

Sisters in the Spirit
Ministries, Inc.



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Issue 6

Sisters in the Spirit Ministries Newsletter

Empowerment for the Christian Woman



Can Christians be "Woke"?

By Rev. Dr. Katrina White Brown

Stay Woke! These are simple words, yet they have become among the most controversial of this present time.

Just what does it mean to be "woke." More importantly, can Christians be "woke."

The Merriam-Webster dictionary identifies "woke" as a slang term meaning "being aware of and actively attentive to important facts and issues, especially issues of racial and social justice." On the surface, wokeness seems as though its focus is seeking justice and showing concern for the weak and oppressed. As Christians, these are things the Bible urges us to do. However, the concept of "wokeness" requires a much deeper dive below the surface.

"Wokeness" often embraces theories and ideologies inconsistent with or even hostile to the Bible. But many well-intentioned Christians - out of a desire to be compassionate, accepting, and loving - are succumbing to cultural pressure to adopt

"woke" ideology, without fully understanding what it means.

"Woke" means being conscious of injustice in society. A "woke" person is especially attentive to racial discrimination and the issues surrounding it. Although the word "woke" has been closely linked to the Black Lives Matter movement, it has a deeper history.

Being "woke" was first referenced and in a 1962 essay published in the New York Times called *If You're Woke You Dig It* by William Melvin Kelley. Being "woke" generally meant being well-informed in Black English, but it was also strongly aligned with political awareness, especially in the context of the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960's.

Singer and activist Erykah Badu is credited with helping to revive the term "woke" which she used in the lyrics of her 2008 song "Master Teacher."

Under the hashtag [#staywoke](#) on social

continues on page 6

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:

Praise Him

By Fanny Crosby

Praise Him, praise Him
Praise Him, praise Him
Jesus blessed savior
He's worthy to be praised
From the rising of the sun
Until the going down of the same
He is worthy Jesus is worthy
He's worthy to be praised

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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



In the neighborhood where I grew up, there were only a handful of girls and an overwhelming number of boys. Although I was definitely a “girly girl”, many times the only option I had was to play baseball, football, dodge ball, cowboys — whatever the boys played, I played.

The boys were always pretending that they had superpowers, modeling themselves after the television and comic book heroes of the day. Superman, Batman, The Green Hornet, Dick Tracy — anybody who could do the impossible — that’s who the boys pretended to be. I was left out of those games however, because there were no superheroes that looked like me. As the boys explained it, “girls can’t do anything special, cause they don’t have any superpowers. That’s why you never see a girl superheroes.” Although it was true that I didn’t see anyone who was African American and female appearing in any of the comic books we read or the television shows we watched, it was absolutely false that I had no superpowers.

Everybody is created with at least one superpower; better known as a spiritual gift. When you discover and develop your spiritual gifts, it will help you recognize your heroic identities and purposes.

We are all superheroes with superpowers. 1 Corinthians 12:4-11 explains: ⁴*There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them* ⁵*There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord.* ⁶*There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work.* ⁷*Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.* ⁸*To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit,* ⁹*to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit,¹⁰ to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues.* ¹¹*All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.* Our spiritual superpowers are God-given, and He is completely involved in empowering our gifts. Each one of us has a specialized role where we can best use our superpowers. Part of the excitement of following Christ is discovering how that superpower fits into God’s plan of salvation.

So, what’s your superpower? 1 Corinthians identifies wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, prophecy, distinguishing between spirits, speaking in tongues, and interpretation of tongues. If you are unsure about your spiritual gift, here are three principles to help you identify and develop your spiritual superpowers.

First, pray and ask for God’s Help. God loves to help us grow. **Ask** Him for clarity and it will be given to you; **Seek** His wisdom and you will find His purpose for your life; **Knock** on the door of knowledge - it will be opened to you. Matthew 7:7)

Second, look for opportunities to uplift and bless others. Our gifts are given to benefit others. Our spiritual superpowers enable us to serve the people around us and to fight off the temptation to use our gift only for ourselves. Our gifts are opportunities to be generous, strong, and helpful for others.

Third, don’t unfairly compare your gifts with those of others. It’s tragic when someone describes herself as having no talents or gifts.” Each of us is blessed with an inherent gift of the Spirit, and we can develop even more. But use what God has given you to make a difference in the lives of others.

