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| JIG SAW

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| Life may sometimes resemble a jigsaw puzzle – all in pieces and maybe a little like the Creation – without form and void. And this is where the challenge comes in.My wife LOVES jigsaw puzzles. 500 pieces – really, that all? 1000 pieces better. And two thousand even better. If I gave her a puzzle with 12 pieces, it would be easy but no fun. It is the challenge!Our jigsaw puzzle lives resemble that challenge.The major difference is that the pieces of our lives don’t come in a box – they start in a womb. And as it says in the scripture, “I was knit together in the secret place.”They say that babies don’t come with an instruction manual and neither does our life exactly. Yes, we do have the great instructions – “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, soul and strength and your neighbor as yourself” And as the Bible tells us, “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.”And in between those two we are handed the box called “life” but it comes without a picture and we are to put the puzzle together.In Montessori education we talk about the child “creating” themselves, forming who they will be from that which was “knit” into them before their birth. They are not “blank” canvases waiting to be filled. They are tapestries waiting to be revealed.Common methodology for jigsaw puzzles is to start with the frame looking for the pieces with a straight edge. Even if you don’t know the picture you can find the straight edges. The frame of your life also has four sides. The first frame is the family you are born into. No accident, that is where God intended for you to be. The second side of your frame is the country and culture of your birth. The third frame is your personality, character, gifts, and talents. And the fourth frame is God Himself. (Finding God is the ultimate answer to the puzzle.)Even without a picture you are able to piece together a frame. And the pieces that don’t fit into your first three sides are the pieces that fit into the God part of your life. Then there are the shapes and forms, colors, and structures that you begin to piece together. Parts of your puzzle begin to go together even if you don’t know exactly where they fit in the frame. And as you move on, they eventually get connected. Sometimes early, sometimes later. As the pieces begin to go together you get a glimpse, an intimation of what the picture will look like.There are a lot of pieces to place. And you can count on trying all kinds of combinations and constantly putting pieces in the wrong place and trying again. The worse part may be the large expanses of green grass or blue sky that require extraordinary patience without seeing much progress. (It may seem to be a lot like everyday life.)The closer you get to finishing the puzzle, the picture of “your” life comes into focus. We don’t know when we will get to the last piece. We see the remaining holes in the puzzle, and we get anxious to finish the puzzle. And this may be where our analogy ends. Because when we get to the end of a puzzle we put the pieces back into the box. And that is a tough commentary for our being put into a “box” at the end. But before we get to the end we have had great joy in the process, in the discovery, in watching God’s plan unfold before our eyes. We don’t know what the picture will look like when we start but we know that our Creator has a beautiful picture of our life in mind. And so we should embrace the joy of the jigsaw puzzle.        |

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