



Sisters in the Spirit Ministries Newsletter

Empowerment for the Christian Woman



By Rev. Dr. Katrina White Brown

For many, love comes down to one single day of the year - February 14th. This is the day when all the hearts and flowers, candy, pretty cards, gifts, and romance show up. It makes the recipients of these delightful tokens of affection smile, blush, beam with joy, and after all, that's what Valentine's Day is all about...right? At least, that's what the celebration has become in our modern-day society. But what is the real story behind Valentine's Day, and is it truly all about love?

Most sources believe that Saint Valentine's Day began with a feast in honor of an early Christian martyr named Valentinus. It is celebrated in mid-February to coincide with his burial. Saint Valentinus is remembered as a loving, compassionate and heroic person.

He was a priest during the time when the Roman Emperor Claudius II was perse-

cuting the church, around 250 AD. Claudius had issued an edict designed to strengthen the Roman Army. He mandated that young men were not to marry, as single men made better soldiers. They would not be distracted by thoughts and care of their loved ones, and could focus on their call to duty.

Valentinus believed those who were in love should be able to marry within the Christian church and he defied the emperor's orders by performing marriages in secret. He was caught, imprisoned, tortured and eventually killed for performing forbidden marriages and for ministering to Christians.

The legend is that while Valentinus was in prison, he prayed with and saw the healing of the blind daughter of his jailer Asterius. Asterius and his entire household are said to have come to Christian faith as a result. It is widely believed that

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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 chorus of:

Addicted Love

by BeBe and CeCe Winans

Time to admit
Time we should admit it
I'm so addicted, yeah
You see, He's taken my heart
And showed me the right way
No doubt about it
Doubt it, no doubt
See, I'm lost without it, yeah
You see this love takes me higher
I didn't know why then
I found it was addictive love, yeah

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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 is a really special day for a lot of my friends. They look forward to receiving chocolates, or flowers, or romantic cards—all designed as expressions of love. By the same token, Valentine's Day is also one of the saddest days of the year for other of my friends who aren't in romantic relationships. They experience feelings of loneliness and some of them get downright depressed because they have no one lavishing them with sentimental gifts or tokens of affection.

About ten years ago, women started celebrating *Galentine's Day* as a day when "ladies celebrate ladies." It was first mentioned in the popular television sitcom *Parks and Recreation*. *Galentine's Day* happens on February 13th and it is all about celebrating the friendships shared with women friends and reveling in the fun of those relationships.

For me, Valentine's Day is a 365 day (366 when its Leap Year) celebration, because its all about love. There has not been one single day of my life when I was not loved. But I didn't always understand that. Back in the day Valentines Day was the make or break day that determined how cool, popular, well-liked - or not, you were in school.

As a young girl I delighted in sending and receiving Valentines Day cards. My Mom and I would go to my favorite 5 & 10 store and get a box of 30 cards with the cutest (non-romantic) messages on them; enough for everybody in my class and the teacher. Then we would get endless boxes of Conversation Hearts - little heart-shaped candies made of pure sugar and printed with corny, but endearing blurbs. And, at the end of the day, my classmates and I would always look forward to our Valentines Day party where we exchanged cards and feasted on the cupcakes baked by somebody's Mom. What fun!

As I got older, Valentines Day became a cruel yardstick for approval and acceptance. It was a pressure cooker for both males and females. The girls who didn't get teddy bears, or candy in heart-shaped boxes, or multitudes of cards were made to feel ashamed and embarrassed; the guys who failed to meet Valentine expectations were unmercifully tormented. It was just too much, and I lost all appreciation for the day because I didn't want any part of that stress.

But the tradition of giving gifts, candy, flowers, and romantic cards have been deeply engrained in our culture, especially for the men, so when I told my soon-to-be husband that I just didn't require all of the usual Valentines Day trappings, he was somewhat reluctant to believe me. We both agreed that showing love using gifts and cards and romantic outings didn't need a specific day - we do this for each other throughout the year.

