



## LIFE IS A PUZZLE

*A woman (Christian) is gazing at puzzle pieces on a board. She tries to rearrange them so they fit together. The design is unimportant as long as the pieces are all similar, but not easy to put together. Christian turns to audience.*

**Christian:** This puzzle is just like my life. Just when I think I have everything under control some part just doesn't seem to fit. Just look at this confusion. I could sure use some help. Where are my friends when I need them? They're probably at some church retreat enjoying themselves and singing fun songs. Here I am. I can't figure out how to put my life together.

*(Person in long flowing robe enters humming.)*

**Christian:** Can you help me get my life together?

**Guru Person:** Of course, I can be of assistance. I have been to the top of the mountain and have talked with **the** Guru. Hummmmmm. I have given up anger. I am one with nature. The cosmos and I are one. Where there is peace and harmony all things are possible. Life is joy. That is the key to life. Hummmmmm. *(Whirls and twirls, reaches out and rearranges the puzzle pieces.)* Hummmmmm. *(Rearranges them again this time with more force. Tries to break off portion that doesn't fit. Hum has changed to Grrrrrrrr.)* Your life is really messed up. If I were you I would just hum and forget about this stuff. *(Walks off shaking head with Grrhummm, Grrhummm.)*

**Christian:** I just can't put the pieces of my life together. It is so confusing. Whatever Ashram that came out of, she can go back to. I don't think I'm in any shape to climb a mountain just to end up like that. There's got to be a better way.

*(Shopper enters with shopping bag bulging.)*

**Shopper:** What seems to be your problem?

**Christian:** I just can't put the pieces of my life together. It is so confusing.

**Shopper:** I know exactly what you need. You need to go shopping. Just look at all the neat stuff I've got. I've got all the answers and I got them all on sale! A couple of hours at Fashion Club followed by lunch at the Pickle Garden, then on to Dillard's with a quick run through Sears will fix you up just fine. Why, look at me. Don't I look great? This shirt was marked down three times. The slacks were sized wrong so they let me have them for almost nothing. *(She is pulling out items from her sack and tossing them about.)* Now can you believe that I got all this out of that little bag? That's called being organized. Here, let me help with your puzzling life and then we are off to Home Depot and Wal-Mart. *(She pushes the puzzle pieces around very fast and doesn't get anything to fit.)* Well, I guess your life is a

mess. You should have gone shopping sooner. You might be past helping. (*Looks at watch.*) Speaking of which, it is almost past time for the QVC channel to start their closeout sale. Sure you won't give up on this life and try mine?

**Christian:** Guess I'll keep trying. The lunch at the Pickle Garden did sound good, though.

(*A woman who is a mother enters. She is shouting warnings and instructions over her shoulder to her children.*)

**Mother:** What seems to be your trouble? (*Yells back at child.*) "Stop teasing your sister."

**Christian:** I just can't put the pieces of my life together. It is so confusing.

**Mother:** Do I know confusing? "Don't hit your brother." This being a parent is not easy. The kids nowadays think they should be able to do whatever they want. "If you don't stop that right now, I'll tell your father when he gets home." It is not easy being a good mother. It has taken me a long time to figure it out. "Any more fighting and you can't spend the weekend with your grandparents." What am I saying? They have to go to their grandparents. I need to go to that LWML retreat. My mom has a lot more energy than I do and somehow she manages to keep the kids happy and busy and she doesn't turn on the television at all. (*She tries to move the puzzle pieces but drops them on the floor.*) I just don't have the energy to help you. I still have to go home and bake 24 cupcakes and make a Halloween outfit.

**Christian:** That mother doesn't seem to have her life any better organized than I do.

(*Business woman enters with cell phone, briefcase and date planner.*)

**Business Woman:** What is your problem? Why are you standing around?

**Christian:** I just can't put the pieces of my life together. It is so confusing.

**Business Woman:** Of course, you can put your life together. What can be so difficult? I have raised two children, a dog, a gerbil, and a husband and still have time to spin off a company and take it public. (*Talks to phone.*) "Buy 10,000 shares and do it now. Also, fire that idiot in filing who parked in my space this morning. Call my husband and tell him I will be at an LWML retreat tonight and he should be sure to pick up Lily, his daughter, at piano. The last time she was there for three days." Life is a bit hectic, but if you learn to delegate it can be managed. Now, let me see this. (*She moves a few pieces, keys something into calculator and moves a couple more, then gathers up her stuff.*) You really need to hire someone to do this. There is no need to spend your life on such a routine procedure. That's why everyone should have a secretary.

**Christian:** How can I put the pieces of my life together? Maybe a secretary would be helpful.

*(Enter movie star.)*

**Movie Star:** Darling!!! If you keep that frown on your face you will have Condor tracks instead of just crows feet. You must emote when you talk. Project yourself. *(Struts around acting like Greta Garbo.)* If you want to be noticed, please don't whine and look so dowdy. A bit of makeup...well, maybe a lot of makeup will help. Those clothes are so Lutheran. You need to be a flamboyant person. Possibly a woman of mystery. You are definitely past playing the part of the girl next door. Maybe a mother or, better yet, maybe a grandmother. I understand they are casting for Noah's wife in the remake of the flood. Have you thought about playing character roles? Are you allergic to animals? What are you doing? What is that mess? Here, let me show you how to do this gracefully. *(Lifts pieces, shows them to audience, puts them back. When they don't fit, throws a temper tantrum, kicks at the stand, screams and then turns to audience with a large fake smile.)* You're right, there are some people who need to be in the audience and not on the stage. Ta! Ta!

**Christian:** I don't think I need a lot of makeup. I certainly don't want to be like a movie star. I still can't put the pieces of my life together correctly.

