



Sisters in the Spirit Ministries Newsletter

Empowerment for the Christian Woman



By Rev. Dr. Katrina White Brown

The Apostle Paul wrote in 1st Corinthians 13:13 "And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love." John encouraged in 1st John 4:7 "Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God." Jesus taught to "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments" (Matthew 22:37-40).

When it comes to our relationship with God - it's all about love!

The Bible has been described as "God's love letter to His People," and some of its most beautiful expressions are written in 1st Corinthians chapter 13. This chapter has been described as the love chapter, and within this first letter to the Corinthians, Paul provides an eloquent and famous description of true love, which is agape love.

Agape love is different from other types of love. The essence of agape love is goodwill, benevolence, and willful delight in the object of love. Agape is not used in the New Testament to refer to romantic or sexual love. Nor does it refer to close friendship or brotherly love. It is the type of love that Paul describes in 1st Corin-

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20 SECONDS OF PRAISE



Health officials recommend washing your hands frequently for a minimum of 20 seconds as a primary defense against germs. You can time this by singing a verse and chorus of:

I Smile By Kirk Franklin

Today's a new day
But there is no sunshine
Nothing but clouds
And it's dark in my heart
And it feels like a cold night
I almost gave up, but a power
That I can't explain
Fell from Heaven like a shower
Now When I think how much better
I'm going to be when this is over
I smile, Even though I hurt, see, I smile
I know God is working so I smile
Even though I've been here for a while
I smile

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Sisters in the Spirit is an outreach ministry created to empower Christian women in better serving the Lord. We are here to help "equip God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ..."

Ephesians 4:12



Valentine's Day ... you either love it, hate it, or are completely indifferent to the celebration. But no matter how you feel, it has become one of the most stressful days of the year. Both men and women often use Valentine's Day as the yardstick for measuring the strength of their relationships. For women, if your man doesn't provide the proper embellishments, all of a sudden he's a jerk who doesn't care. For men, if you come up short on the gifts, it could cast the death knell between you and your lady. Even worse, if you don't have someone in your life to attend to the requisite needs of Valentine's Day, you may feel unloved, unwanted, and unvalued. It's just too much pressure!

I'm not a fan of Valentine's Day. Love relationships require attention every day - not just on February 14th. Flowers, dinners, cuddly teddy bears, and heart-shaped candies are great, but they are appreciated and needed on March 14th, June 14th, October 14th ... you get my meaning. Demonstrating love is not just a one day thing.

But just like we put everything into showing our love and affection on one specific day, we also establish that same kind of relationship with Christ Jesus. How many believers save up all of their love during the week so that they can make a big showing on Sunday? And some believers only show up for the Lord on Resurrection Sunday (Easter) and Christmas, and they are done for the year. As believers my Sisters, we need to show up for the Lord every day and in every way. Can you even imagine where we would be if the Lord only showed up for us on special occasions?

Love is a lifestyle. Love is intentional. Love is sacrificial. Love is eternal. Jesus pared an overwhelming list of commandments - the list of "thou shall nots" - down to two simple "thou shalls." Jesus said to Love God first and Love People as God loves them. A good place to start is to love yourself my sisters.

Self love and self care go hand-in-hand. It's the ability to appreciate yourself physically, mentally, and spiritually. Practicing self-love and care can keep your mind, body, and soul in check, because you own the fact that your happiness and well-being depends on what you do and how you do it. You never have to settle for less than you deserve, and you walk in the authority of your God-given purpose.

My Sisters, if we don't love ourselves it's impossible to love others. Without self-love the spirit of unworthiness and negativity runs rampant in our spirit. Self-love means that we don't depend on others for validation. Encourage yourself through daily affirmations in the mighty name of Jesus. "I acknowledge my self-worth," or "I am good enough," or "I am deserving of love and happiness," or "I am beautiful inside and out," or "I am marvelous in God's sight and no weapon formed against me shall prosper" - these affirmations re-emphasize who God has created us to be.

Stop comparing yourself to others. They are not on your journey. The plans God has for you are unique to who you are in Christ. Make an effort to focus on yourself, your goals, and your strengths. Doing so will help free you from the negative energy that causes self-doubt. And, learn how to say no. This can help you get a hold of your life AND reduce stress and anxiety. It also gives you more time to say yes to God.