Valentines Day cards are not the yardstick for the measurement of love - the heart is. Even so, God has sent us the ultimate love letter. Its called the Bible, and from beginning to end it tells of the great love God has for us. Because the entire Bible is about Jesus, it is a testimony to the fact that "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16)

In my Spirit for you my sisters, is that you accept God's invitation to be His Valentine. No, it doesn't come with flowers, or chocolates, or gift baskets chocked full of perfumes and lotions, but when you are God's Valentine, His love is unconditional, and He will never leave you nor forsake you. And, it goes far beyond February 14th - it's for eternity!

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



How can you mend a broken heart?
 How can you stop the rain from falling down?
 How can you stop the sun from shining?
 What makes the world go round?
 How can you mend this broken man?
 How can a loser ever win?
 Please help me mend my broken heart
 and let me live again

By Rev. Dr. Katrina W. Brown

When the Bee Gees released “How Can You Mend a Broken Heart” in 1971, it shot up the charts to become #1. However, the song provided no answers for fixing the heart. And, the writers didn’t seem to consider the Lord as a healing balm for a heart that’s been broken. Perhaps the Bee Gees didn’t know the healing power that comes with having faith in the Lord.

But the two women featured in this story have a different testimony. Both of them turned to their faith in God for their healing after their hearts were torn to pieces. Although the names in these stories have been changed to protect identities, their witness to God’s healing power is authentic.



ELAINE’S STORY

Elaine had been in a 10 year relationship with the man that she felt comfortable calling the love of her life. In her mind and heart, it was just a matter of time before she and “Steve” were headed to the altar. But after a decade of being together,

Elaine experienced a difficult and extremely painful breakup from Steve. “I actually didn’t see it coming,” she said. “But all of a sudden I was back in that place of insecurity, uncertainty, and fear that I was in when my first marriage broke up.”

Prior to her relationship with Steve, Elaine had been married for a short time to a man who physically abused her. That relationship ended in divorce; Elaine got out for her own safety and that of her son. “Once again I had a big hole in my life where a man had once been, but I had an even bigger hole in my heart where love had once been,” Elaine acknowledged. “He just left me with a broken heart.”

She tried everything to fill the hole in her heart. “I went out a lot to meet guys, I was drinking, I was doing my best to just stay busy, but none of that helped. It also didn’t help when my friends kept telling me not to worry cause there was someone out there for me. The longer I was alone, the worse I felt. I started thinking that I was damaged and that no one would ever want me.” It was only through Jesus that Elaine finally realized healing.

“It took me a while to realize how God had surrounded me with an amazing support system of loving, caring, and listening friends. They reminded me that I was still loved, I was worthy, and that God had never left me.” She also wrote about her feelings regularly in her journal. Most im-

portantly, she leaned heavily on God’s Word. “The scripture that was especially meaningful was Jeremiah 29:11, *for I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, to give you a hope and a future.* It took a while, but I came to realize that it’s ok to be single. It doesn’t make me unwanted or unloved. God can use us no matter what, and being single is actually a blessing in ways I never knew.”

Elaine’s advise for healing from a broken heart: “don’t sit around waiting for validation from a man when you have healing that needs to take place. God would not want us staying in a place of hurt when His plans for us are good. We just have to trust and depend that He knows best.”

RACHEL’S STORY

Divorce was never an option in Rachel’s mind. She believed that being married pleased God, and besides, she didn’t want to face life without a partner. Yet, divorce was exactly what happened. After eighteen years of marriage, Rachel learned that her husband “Rick” had a very dark side that involved young girls. But the process had started way before this revelation took place. Rick had started treating Rachel and their children with disrespect and downright scorn. He had become a person that she didn’t know, and in truth, one that she didn’t want to know. Rick beat her down mentally and emotionally, and made her life hell. By the time the divorce happened, she believed that she was unlovable; that there was something wrong with her; and that she would never find love again.

“It wasn’t easy. My heart was not just broken, it had been ripped out of my body. It was only because of God that I was able to go on,” said Rachel.