In my Spirit for you my Sisters is that you be the Superhero God has called you to be. Identify, develop, and utilize your superpowers for the Lord as we continue to build the eternal Kingdom of God.

Love, Peace, and Blessings Always,

Katrina W. Brown



Has Many Causes - and One Remedy.

How to find freedom from cycles of self-loathing

By Abbey Wedgeworth

Jasmine L. Holmes is not a licensed counselor or psychologist. But she is a Christian woman who actively struggles with shame. In her newest book, *Never Cast Out: How the Gospel Puts an End to the Story of Shame*, she shares candid accounts of dealing with shame spirals and turning to the Bible for hope. I spoke with her about discerning the causes of shame and responding in spiritually profitable ways.

AW - How would you define shame, and what makes it such an important topic?

JH - My earliest memory is a memory of shame. I must have been two and a half years old. My mom told me “no” to something I had asked for. She said it gently, with a tone of *No, we’re not going to do that right now*. But I felt so terrible and wrong. And I remember thinking I shouldn’t have asked in the first place.



Jasmine L. Holmes

I had no idea, at that moment, that for the rest of my life I would experience that feeling in numerous ways. So when I talk about shame, I’m talking about that negative feeling, that feeling associated with being wrong, being bad, being not enough. It’s that feeling of wanting to hide.

Shame affects so many people, in ways big and small. And for this

book, I wanted to be careful to admit that my experiences of shame are small compared to what, say, abuse victims and survivors endure day to day. So I’m talking, if you will, about my little shame that follows me around every day, and I’m not trying to make light of the big shame others suffer.

AW - Why is it so important to attend to even our “little” experiences of shame?

JH - If we fail to recognize them, they compound—they grow. As a mom, for instance, you might have a moment, like I did this morning, of looking around and thinking, *Oh, my house is so dirty*. And I had to decide not to wallow. Otherwise, I might start thinking, *My house is dirty; therefore I’m a terrible mom, because I shouldn’t be working. If I were staying home with my kids full time ...*

And on and on it goes down this rabbit hole, this shame spiral. It takes my eyes off Jesus, off the Cross, and it puts me into this navel-gazing space where all I hear is this loud, intrusive voice saying, “You are bad.” Shame distracts us from kingdom work, and it also distracts us from biblical rest, which means resting in Christ. Shame, by contrast, keeps us

on a hamster wheel.

AW - You define three typical responses to shame as “false gospels.” What are they, and why don’t they work?

JH - The three false gospels are “Shake it off,” “Work it off,” and “Pass it off.” The “shake it off” attitude says that shame is always bad, and that I should just do what I want at all times. But of course we wouldn’t want to live in a society where no one is capable of shame.

“Work it off” means allowing shame to jerk us around. For instance, when I thought my house looked dirty, I could have said, “Well, I’d better get up and clean it. I need to do this the right way, or my kids will end up in therapy.” We obey the urgings of shame because we feel like there’s always a guillotine dangling over our heads. But we’re only quieting the voice of shame rather than dealing with the heart of the matter.

The instinct to “pass it off” was part of how I grew up in a hyper-conservative background, where the attitude was, *Yes, we do bad things, but at least we’re better than the world*. We can always think of someone whose house is dirtier—or fill in the blank. We pull others lower to make ourselves feel better. The problem with all of these approaches, however, is that shame is telling us something. It’s giving us a message. Maybe shame is telling us that we’ve done something wrong—or maybe not. Maybe it’s telling us to turn to Christ or to have a conversation with a mentor or friend. But whatever the message, ignoring shame is like ignoring a stomach ache and letting the underlying illness get worse and worse.

AW - What value does shame have in the Christian life or in the process of sanctification?

JH - Shame offers different opportunities. One is for repentance. If we’ve sinned and feel guilty, then shame points us toward the Cross, where we can confess our sins in the knowledge that Jesus has atoned for them. It leads us to say, “God, I have done this bad thing. And instead of running and hiding like Adam and Eve, I will run toward you and admit I messed up. And I will bask in your grace at the end of that.”

A second opportunity is for reorienting our hopes toward Jesus. The shame I feel over a dirty house, for instance, might reveal that I’ve made my house into an idol—something I lean on for the justification and righteousness only Jesus can provide.

AW - You write, “Sometimes the accuser uses our sin to fuel his accusations. Sometimes, though, he just uses our humanness.” How do these forms of shame—and their remedies—differ?