Talk to God. Prayer is free and can be done anywhere, at anytime, and God always wants to hear from you. God's love is greater than anything we could ever experience, and will remain long after the flowers fade, the candy is eaten, the dinner is digested, and the cuddly bears lose their stuffing. His love is eternal.

In my spirit for you my Sisters, is that you see the woman that God sees when you look in the mirror. He always wants the best for us. Certainly we can love ourselves in that same way.

*Love, Peace, and Blessings Always,
Katrina W. Brown*

What Is Valentine's Day ...

And Is It Connected to Christianity?



By Danielle Bernock

February 14 is when we celebrate Valentine's Day. Although some enjoy it as the celebration of love, others reject it as a materialistic commercialized holiday.

Valentine's Day started with a connection to Christianity but there is a lot of information to wade through to find the truth. The details within the stories connecting it to Christianity are difficult to prove. Nevertheless, Valentine's Day does have a connection to Christianity.

Christian Connections

Valentine's Day began as Saint Valentine's Day or the Feast of Saint Valentine. The feast was first established by Pope Gelasius I to honor the saints, who were named Valentinus, and were martyred on February 14. Those familiar with this connection believe there to be a single man, but there were actually three saints bearing the name Valentine or Valentinus. Two were from Italy and one was from Africa. Two were clearly beheaded, while the details of the third one's martyrdom is unclear.

One Valentine's story is that he was a temple priest who was imprisoned for ministering to Christians when they were being persecuted by the Roman empire. While in prison, he fell in love with a young woman (possibly the jailer's daughter) and sent her a farewell note (from "Your Valentine") before his execution. One version of the story states that the young woman was blind, and Valentine healed her. Other stories omit that part.

Another Valentine's story says that he was beheaded for performing secret weddings when Emperor Claudius had outlawed them for young soldiers. Yet another story details that Valentine was a priest who was arrested, but instead of being put in jail, he was put into the custody of an aristocrat named Asterius. After hearing Valentine speak, he challenged him about the validity of Christ. Asterius bargained with Valentine for healing for his wife, in order for them to believe in Christ. Valentine healed her and they both got baptized. After Emperor Claudius II found out about this, he had Valentine killed.

With the difficulty of determining which details are true, it's no wonder they can be found all mixed together, giving us the idea of a single person named Valentine.

Pagan Connections

While it is clear that the origin of Valentine's Day is connected to Christianity, there are those who claim paganism is the root. Those telling this story say Christianity

took the Roman festival known as "Lupercalia" and "Christianized" it.

Lupercalia was a fertility festival that honored the Roman gods held annually on February 15. Some stories

say the Roman gods Juno and Pan were honored, while others say the gods Faunus, Romulus, and Remus were the honorees. The details of the festival have differences depending on which story you read, however, they are all quite gory. Nevertheless, Paganism may or may not have had anything to do with Valentine's Day.

Love Birds

How Valentine's Day became connected with romantic love is attributed to a poem by Geoffrey Chaucer. In 1375, he wrote "Parliament of Fowles" connecting romantic love to the beginning of mating season for birds (mid-February). He wrote, "For this was sent on Seynt (Saint) Valentyne's day/Whan every foul cometh ther to choose his mate."

During that time in history, courtly love flourished, and couples took the occasion to express their love in the form of flowers, candies, and cards (valentines). And perhaps this is where the term love birds comes from.

What Does This All Mean?

Whatever Valentine's Day is to you, it is for you to decide. Personally, I think it's a great opportunity to celebrate love, whether it be for family, friends, lovers, or neighbors because Jesus said that people would know us by our love. Jesus said: *A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another* (John 13:34-35).

The scriptures are full of the expression of God's love.

