



As a young girl I used to love fixing jigsaw puzzles; however, I found it most annoying when there were no more available pieces on the table and yet the picture was not complete because there was a piece missing. The picture was



spoilt and incomplete. What made matters worse was that when my Mam was cleaning and came across a piece on the floor, she would pop it into the nearest jigsaw box, regardless as to whether or not it was being put into the correct box! Have you noticed that sometimes a piece appears to have been put in the right place, but then, when more of the picture is beginning to emerge, you suddenly realize that that particular piece belongs somewhere else. In every jigsaw there is only one correct position in which a piece can be placed.



I was thinking how this is similar to our lives. There is only one place in which God wants us to fit. We may sometimes have difficulty in knowing exactly where that place is, such as, 'Is that the job that God wants me to do?' 'Is this the person He wants me to marry?' 'Am I doing the right thing here?' It is only as we draw closer to God that His plans for us become easier to discern. Sometimes we can go off track a bit and have to change our direction, but ultimately, God will draw us back to His chosen place for our lives.



Some of us may be very large pieces in God's jigsaw and some may be little tiny pieces, but, if His picture is to be completed properly, the actual size of the piece is irrelevant as EVERY PIECE, regardless of size, has a special place in His overall picture. If even a tiny piece is not in the proper place then His picture is spoilt.

I love to read about Moses. I think he was a very large piece in God's jigsaw and I really admire everything that he did to try and live the life God wanted him to live. At the same time, I think one reason why I particularly like reading about him is because we read how he sometimes reacted in what I would call a 'Normal human way'. He made excuses for not wanting to do what God asked him to do. He doubted his own abilities. He got annoyed with God about certain things. On one occasion God said that he was disobedient to what he had been asked to do.

40

40

40

At the time of Moses, people were living a bit longer than at the present day. The life of Moses seems to have been divided up into roughly three phases – Forty years in the palace, forty years looking after sheep and then forty years leading the Israelites. Apart from the circumstances of his birth and then later the killing of the Egyptian, we read very little about his first eighty years. It was when he was at about the age of eighty that God gave him



such an awesome challenge. Would you fancy taking on the position of leading a million people having reached the age of eighty? I think I would have wanted to stay with the sheep and have a nice relaxed retirement. (I am sure I could have found a way of using the sheep's wool for knitting!)

Moses was obviously the right person for the job God asked him to take on as he would have been highly trained in leadership having been brought up in the palace. Even though I understand that the Israelites could actually have reached the 'Promised land' in a few weeks, they were wandering around in the

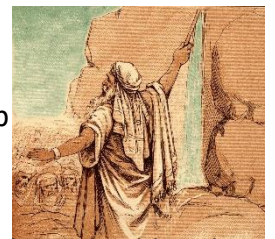
wilderness, with very little food or water, for forty years. As Moses had spent that length of time already in that sort of situation, he was well-equipped to be able to lead others in the same circumstances.



Moses had a very close relationship with God and must have spent a great deal of time in prayer. On one occasion he fasted for forty days whilst he was praying, not for himself, but on behalf of the people. After that he broke the tablets containing the ten commandments because his brother Aaron had allowed the people to worship a golden calf, then he went back up the mountain and fasted for another forty days. What a commitment! No wonder God had assigned to him such a mammoth task.

One of the most poignant verses I read in the Bible about Moses is when he is praying for the people and says, “If Thou wilt forgive their sin – and if not, blot me I pray Thee, out of Thy book.” What a sacrifice he was prepared to make; to be separated from God because of the sins of the people. God had chosen him for such an undertaking because He knew the heart of Moses. He knew to what lengths Moses would go in order to fulfil what He was asking of him.

The Israelites were often disgruntled about their situation. One day they had a real moan against Moses and Aaron about the lack of food and water. When Moses took up the matter with God, God told Moses to speak to the rock and water would come from it. Instead of speaking to the rock as God had said, Moses hit it twice with his rod. God then told Moses that because of his disobedience in that he had not done exactly what he was told to do, he would be allowed to see the Promised land, but not allowed to set foot in it. I always feel sorry for Moses about this. He had put up with such a lot from the Israelites and was so committed and yet was punished for this one act of disobedience.



Over the years I have come to the conclusion that the more God blesses and uses us, the greater His demand for our obedience to His wishes. In other words, more is expected from those who are larger pieces in His jigsaw. I think particularly of that verse that says, ‘Everyone to whom much is given, of him much will be required.’ (Luke 12:48) God wants our total obedience, even if there are times when we do not

understand why he is leading us along a certain path. We only see part of the picture, but God has an overall view of everyone’s situation. He has decided what His completed picture is to look like and where each individual fits exactly into place.

To think about:-

Do you think that God was a bit mean to Moses by not letting him go into the Promised land?

Does God expect a much higher standard of obedience from those who are larger pieces in His jigsaw?

Do not underestimate how much God values you. Even the teeniest bit of jigsaw is needed to complete His picture.

Related Bible readings:-

Deuteronomy 9: 18 Forty days on behalf of the people

Exodus 32: 30 – 34 “Blot me out”

Numbers 20: 6 – 13 Moses hits the rock for water



Jeremiah 29: 11