WHICH ONE OF THESE THINGS IS NOT LIKE THE OTHERS?

CAN YOU FIND THE ONE THING IN EACH GROUP THAT DOES NOT BELONG WITH THE REST?

CROSS OUT THE ONE THAT DOESN'T BELONG WITH THE REST OF THE GROUP

1. JERICHO, JERUSALEM, BILOXI, ATHENS, ROME, TARSUS (BIBLE TOWNS)
2. MARY, SUSANNA, LAZARUS, MARTHA (ONE FAMILY)
3. SIMEON, JUDAH, GAD, DAN, NAPHTALI, OMRI, BENJAMIN (PART OF A FAMILY)
4. SAUL, JONATHAN, SOLOMON, REHOBOAM, DAVID, HEZEKIAH (KINGS)
5. DARIUS, NEBUCHADNEZZAR, BENHADAD, REUBEN, PHAROAH (FOREIGN RULERS)
6. MIRIAM, NAAMAN, MARY MAGDALENE (WERE ONCE LEPERS)
7. ADONIJAH, SHADRACH, MESHACK, ABEDNEGO (DANIEL 'S FRIENDS)
8. PETER, ANDREW, JAMES, JOHN (JESUS ' INNER CIRCLE)
9. JUDAS, PHILIP, THOMAS, JAMES, SILAS (SOME OF JESUS ' DISCIPLES)
10. ABRAHAM, CALEB, SARAH, KETURAH, ISAAC, ISHMAEL, LOT (ABRAHAM 'S FAMILY)
11. JORDAN, NILE, PHARPAR, ARBANA, LEBANON, EUPHRATES (RIVERS)
12. OLIVE, SYCAMORE, CEDAR, FIG, REDWOOD, PALM (TREES IN ISRAEL)
13. JACOB, RUTH, LEAH, RACHEL, ZILPAH, BILHAH (JACOB 'S FAMILY)
14. SILAS, BARNABAS, JOHN, MARK, CYRUS, LUKE (PAUL 'S COMPANIONS)
15. AMOS, JAMES, HEBREWS, HEZEKIAH, JONAH, GENESIS (BOOKS OF THE BIBLE)

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The Brick



A young and successful executive was traveling down a neighborhood street, going a bit too fast in his new Jaguar. He was watching for kids darting out from between parked cars and slowed down when he thought he saw something.

As his car passed, no children appeared. Instead, a brick smashed into the Jag's side door! He slammed on the brakes and backed the Jag back to the spot where the brick had been thrown.

The angry driver then jumped out of the car, grabbed the nearest kid and pushed him up against a parked car shouting, "What was that all about and who are you? Just what the heck are you doing? That's a new car, and that brick you threw is going to cost a lot of money. Why did you do it?"

The young boy was apologetic. "Please, mister...please, I'm sorry but I didn't know what else to do" He pleaded. I threw the brick because no one else would stop..."

With tears dripping down his face and off his chin, the youth pointed to a spot just around a parked car. "It's my brother," he said. "He rolled off the curb and fell out of his wheelchair and I can't lift him up."

Now sobbing, the boy asked the stunned executive, "Would you please help me get him back into his wheelchair? He's hurt and he's too heavy for me."

Moved beyond words, the driver tried to swallow the rapidly swelling lump in his throat. He hurriedly lifted the handicapped boy back into the wheelchair, then took out a handkerchief and dabbed at the fresh scrapes and cuts. A quick look told him everything was going to be okay.

"Thank you and may God bless you," the grateful child told the stranger.

Too shook up for words, the man simply watched the boy push his wheelchair-bound brother down the sidewalk toward their home. It was a long, slow walk back to the Jaguar. The damage was very noticeable, but the driver never bothered to repair the dented side door. He kept the dent there to remind him of this message:

"Don't go through life so fast that someone has to throw a brick at you to get your attention."



- to spur on; impel; motivate.