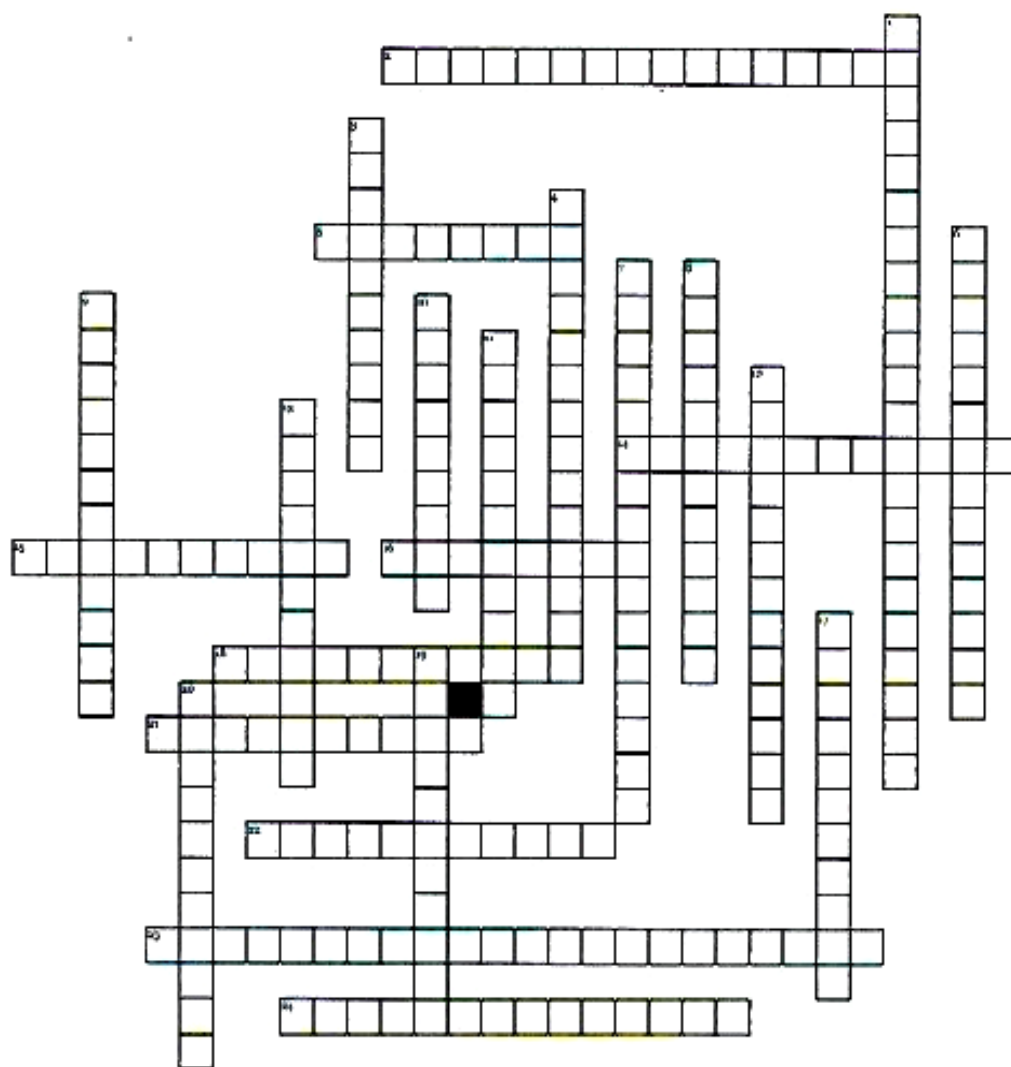
- *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life* (John 3:16).
- *And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony* (Colossians 3:14).
- *If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may*

continues on page 7



SEARCHING FOR HISTORY

FIND THESE BLACK HISTORY HEROES



Across

2. Invented America's first fully-functioning clock
5. First black woman millionaire
14. Recipient of the National Book Award
15. First black Rhodes Scholar
16. First black woman Poet Laureate
18. First black Ivy League president
21. Conducted experiments in the 1940s using dolls to study children's attitudes about race
22. First African-American to study and work as a professionally trained nurse in the United States
23. Devised over 100 products using the peanut
24. Considered the "GOAT" in the tennis world

Down

1. Patented more than 60 inventions
3. First black female astronaut
4. Known as the "black Thomas Edison"
6. A member of the Harlem Renaissance
7. Awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom; a Hidden Figure
8. Inventor of the long-life light bulb
9. Ophthalmologist and first black woman to receive a patent for a medical invention
10. First African-American to earn a doctorate from Harvard
11. First neurosurgeon to have successfully separated conjoined twins at the head
12. Boyz in the Hood director

13. Achieved renown in the 1990s for his pioneering work in tracing the ancestry of African-Americans via DNA testing
17. Needed Police protection to attend school
19. NASA's first black female engineer
20. 1st Black woman to appear on U.S. currency



The secret OF LIFE

A father used to say to his children when they were young - "when you all reach the age of 12 I will tell you the secret of life." One day when the oldest turned 12, he anxiously asked his father what was the secret of life. The father replied that he was going to tell him, but that he should not reveal it to his brothers.

