

# HEART-TO-HEART

*We are reminded that Christ is in our hearts and we are in His and that love connects us all in unity.*



## *Learning Never Ends*

The majority of students return back to school on August 4. Do you recall being a student and wishing summer break never ended? Or were you excited to go back to school and your friends again?

Students will be one grade higher and studies become a little more difficult each year. Do you remember having a little anxiety at the start of the school year because of all of the unknowns? There's a little fear in having to learn something new.

The good news is that as adults, we've already gone through those school years, and we came out pretty ok, so the anxiety was for nothing. We've also figured out that "learning" isn't just reserved for school, but it's a life-long endeavor. We may no longer learn academically, but we realize that we learn something new all of the time, from family, from friends, from media, from reading...the list goes on.

As followers of Jesus, there is a realization that we learn more about Him, and ourselves, over time. That learning never ends.

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# *A Puzzling Matter*

by Julie Morita

I love doing jigsaw puzzles. I love the ones with colorful pictures, and at least a 1000 pieces. For me, my “happy place” is being able to unplug and do a puzzle (besides reading a good book). The part that I don’t like is the unboxing, when you have to flip the pieces to their right side, find the edges, and figure out where to put all the other pieces you’re not working with. I use the boxes that cans of soda or dog food come in as my “sorting trays.” I don’t sort by color either. I just make sure that all the pieces are right side up and have only one layer of puzzle pieces in each tray. Once I get that out of the way, I can then enjoy my time “puzzling.”

I also got a bunch of “impossible puzzles” that are single-colored (see pic). For these puzzles, you can’t tell which side is the correct one for each of the pieces. I’ve also done the edges only to find that the sides don’t match because one or more sides have to flip over.

There’s lessons to solving problems when doing puzzles:

1. During the unboxing, it seems overwhelming. There’s so many pieces and you have to turn them all right side up. Don’t overthink it - just take a breath and take that first step to start the process.
2. After unboxing the puzzle, I find the edges while flipping the pieces to the correct side at the same time; seems efficient. When that’s done, I start doing the edges first so that I know “the sandbox that I’m playing in.” Then I may work on certain colors, certain sides of the puzzle, or certain pictures on the puzzle. It depends on the puzzle. To tackle any problem, we need a game plan that has incremental steps to the resolution.
3. When you’re trying to find that one piece that you’re looking for, you can spend your whole time doing that and you’ll get stuck. You need to learn when to move on and look for a different piece so that you can keep progressing.
4. Sometimes we only look for certain colors or only for certain shapes. Be versatile and look for the combination.
5. For the impossible puzzles, there is only one color and both sides look and feel the same, so there’s no “right” side. I may have to turn pieces around and flip them over to see if it may be the one I’m looking for. Sometimes, when my mindset is fixed, I don’t see the piece that I was looking for that was right in front of me the whole time. That’s because all I saw was what was presented and not what “could be” if I looked at it from a different perspective.
6. When you’re looking for a specific puzzle piece and you find it and it fits into the space you intended, there is joy and a feeling of contentment. Celebrate the small wins when it gets you closer to your objective.



Never doubt your own ability to be blind to what is right in front of you.

# *Dependence on God*

by Jeanne Nagatani

A devotional from Charles F. Stanley caught my attention:

“1 Chronicles 29:12 – In Your hand it is to make great and to give strength to all.

The Lord desires to heal you of old emotional wounds and memories, and to heal you so completely that you no longer rely on any of the crutches you have used in the past as a substitute for trust in God ... God alone wants to be permanent – yes, eternal -- solution for every difficulty or problem you encounter... He is the ultimate and final Source of your strength, healing, and comfort. God wants you to be utterly and completely dependent upon Him, not upon any other person or thing.”

I was raised to feel guilt and shame in whatever I did. This affected how I viewed others, how I behaved, and how I viewed myself. How does one overcome the this? When I attended Nuuanu Baptist Church many years ago, Pastor Sanders said during his message one Sunday morning that “God can forgive me of all my shame and guilt as long as I repent.” Wow!! I can be forgiven of my guilt and the shame of my past? Then I better sign-up and believe in Jesus and get baptized. Which I did. Sadly, there was no follow-up after my baptism, so I was lost. I believed in Jesus, but how was He going to help me get over my guilt and shame? I had no idea.

Dennis and I started attending WOCC and joined Sunday School and Bible study. I began to learn about Jesus and developed a relationship with Him. That’s when I also learned how I could be forgiven of my sins. Finally, I had an inkling of how to get rid of my guilt and shame. It only took me a couple of decades to find out how.

Eventually, I joined a Bible study with a couple of women. Someone from the group told me, “You keep looking in the rearview mirror (my past). Start looking through the windshield (my future) instead.” Easier said than done. I eventually came to the conclusion that I needed to forgive myself too. I had to keep reminding myself that Jesus forgave me, so I should forgive myself too.

With God’s help, I can honestly say that I look through my windshield more now than through my rearview mirror. Don’t get me wrong, even now, there are times that I still look in my rearview mirror and have to remind myself that Jesus forgave me, so I must forgive myself.

Anyone who is passionate about something adapts and makes changes. Transformation (change) is hard, but it depends on how much you want to change yourself and become a better person. Do you like what you see in the mirror? If you don’t, how much are you willing to change in order to like yourself more and to become more like how Jesus wants you to be? What I learned is that you can depend on Jesus to help you to change. I know, because He helped me.



“Faith doesn’t always mean that God changes your situation. Sometimes it means He changes you.”

– Steven Furtick



## *Children's Ministry*

Did you know...we're starting up the Children's Ministry at WOCC? Praise God that we now have children who attend Sunday worship service. Joan Doi and Elaine Nagasako have been leading Children's Church as they immediately observed children attending and swung into action. A more formal plan was drafted with Pastor Jason's leadership, as we now have children attending on a regular basis. There is much to do and many resources needed to share the love of Jesus with these children.

On Saturday, August 23, 2025, we are having a meeting to share information about the Children's Ministry. We need volunteers. If working with children is not your thing, there are volunteer tasks that don't involve directly working with children too. There's something for everyone. If you're interested in helping out, or curious about this ministry, please feel free to attend this meeting.



Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."

MATTHEW 19:14



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