Scripture played an important part in her healing, along with the stories of broken women in the Bible. “Psalm 31 spoke directly to me: *“be merciful to me, LORD, for I am in distress; my eyes grow weak with sorrow, my soul and body with grief. My life is consumed by anguish, and my years by groaning; my strength fails because of my affliction, and my bones grow weak. Because of all my enemies, I am the utter contempt of my neighbors and an object of dread to my closest friends - those who see me on the street flee from me. I am forgotten as though I were dead; I have become like broken pottery.* (Psalm 31:9-12) I felt as



continues on page 6

Valentine's Day

Unscramble these words in search of Valentine's Day love

7
U
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n

1. EVCOSIAONNRT RTHSAE _____
2. RACD _____
3. HSLOOCECTA _____
4. ESETCR MDIARRE _____
5. ICDPU _____
6. BRREYAUF _____
7. RHSTAE DNA FOWSRLE _____
8. DNRIPFEHSI _____
9. UHSG AND SSSKEI _____
10. VLOE _____
11. FCYNA DRNIEN _____
12. RETOVIFA ADY _____
13. EESPRNTS _____
14. WAER DER _____
15. EOSSR _____
16. ESEWT HETRA _____
17. ACEDLSN _____
18. PCSILAE _____
19. EVALIESNNT _____
20. DEDTY BAER _____
21. OARNCME _____
22. NOLIOHMTG _____

Word Bank

CARD	CUPID	HEARTS AND FLOWERS	ROSES
SPECIAL	SECRET ADMIRER	PRESENTS	FRIENDSHIP
SWEET HEART	HUGS AND KISSES	WEAR RED	CONVERSATION HEARTS
FEBRUARY	VALENTINES	CHOCOLATES	TEDDY BEAR
FAVORITE DAY	LOVE	ROMANCE	FANCY DINNER
CANDLES	MOONLIGHT		



INFLATION IS KILLING MY BUDGET!!!

If you are spending more but getting less, you're not alone. Inflation is making life miserable for a lot of people. Every day the news headlines confirm that prices for goods and services are going up. Although you may not be able to control the prices, you can have better control over how these rising costs are impacting your budget.

WHAT IS INFLATION?

Inflation is the rate of increase in prices over a given period of time. It is typically a broad measure, such as the overall increase in prices or

the increase in the cost of living in the country. Inflation represents how much more expensive goods and/or services have become over a certain period, most commonly a year. It is a measure of change. For example, to say that the inflation rate is 2% means that prices have increased by 2%.

Dealing with higher prices means being more strategic about how you spend. Learning how to budget for periods of higher inflation can potentially save you money. Take steps to protect yourself from inflation's worst impacts. Start by looking at your short and long term financial plans to see what adjustments you might need to make.

Think about deferring a home improvement project or perhaps taking a staycation at home instead of traveling. Or, effective fighting inflation might require that you something more extreme, like taking on a second job or starting a side business. However having a budget to follow can make your inflation-proofing plan work. Here are some cost-saving considerations:

STREAMLINE YOUR MORTGAGE COSTS - If you own your home, your mortgage may be one of your biggest budgeting costs. You may have an opportunity to reap savings by refinancing. To determine if refinancing makes sense, first consider what rates you're likely to qualify for based on your credit score and income. Then, compare that to your current interest rate. A mortgage refinance calculator can help you run the numbers. If you're not in a position to refinance your mortgage, here's another possibility for saving: Shop around for a better deal on homeowners insurance. Finding a less expensive policy could help shrink your budget and save money.

REDUCE RATES ON OTHER DEBTS -If you have credit card debt, look for 0% APR balance transfer offers or low interest personal loans from your bank. A 0% balance transfer can give you time to pay back what you owe interest-free. Personal loans, meanwhile, can help you consolidate high-interest debts at a lower fixed rate. Refinancing student loans could help you secure a lower rate, making monthly payments more manageable.