He told his son "the secret of life can be found in the life of a cow. The cow does not give milk." The boy clearly did not understand. "What are you saying?" his son asked in disbelief. The father explained "the cow does not give milk, you have to milk it. You have to get up at 4:00 in the morning, go to the field, walk through the corral full of manure, tie the tail, hobble the legs of the cow, sit on the stool, place the bucket and do the work yourself."

The father further explained to his son "that is the secret of life, that the cow does not give milk. You milk her or you don't get milk. There are many in your generation son, who think that cows GIVE milk. They think that things are automatic and free, and their mentality is that if "I wish ... I ask ... I get."

The son still had a puzzled look on his face. His father continued. "They have been accustomed to getting whatever they want the easy way. But no, life is not a matter of wishing, asking and getting. The things that one receives are through the effort of what one does. Happiness is the result of effort. Lack of effort creates frustration."

Share with your children from a young age the secret of life, so they don't grow up with the mentality that the government, their parents, or their cute little faces are going to give them everything they need in life. Remember "Cows don't give milk - you have to work for it."



FREEDOM IN THE WORD

Join with Sisters in the Spirit in providing the SIS Newsletter to the 800 women incarcerated at the Fluvanna Correctional Center for Women in Troy, Virginia

Fluvanna Correctional Center for Women (FCCW) is the largest prison for women in Virginia. SIS has been sending newsletters to several of the inmates for years, and the women have found *Freedom in the Word* that they read. Recently, FCCW Chaplain Rev. Jerusha Moses, contacted SIS and asked if the Ministry could provide newsletters to all 800 of the women. We said

Yes, Yes, Yes!

and you can help accomplish this!

Your gift of \$25 will help sponsor 3 months of newsletters for 10 women incarcerated at FCCW.

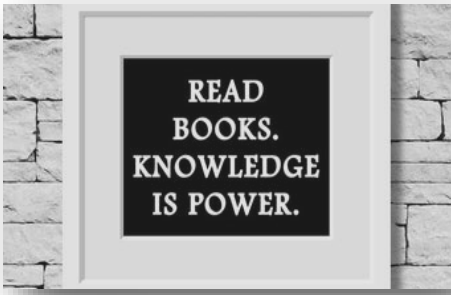
Jesus said "Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me."

There is encouragement, enlightenment, and empowerment within the pages of the SIS Newsletter. You can help provide this freedom in the words of the Newsletter by sending your contribution to:

SIS Ministries

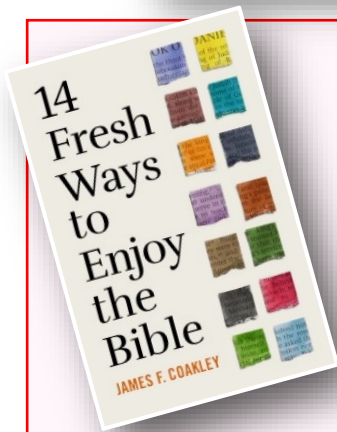
***P.O. Box 649 * Gloucester Point, VA 23062
Attention: Freedom in the Word Campaign
Or use our cash app - \$SntheS***

Thank you for your generosity towards those who are in prison!



It's All About Love

Continued from Page 1



14 FRESH WAYS TO ENJOY THE BIBLE BY JAMES F. COAKLEY

**The Bible is God's masterpiece
and gift to you—claim it for all
that it's worth.**

The Bible is the most read book in all the world. But many of us get stuck in a rut when it comes to approaching it. Rather than feeling inspired and energized, we feel confused, disenchanted, or removed. Bible scholar and lover of God's Word James Coakley wants to share fourteen invaluable strategies that will bring our Scripture study to life.

The Bible is historical, true, *and* it's also great literature. The Artist who created the universe has also gifted us with His Word, which is beautifully designed and full of creativity. The same riveting techniques that modern authors use in their books were also used by Biblical authors long ago.