*(Enter aerobics instructor.)*

**Instructor:** A one, two, three, four. *(Raises one arm and then the other. Stands jogging in place.)* What seems to be the problem here? You look very tired and unhappy.

**Christian:** I just can't put the pieces of my life together. It is so confusing.

**Instructor:** What you need is to exercise and get your vital juices flowing. Look at me! I just finished a 10K run and then cooled down by lifting weights for an hour or so. My juices are really moving. Life has a whole new meaning when you're healthy and vibrant and look at each day as an opportunity to outlive your friends. Why, I plan on living until I'm fifty, or is that a hundred and fifty? Exercise keeps you mentally alert also. Why, I can out-jog all of my 13, or is it 14, grandchildren. You really need to get off your stool and move a little. Remember the saying, "If you don't use it, you lose it." It is so true. Why, I can't tell you how many muscles I move just standing here talking to you. This is more than just a mental exercise. I am constantly thinking of holding in that stomach, tuck that tush in, breathe from your belly, stretch that inner thigh, relax that neck muscle. See...all those things are going on while I talk to you. Now in your case, maybe if you just tried to keep your eyes open and your feet on the floor, that would be a place to start. Hey, what have you got there? A puzzle? I love puzzles. Challenges those old brain muscles. *(Tries to assemble pieces. Turns in frustration.)* Well, I must be finishing this session, so I'll have to go. Think about what I just said about aerobics. It would work wonders with that body. Just look at me!

**Christian:** (*Waves to instructor.*) I suppose I could start to exercise if I ever get my life in order. Right now I really need help in getting things back on track.

**Psychiatrist:** Pardon me, madam, but I am a psychiatrist, quite possibly I could help. You seem to be having an identity crisis of some sort.

**Christian:** I just can't put the pieces of my life together. It is so confusing.

**Psychiatrist:** (*Rubs hands together with glee and turns to audience and grins.*) Oh, just my kind of problem. I expect this will be a long-term therapy patient. What type of insurance do you have? Are you on Medicare? Medicaid? Private health insurance? We can work out a small weekly payment plan if you need to. My accountant will bring by the papers. Now, we don't have a couch here so just relax on your stool, but not too much. Can't have you falling off and hurting yourself, can we? Are we comfy? Now think back to the first time you felt out of control. As for me, I think it was when my father and mother both said I couldn't practice surgery on the Thanksgiving turkey. It really had a traumatic effect on my inner child, not to say anything of my outer child when Daddy spanked me for dismembering the turkey before it was even cooked. That must be why I didn't go into surgery. I think I decided then to go into medicine for the mind. It had to be less messy and certainly wouldn't upset people so much if you botched a job. Ho! Ho! Ho! A little medical humor there. Are you trying to put this puzzle together? I've always been good at puzzles. Let me see...this must be a Freudian puzzle. If I were you, I'd get another puzzle. Must be off. Still have a waiting room full of patients to cancel appointments for.

**Christian:** I don't think that was a real doctor. I can't trade in my life just like that. I wonder what kind of medicine she was on. Certainly nothing approved by the LWML.

*(Teacher enters reading a book and deep in thought. Looks up as she approaches the stand.)*

**Teacher:** What have we here? What a lovely puzzle. Is it yours?

**Christian:** It's my life and I just can't seem to put it together. I've tried and so have so many people.

**Teacher:** My dear child, no one can put this puzzle together for you. That would be cheating. You have to do this yourself. Remember you are an adult now. You can do this. You just have to work at it. Nothing worth having comes easy. We have to study and prepare ourselves. Didn't we learn that in school? We must not have been paying attention. (*Shakes head and makes clucking noises.*) Were we daydreaming or reading a paperback inside our geography book? Did I have you in second grade? Weren't you that little girl that was always coloring outside the lines? Your mother braided your hair in French braids, as I

recall. She wouldn't recognize it now. Now, I have to be going but you still have time to complete the puzzle. You have to apply yourself instead of sitting here feeling sorry for yourself. Remember, a job worth doing is worth doing right!

**Christian:** This is becoming a very complicated time. *(Tries to assemble puzzle.)* I think I am so close, but then it still doesn't fit together.

**Old Lady:** Oh, my aching back. What seems to be your trouble? My arthritis is sure getting to me.

**Christian:** I just can't put the pieces of my life together. It is so confusing.

**Old Lady:** Talk to me about confusing. I've been confused since Grover Cleveland ran for governor, or was it president? You can't let a few memory lapses get you down or you're in trouble. The aches and pains are pretty bad sometimes, but I have a hard time remembering when something didn't ache. You look like you're feeling a lot of pain. I've seen that look on people before. I've seen a lot of looks on people over the years. Some are good and some aren't. Of course, people are like that, too. Some are good and some aren't. Learned a lot about people from the Bible. Been reading the Bible every day ever since I can remember. Sometimes I can't remember much, but I can remember that. I once had a hard time figuring out what to do with my life. I finally realized you can't count on people to fix your problems. You need to put the pieces of your life in God's hands, trust in Him completely, and He will guide and direct you. He loves you and will always be there for you no matter what happens. Puzzles are kind of like life. Sometimes it seems as though someone has either put in too many pieces or else they didn't put in enough. That looks like a good one there. Guess I'll be on my way and let you finish.

**Christian:** I wonder what she meant by that. You know everyone has been trying to put my life together for me and they couldn't do it. I tried to put it together and it didn't work. I wonder if the secret could be in the Bible. *(As she gets the Bible she knocks the puzzle over and picks the pieces up and puts them on the board backside up. A cross is formed as she assembles the pieces.)* The answer has been here all the time.