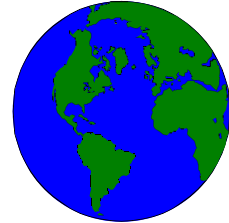


Steward Life

LESSON 27

START HERE

Go to <http://thinks.com/java/jigsaw/daily-jigsaw.pl> and look at some of the puzzles available. But don't forget to come back!



STORY

Jerry had spent at least a week, every evening, on a large picture puzzle of Niagara Falls. In the lower center of the picture was the “Maid of the Mist,” the excursion boat that takes visitors for a ride in the river below the falls.

He was down to the last dozen pieces or so. Ten...eight...five.... The boat was the last part of the picture. Three...two...one... One.... One....

Jerry turned over the puzzle box. He looked on the floor beneath the card table. He got down on his hands and knees and looked under nearby furniture.

He was aghast! One piece-the final piece-right in the middle of the Maid of the Mist excursion boat-was missing!

“The whole puzzle is ruined!” Jerry shouted.

His wife and his children came running in.

“The whole puzzle is ruined!” he shouted again. “Only one piece missing-but such an important piece. The whole picture-the whole process-has been futile-a waste of time. To get to this point and not to have a complete picture is so frustrating!”

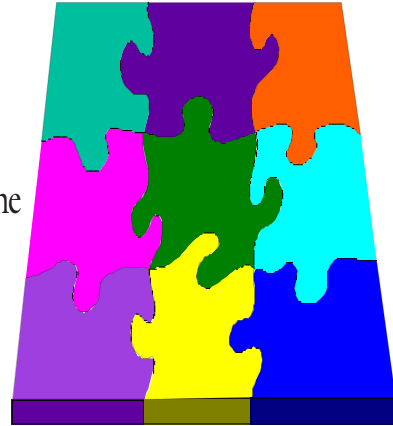
A few minutes later in came his ten-year-old daughter, Evelyn. From her dusty hand dropped the final piece.

“Where did you find this?” Jerry asked.

“It was a lucky guess,” she replied. “I rescued it from the dirt bag inside the vacuum cleaner.”

INSIGHT OUT

It really is true that a single missing piece of a puzzle destroys the whole picture. A jigsaw puzzle is not complete without all its pieces. All the work that goes into putting the whole thing together can be wasted. And if only one piece is missing, you don't even know it until the end.



The apostle Paul begins 1 Corinthians 12 by saying, “Let me tell you about spiritual people....” (*pneumatikoi* in Greek) He then goes on to describe how people who live the StewardLife fit together in the Church-the Body of Christ.

At one point in the movie “A League of Their Own” coach Tom Hanks tells his ladies softball team, “There’s no crying in baseball!”

Paul tells the Corinthians, “There’s no missing pieces in the Body of Christ!” The whole body needs every member-every piece-to function. People who live the steward life know their place(or seek to find their place-in the church. Their unique talents, like pieces of a puzzle, go together to move the entire body forward.

Now put on your spiritual eyes and see what happens when a piece is missing: God is so concerned with each one of us that He goes searching in the dirt and grime of sin to find us and pluck us out. No matter what we have been sucked into, because He cares for every individual, God can put us back into the picture.

EXERCISE

How often have you been missing from the picture? Recall ways that God, through His Holy Spirit, searched you out, dusted you off and brought you back.

STEWARDSHIP PRINCIPLE

One of our church body's stewardship principles says we "Realize that our lives of stewardship are personal responses to God, lived out within the community of faith to benefit the whole world." (See Rom. 12:4-5; 1 Cor. 12:12-13; 1 Pet. 4:10; 2 Cor. 8:13-14; Gal. 6:7-10.)

We emphasize the privilege and accountability of having specific gifts to honor the Lord and bless others—as members of the Body of Christ in kingdom work with others. God showers blessings on those who manage His gifts wisely and well for the common good.

INSIGHT OUT

The word used in Greek for "carpenter" in the New Testament is the same word used for "stone mason." Because of the number of masonry examples used by Jesus and other New Testament writers—and the lack of carpentry examples, could we be wrong? Perhaps Jesus was a stone mason, not a carpenter?

A building block or a brick alone is useless. Only in relationship—joined to, topping, supporting—is it useful. Otherwise, it can become a stumbling block. In community—in "common unity" we relate to, depend upon and serve with one another (1 Peter 2:4-5).

Consider this progression and what it means in your StewardLife: God is owner-architect-builder-inhabitant.



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