Coakley opens our eyes to the dramatic and poetical ways God communicates to us. Readers will acquire practical strategies to engage in God's Word and general guidelines that will keep them on track.

The literary skills mentioned in this book don't require advanced training—just a desire to open and receive the gift of God's Word. Would you like to unearth new treasure and insight whenever you open your Bible? Coakley promises an exciting ride and invigorating time in God's eternal, life-changing Word!

Review provided by Moody Publishing
14 Fresh Ways to Enjoy the Bible is available at
Amazon.com, Christianbooks.com, and
Goodreads.com

thians 13 as “the greatest...”

Why is love the greatest? Paul writes that *Love is patient, love is kind. Love does not envy, is not boastful, is not conceited, does not act improperly, is not selfish, is not provoked, and does not keep a record of wrongs. Love finds no joy in unrighteousness but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends.*

One of the reasons that love is the greatest gift is that it is essential to God's nature. The Gospel according to John and John's three letters abound with the theme of love. God gives us His love, and we reflect that love back to Him. 1 John 4:19 points out “we love because He first loved us.” Jesus exemplified this when He said, “As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.” (John 15:9-11)

Agape love is always manifested as love in action. It is shown by what it does, and it was most clearly displayed at the cross. “Because of the great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ, even when we were dead in our trespasses - it is by grace you have been saved” (Ephesians 2:4-5). We did not deserve such a sacrifice, “but God demonstrates His own love for us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8). God's demonstration of agape love led to the sacrifice of the Son of God for those He loves. And, we are to love others with agape love, whether they are fellow believers (John 13:34) or bitter enemies.

Our lives must be focused on loving and serving God with agape love as modeled by Christ. This kind of love does not come naturally to us. Because of our fallen nature, we are incapable of producing such a love on our own. If we are to love as God loves, it can only come from its Source - the God of Creation. This is the love described in Romans 5:5 that “has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us” when we became His children. “This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters” (1 John 3:16). Because of God's love toward us, we are able to love one another.

Love is at the core of God's character and is central to the Christian life. The commandments of Christ are to love God and love others. Love infuses all that God does and it should be the basis for all that we do - it's all about love.



Coming Soon ...



What are you grateful for?
Do you tell God Thank You?
How have you been blessed?

Our new **Grateful, Thankful, Blessed** column is for you to give your testimony. Let us know about how God is moving in your life. We'll publish your story.

Mail or E-mail your testimony to:

Grateful, Thankful, Blessed
P.O. Box 649 | Gloucester Point, VA 23062
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What Is Valentine's Day ... Continued from page 3

boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing (1 Corinthians 13:1-3).

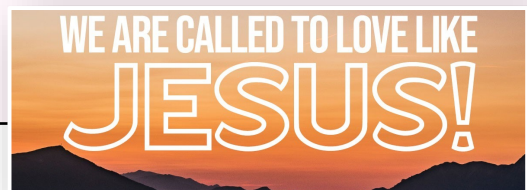
Valentine's Day Fun Facts

Passing out Valentines is a 600-year-old tradition. Esther Howland was the first manufacturer of Valentine's Day cards. Today, millions of greeting cards are purchased every year.

People consider pink and red the colors of love. Candy hearts were originally medical lozenges. The candies got their iconic shape much later.

The heart shape wasn't always a romantic symbol. Roses are the flowers of love. Men and women prefer the same of candy. The chocolate box has been around for more than 140 years.

About the author: Danielle Bernock is an international, award-winning author, coach, and speaker who helps people embrace their value and heal their souls through the power of the love of God.



FREEDOM IN THE WORD Campaign

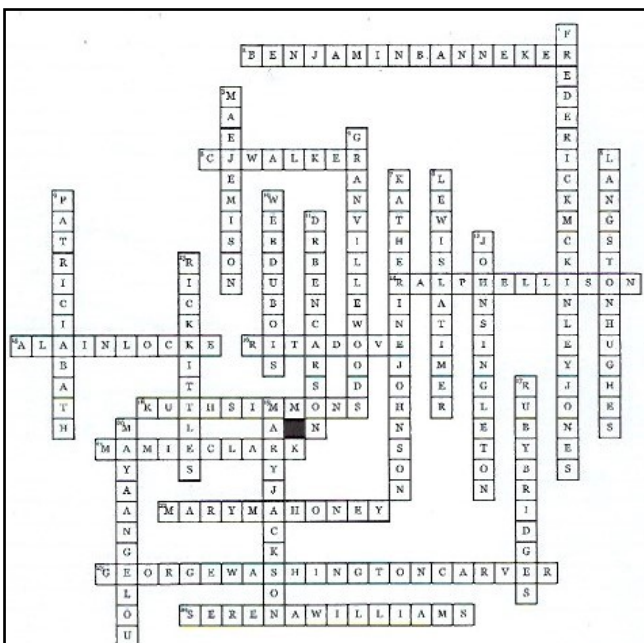
THANK YOU!