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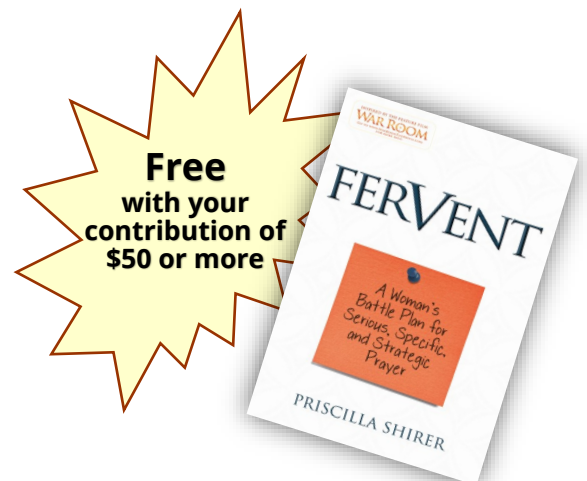
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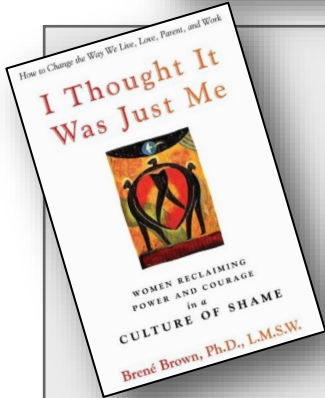
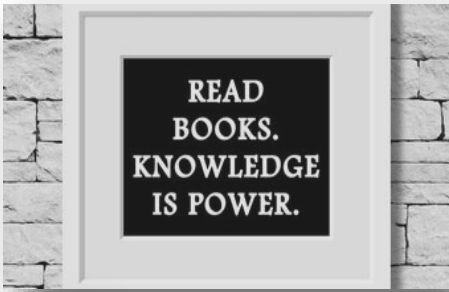
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CAN CHRISTIANS be "Woke"?

Continued from Page 1



I THOUGHT IT WAS JUST ME: WOMEN RECLAIMING POWER AND COURAGE IN A CULTURE OF SHAME BY BRENE BROWN

This book is an affirming, revealing examination of the painful effects of shame—with new, powerful strategies that promise to transform a woman's ability to love, parent, work, and build relationships.

Shame manifests itself in many ways. Addiction, perfectionism, fear and blame are just a few of the outward signs that Dr. Brené Brown discovered in her 6-year study of shame's effects on women. While shame is generally thought of as an emotion sequestered in the shadows of our psyches, *I Thought It Was Just Me* demonstrates the ways in which it is actually present in the most mundane and visible aspects of our lives—from our mental and physical health and body image to our relationships with our partners, our kids, our friends, our money, and our work.

After talking to hundreds of women and therapists, Dr. Brown is able to illuminate the myriad shaming influences that dominate our culture and explain why we are all vulnerable to shame. We live in a culture that tells us we must reject our bodies, reject our authentic stories, and ultimately reject our true selves in order to fit in and be accepted.

Outlining an empowering new approach that dispels judgment and awakens us to the genuine acceptance of ourselves and others, *I Thought It Was Just Me* begins a crucial new dialogue of hope. Through potent personal narratives and examples from real women, Brown identifies and explains four key elements that allow women to transform their shame into courage, compassion and connection. Shame is a dark and sad place in which to live a life, keeping us from connecting fully to our loved ones and being the women we were meant to be. But learning how to understand shame's influence and move through it toward full acceptance of ourselves and others takes away much of shame's power to harm.

It's not just you, you're not alone, and if you fight the daily battle of feeling like you are—somehow—just not "enough," you owe it to yourself to read this book and discover your infinite possibilities as a human being. *I Thought it was Just Me* is available at Amazon.com, Goodreads.com, and Christianbooks.com

media, "woke" took off in 2014 with the Black Lives Matter movement, ignited by the tragic shooting of two young, unarmed black men by police officers.

Among activists, "woke" and "stay woke" were cries not just to be aware of racial injustice, but to organize and mobilize to do something about it, referring to awareness of all other forms of injustice and oppression.

Biblically, the prophet Micah advised the Israelites about being "woke." He wrote in Micah 6:8 - *He has shown you, oh mortal, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.*

Act justly" would have been understood by Micah's audience as living with a sense of right and wrong. In particular, the judicial courts had a responsibility to provide equity and protect the innocent. "Love mercy" meant that along with justice, Israel was to provide mercy. Both justice and mercy are foundational to God's character "Walk humbly" is a description of the heart's attitude toward God. God's people depend on Him rather than their own abilities. Therefore, the response of a godly "woke" heart is outward (do justice), inward (love mercy), and upward (walk humbly). In this context, we as Christians not only can be "woke", we must "stay woke."