COMPLETE A HOME ENERGY AUDIT - Energy prices are a major driver of inflation. When energy sources: coal, natural gas, heating oil and electricity, cost more, the cost of producing and transporting consumer goods also goes up. The companies that produce or move those goods pass the higher prices on to consumers. Budgeting for higher prices means considering how much energy you're using at home and finding ways to curb costs as much as possible. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, some simple ways to reduce energy usage at home or on the road include: sealing air leaks around windows and doors; having your HVAC system cleaned and serviced in spring and fall; using energy-efficient lightbulbs; setting your thermostat lower in winter and higher in summer; unplugging electronics when not in use; keeping your tires properly inflated; carpooling to share fuel costs; consolidating trips in the car, and driving the speed limit. If you're struggling with higher energy prices, you may consider looking into the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program. This program provides eligible households with financial help in paying heating and cooling bills.

ELIMINATE UNNECESSARY SUBSCRIPTIONS AND FEES - According to research, the average household has more than 4 streaming services and spends an average of \$55 on them per month. This adds up to more than \$600 per year. If you're trying to cut expenses, this can be a good place to start. Also, switching banks is something else you might consider. On average, checking account fees may be costing you \$32 per month or nearly \$400 per year. Changing banks or finding a new checking account could be a good way to add money back to your budget when trying to offset inflation.

SHOP SMARTER AT THE GROCERY STORE - Swap out brand-name items for generic products as much as possible; buy in bulk wherever possible because it allows you to purchase items at a lower unit price; incorporate more meatless meals into your family's diet; use grocery store weekly sales flyers to plan budget-friendly meals; shop local farmers' markets where you can; and incorporate more low-cost staple items into your meals, such as pasta or rice.

Rising inflation can be challenging for your family budget, but knowing how to prepare for it can help you weather the financial storm it creates.

Information for this article came from the Forbes Advisor www.forbes.com

THE LORD'S HOME RUN



Amanda and the Lord stood by to observe a baseball game. The Lord's team was playing Satan's team. The Lord's team was at bat, the score was tied zero to zero, and it was the bottom of the 9th inning with two outs. They continued to watch as a batter stepped up to the plate named "Love." Love swung at the first pitch and hit a single, because "Love never fails." The next batter was named Faith, who also got a single because Faith works with Love.

The next batter up was named Godly Wisdom. Satan wound up and threw the first pitch. Godly Wisdom looked it over and let it pass - ball one. Three more pitches and Godly Wisdom walked because she never swings at what Satan throws.

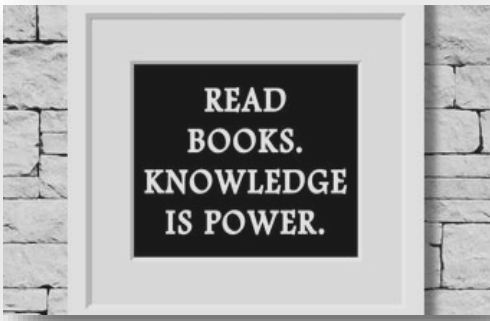
The bases were now loaded. The Lord then turned to Amanda and told her He was now going to bring in His star player. Up to the plate stepped Grace. Amanda said, "she sure doesn't look like much!"

Satan's whole team relaxed when they saw Grace. Thinking that there was no way he could lose, Satan wound up and fired his first pitch. To the shock of everyone, Grace hit the ball harder than anyone had ever seen! However, Satan was not worried; his center fielder let very few get by. Satan's outfielder went up for the ball, but it went right through his glove, hit him on the head and sent him crashing on the ground. The roaring crowds went wild as the ball continued over the fence for a home run!

The Lord's team won!

The Lord then asked Amanda if she knew why Love, Faith, and Godly Wisdom could get on base but couldn't win the game. Amanda answered that she didn't know why. The Lord explained, "if your love, faith, and wisdom had won the game, you would think you had done it by yourself. Love, Faith, and Wisdom will get you on base, but only My Grace can get you Home.