We have raised almost half of our **\$3200** goal needed to get the SIS Newsletter to the 800 at the Fluvanna Correctional Center for Women. (See page 5)

Your gift of \$25 will help sponsor 3 months of newsletters for 10 women incarcerated at FCCW.

We still have a ways to go. Please give as much as you can. These women may be in physical bondage, but not their spirit, because there is true freedom in God's Word!

Solution to **SEARCHING FOR HISTORY** Crossword puzzle





Sisters in the Spirit Newsletter

This is a free monthly
publication of
Sisters in the Spirit
Ministries, Inc.,
a 501(c)(3) non-profit
organization founded to
empower Christian women
in better fulfilling their
God-given purpose.
Editor: Dr. Katrina W. Brown
The newsletter is
distributed via mail and
online throughout
the United States and
the Caribbean.

Visit our website:
sistersinthespirit.org



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The LAST Laugh



Do I stay or do I go?

A wife got so mad at her husband she packed his bags and told him to get out. As he walked to the door she yelled, "I hope you die a long, slow, painful death." He turned around and said, "So, you want me to stay?"

Hard work pays off

My boss was honest with me today. He pulled up to work with his sweet new car this morning and I complimented him on it. He replied, "Well, if you work hard, set goals, stay determined and put in long hours, I can get an even better one next year."

Bless this food

A man is walking through the woods when he sees a bear charging at him. He runs as hard as he can, but he knows he can't outrun a bear for long, so he starts praying, "Dear Lord, I beseech thee. Please, oh Lord, please let this bear be a Christian!" The bear catches up to him, knocks him down on the ground, then gets on its knees and says, "Dear Lord, thank you for this food I am about to receive..."

Why did you do that?

A guy is sitting at home when he hears a knock at the door. He opens the door and sees a snail on the porch. He picks up the snail and throws it as far as he can. A year later, there's another knock at the door. He opens it and sees the same snail. The snail says, "What was that all about?"

Full of hot air

The wife and I took a long, leisurely drive out to the country and pulled over to fill up our car's gas tank and tires... She was surprised to see that the station had a fee to fill the tires and asked me, "Why in the world do they charge for AIR?!" I responded, "Inflation."

Please stop raining

After a prolonged drought when the rain came, all the animals in the forest were happy except the Kangaroo. When the others asked him what the reason was for such sadness, the Kangaroo revealed that the rain meant that all its kids would now be playing inside.

Smarty cat

I was visiting the house of a distant cousin when I saw that he was playing chess with his cat. I was so impressed, because the cat was studying the board and making strategic moves. I said to my cousin that it had to be the most intelligent cat ever. My cousin replied, "Absolutely not! She has lost every single match!"

Hey ... Over Here!

A cruise ship passes by a remote island, and all the passengers see a bearded man running around and waving his arms wildly. "Captain," one passenger asks, "who is that man over there?" "I have no idea," the captain says, "but he goes nuts every year when we pass him."

Somebody call the Crime Line

Britain's oldest woman turned 114 today. When asked the secret of her longevity, she attributed it to taking a walk at midnight every night. When quizzed on whether she was concerned about the increase in muggings in recent years, she said that she was not, and would continue mugging people as long as her health holds out.

God is watching

After Sunday church, the priest would hand us each an orange and a big cookie. A little girl once lied and took two oranges, but the priest told her she mustn't lie because God is watching. Then, the girl took two cookies and lied about it. When asked why she had done that, she said because she thought that God was only watching oranges.

Shhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh

I was in the library once when a man walked in asking for some ham and cheese. The librarian politely told him that he was in a library. The man first apologized and then whispered to the librarian, "Can I please have some ham and cheese?"