"Woke" Christians should keep three things in mind:

1. Acknowledge that racism in America has resulted in shame, injustice, and, at some points in history, terrible violence. Although we have come as far since the Civil War, racism still exists. There is still work to be done;
2. Understand that while laws and legislation guard the principle of equal rights for all Americans legally, no law can change the heart. Someone who is filled with prejudice and racial hatred will not suddenly be filled with love simply because a new law is passed. Unlike some who pursue change only at the legislative level, Christians know the evil of the human heart, and real justice is possible only when individuals have been justified in Christ. Only when we are saved can we live out the mandate "you shall love your neighbor as yourself" in the way taught by Christ;
3. Realize that real racial reconciliation in the Church occurs when we prioritize our identity in Christ over our belonging to a racial category or ethnicity. Members of the body of Christ should feel more at home in their Christian family than even in their own ethnicity. "*There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus*" (Galatians 3:28).

As Christians, we should be "woke" to the love of God for our family in Christ. *Anyone who hates a brother or sister is in the darkness and walks around in the darkness. They do not know where they are going, because the darkness has blinded them.* (1 John 2:11). We should be "woke" to the light of the gospel (2 Corinthians 4:4). We should be "woke" to the fact of temptation in the world (Matthew 26:41). We should be "woke" that we are reconciled with God and united to Christ (2 Corinthians 5:18), allowing us to be truly reconciled with one another.

Real change and real answers to the problems of racism, injustice, other societal evils are found in God's Word and in the peace He gives.





Has Many Causes - and One Remedy.

Continued from page 3

JH - We are so good at attaching moral weight to questions Scripture doesn't answer authoritatively, like when we get married or when to have kids or how many kids to have. These questions have moral dimensions, of course, but how we answer them doesn't determine our standing before God.

You can say the same about my dirty house. It could tell me lots of things. Perhaps I'm taking on too much—or I'm being lazy. Or maybe I'm just tired. Or maybe it's time to have a conversation with my husband about helping out. There could be sin involved, or just ordinary human limitations. In either case, the remedy is running to Jesus. Because sometimes we need forgiveness, but sometimes we just need security because we're weak and frail and groaning, like all of creation, for the return of Christ.

AW - **You were nervous about writing this book because, as you write, it might "open the floodgates for shame to come roaring into my life." How has it affected your own struggle with shame?**

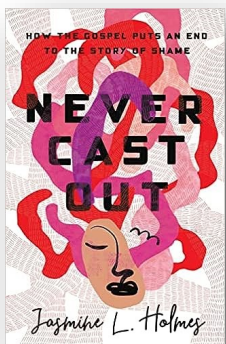
JH - It was weird to write about shame during a shame-filled season of life. As I was writing this book, I was in the depths of despair, first because I was pregnant and then because of postpartum depression and the balancing act of raising three kids. Shame was knocking on my door every day. My editor was such a rock throughout the process. She would say, "You're writing a book about shame, and the Enemy is constantly taunting, just reminding you of your insecurity. And we need to turn to Jesus with that." I joked with her that this is my last book of this nature—I don't need this spiritual growth again!

AW - **What is your greatest hope for people who read this book?**

JH - To see them set free, so they can cast their cares on Jesus because they know he cares for them, and they know he is ready and willing to forgive them.

It's worth repeating that not everyone deals with shame in the same way. For me, as someone diagnosed with depression, shame is something chronic, a rut I get stuck in. But anyone who gets stuck in that navel-gazing, self-loathing cycle can turn to Jesus and be free.

This article reprinted from Christianity Today Magazine.



Jasmine L. Holmes book is *Never Cast Out: How the Gospel Puts an End to the Story of Shame* available at Amazon.com



Saturday October 21, 2023
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Hampton, VA
9:00am - 3:45pm

Use this link for more information
<https://www.lifeway.com/en/events/going-beyond-live/going-beyond-hampton>

About Priscilla Shirer - She is a wife and mom first, but put a Bible in her hand and a message in her heart, and you'll see why thousands meet God in powerful, personal ways at her conferences and through her Bible Study resources. She is the New York Times Best Selling author of more than two dozen books and has had featured roles in movies like War Room (2015), I Can Only Imagine (2018), and Overcomer (2019).