"For by Grace are you saved, it is a gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast." (Ephesians 2:8-9)
"For the Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord will give grace and glory; no good thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly." (Psalm 84:11)



It's All About Love

Continued from page 1

before his execution, Valentinus wrote a farewell letter to Asterius' daughter, and signed it "Your Valentine." This was the first valentine.

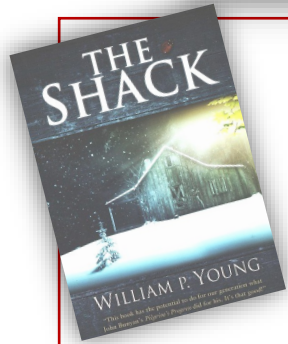
Valentine's Day holds many expectations, but sometimes these expectations don't always match reality. There may be no flowers, candy, card or romantic meal given or received. And February 14th comes and goes like any other day.

But we should seize this day, along with every other day, to celebrate. Why? Because God created us to love, to express that love to others, and to receive love. And, He gave the greatest example of what love is, by giving up His only son for us. Romans 5:8 tells us that "...God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. God loves us that much.

Scripture overflows with references to God's great, enduring and abounding love. For example, I John 4 details the depth of God's love and his commandment to love others. Valentine's Day is a great day to demonstrate that kind of love by sharing it with family, friends, neighbors and more. This is a great day to reach out to widows and widowers, nursing home residents, those with incarcerated family members ... there are endless opportunities to experience the joy in sharing love; both for the giver and the recipient.

Showing love doesn't need to be complex or expensive. Making a phone call, sending a greeting card or text message, or reaching out with a listening ear and an open heart - these are ways of communicating love all year long. Valentine's Day doesn't need to be limited to one day, because love should not be limited to a date on the calendar. Find a way to show love to someone else every day, and use this Valentine's Day as a catalyst for action. And let your words and actions flow from a Christ-filled heart.

It's all about love. "*Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God.* (1 John 4:7).



THE SHACK BY WILLIAM P. YOUNG

This column seldom reviews Christian fiction. However *The Shack* is truly worth reading. Written in 2007 and made into a movie ten years later in 2017, the book definitely provides opportunities for theological discussion,

but more than that, it creates thought provoking challenges to how the reader may perceive the image of God, and why God does what God does.

The story is a simple one. Main character Mackenzie "Mack" Allen Philips is on a camping trip in Oregon with his three young children, when his youngest daughter, Missy, is kidnapped and brutally murdered. Evidence of her death is found in an abandoned shack. The vicious murder rips the young family apart, and when the story resumes four years later, Mack is drifting and grief-stricken. He receives a typewritten letter from someone called "Papa," his wife's nickname for God, inviting him to meet at the shack.

Initially, he writes it off as the joke of a particularly sadistic prankster. But eventually — despite his misgivings — he risks everything and goes. What follows are scenes of redemption, of trying to make sense out of suffering and loss, of grace, and of love. Mack meets God at the shack, but in ways he'd never imagined before.

William Young's depiction of the Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit are unusual and invigorating; part of the charm and uniqueness of the book. Young asks us to rethink our assumptions about God, to see with new eyes and hear with new ears those things that we've seen and heard many times before, and to risk being uncomfortable with what we read. It's an eye-opening moment when God appears to Mack as a "big Black woman with a questionable sense of humor," the Holy Spirit as an Asian woman named Sarayu, and Jesus as a Middle Eastern laborer. Then imagine if you could ask "God in three persons" your hardest questions face to face. Compelling to think about, isn't it? "If you couldn't take care of Missy, how can I trust you to take care of me?" Mack asks God in one poignant conversation.

The Shack is a story with the potential to wake readers up, to rekindle or reinvigorate their faith. In an era when so much Christian fiction is about pat answers, conventional themes, and the regurgitation of what we already know and believe, this story is good news for thoughtful readers.