Priscilla and her husband of 23 years, Jerry Shirer, lead *Going Beyond Ministries* through which they provide spiritual support and resources to the body of Christ. They count it as their greatest privilege to serve every denomination and culture across the spectrum of the Church.

Between writing and studying, you'll probably find Priscilla at home cleaning up after (and trying to satisfy the appetites of) her three rapidly growing teenage sons.

This is an event for women seeking Jesus!



Solution to
Which one of these things is not like the others?

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------|
| 1. BILOXI | 9. SILAS |
| 2. SUSANNA | 10. CALEB |
| 3. OMRI | 11. LEBANON |
| 4. JONATHAN | 12. REDWOOD |
| 5. REUBEN | 13. RUTH |
| 6. MARY MAGDALENE | 14. CYRUS |
| 7. ADONIJAH | 15. HEZEKIAH |
| 8. ANDREW | |



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

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Contact SIS

By mail:
Sisters in the Spirit Ministries
P.O. Box 649
Gloucester Point, VA 23062

By e-mail:
sistersinthespiritministries@gmail.com
or kawbrown@yahoo.com

The LAST Laugh



I miss my friends

Three friends stranded on a deserted island find a magic lamp. Inside it is a genie who agrees to grant each friend one wish. "I want to go home," says the first friend. The genie grants her wish. "I want to go home, too," says the second friend. And the genie sends her back home. "I'm lonely," says the third friend. "I sure wish my friends were back here."

A Long Celebration

A man and his wife are at a restaurant, and the husband keeps staring at an old drunken lady swigging her gin at a nearby table. His wife asks, "Do you know her?" "Yes," sighs the husband. "She's my ex-wife. She took to drinking right after we divorced seven years ago, and I hear she hasn't been sober since." "My God!" says the wife. "Who would think a person could go on celebrating that long?"

Road Kill

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) found over 200 dead crows on Highway 281 this past week, and there was concern that they may have died from the Coronavirus.

A veterinary epidemiologist examined the remains of all the crows, and, to everyone's relief, confirmed the problem was NOT Coronavirus (COVID-19). The cause of death was actually from vehicular impacts. However, during analysis it was noted that varying colors of paints appeared on the bird's beaks and claws. By analyzing these paint residues it was found that 98% of the crows had been killed by impact with trucks, while only 2% were killed by cars.

TxDOT then hired an Ornithological Behaviorist to determine if there was a cause for the disproportionate percentages of truck kills versus car kills. The Ornithological Behaviorist quickly concluded that when crows eat road kill, they always have a look-out crow to warn of danger. They discovered that while all the lookout crows could shout "Cah", "Cah" not a single one could shout "Truck"!!!

Penguin Holiday

A man was driving down the road when a policeman stopped him. The officer looked in the back of the man's truck and said, "Why are these penguins in your truck?" The man replied, "These are my penguins. They belong to me." "You need to take them to the zoo," the policeman said. The next day, the officer saw the same guy driving down the road. He pulled him over again. He saw the penguins were still in the truck, but they were wearing sunglasses this time. "I thought I told you to take these penguins to the zoo!", the officer said. "I did," the man replied. "And today I'm taking them to the beach."

The Evil Brother

There were two evil brothers. They were rich and used their money to keep their ways from the public eye. They even attended the same church and looked to be perfect Christians. Then, their pastor retired and a new one was hired. Not only could he see right through the brothers' deception, but he also spoke well and true, and the church started to swell in numbers. A fund-raising campaign was started to build a new assembly.

All of a sudden, one of the brothers died. The remaining brother sought out the new pastor the day before the funeral and handed him a check for the amount needed to finish paying for the new building. "I have only one condition," he said. "At his funeral, you must say my brother was a saint." The pastor gave his word and deposited the check.

The next day at the funeral, the pastor did not hold back. "He was an evil man," he said. "He cheated on his wife and abused his family." After going on in this vein for a small time, he concluded with: "but, compared to his brother, he was a saint."

No Fishing Allowed

A man goes out ice fishing one morning. He reaches the ice and is about to cut a hole in it when he hears a voice from above: "There are no fish here."

The fisherman is shocked but gets up and moves to another spot. As he's about to cut a hole, he hears a voice from above again, "There are no fish here either." He gets up and moves to a third spot. Before he's even finished walking, the voice says, "I'm telling you, there are no fish here."

The fisherman says, "God, how can you be so sure there aren't any fish here?" The voice replies, "This is the ice rink manager."