Reviewed by Cindy Crosby. The Shack is available at amazon.com and at Christianbooks.com

Healing from a Broken Heart

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though these words were written specifically about me." Rachel said that along with God's Word, music also helped her. "Songs that were especially meaningful were "Through it all" and "His Eye is on the Sparrow."

Healing doesn't necessarily come with a how-to manual, and Rachel says she did make a critical mistake during her healing process. "I pulled away from people. I isolated myself and I refused to do things that I had at one time enjoyed. I wasn't doing fun things any more. I was experiencing feelings that I was nothing without a man. However, I knew healing was taking place when one day I realized that I did not need a man to walk alongside me because I had Jesus. He is my Rock and will never leave me."

Rachel's advise for healing from a broken heart is this: "understand that God's love and healing is real. Know that you are worthy, know that your brokenness can be healed. Your circumstances may or may not change but who you are can. How you respond, how you live and what you believe, will shape your life. Trust God in all things and He will get you through."

Give a Gift from the Heart

Your financial blessings will help Sisters in the Spirit continue to Empower, Encourage, and Educate Christian Women in better serving the Lord

We need your financial support. With your help, we can do more in ministering to the needs of God's people, especially women. As a financial partner, you help us with these programs:

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Rev. Dr. Katrina Brown is a featured speaker at

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Valentine's Day solution

1. EVCOSIAONNRT RTHSAE CONVERSATION HEARTS
2. RACD CARD
3. HSLOOCECTA CHOCOLATES
4. ESETCR MDIARRE SECRET ADMIRER
5. ICDPU CUPID
6. BRREYAUF FEBRUARY
7. RHSTAE DNA FOWSRLE HEARTS AND FLOWERS
8. DNRIPEHSI FRIENDSHIP
9. UHSG AND SSSKEI HUGS AND KISSES
10. VLOE LOVE
11. FCYNA DRNIEN FANCY DINNER
12. RETOVIFA ADY FAVORITE DAY
13. EESPRNTS PRESENTS
14. WAER DER WEAR RED
15. EOSSR ROSES
16. ESEWT HETRA SWEET HEART
17. ACEDLSN CANDLES
18. PCSILAE SPECIAL
19. EVALIESNNT VALENTINES
20. DEDTY BAER TEDDY BEAR
21. OARNCME ROMANCE
22. NOLIOHMTG MOONLIGHT

Being a woman in church leadership can be difficult, and you probably feel overwhelmed and overlooked sometimes. We believe you shouldn't feel alone in ministry. We've collaborated with women in leadership all across the country and asked them to share their knowledge and experiences.

We often put limitations on ourselves and believe we are incapable of things that are before us. God may be calling you to something bigger, something greater, and the only thing standing in the way is you.

Join us as we learn what it means to answer God's calling and lead others as we follow Him.

Don't miss out on this incredible opportunity to connect with other women in church leadership and learn from our incredible speakers. Rev. Dr. Katrina W. Brown, Founder and President of Sisters in the Spirit Ministries, Inc. is one of the featured speakers on Day One, Wednesday March 15th, of the She Leads Women in Church Leadership Summit.

Registration is free at SheLeadsChurch.com

Register for Free | SheLeadsChurch.com

She Leads Church **purpose**
A Summit For Women in Church Leadership

March 15-16, 2023 | ONLINE EVENT



Sisters in the Spirit Newsletter

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Visit our website:
sistersinthespirit.org



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THE LAST LAUGH



God in the driver's seat

The story of Adam and Eve was being carefully explained in the children's Sunday School class. Following the story, the children were asked to draw a picture that would illustrate the story. Little Bobby drew a picture of a car with three people in it. In the front seat was a man and in the back seat, a man and a woman. The teacher was at a loss to understand how this illustrated the lesson of Adam and Eve. Little Bobby was prompt with his explanation. "Why, this is God driving Adam and Eve out of the garden!"

Cat Heaven

A cat dies and goes to Heaven. God meets him at the gate and says, "you have been a good cat all of these years. Anything you desire is yours, all you have to do is ask." The cat says, "well, I lived all my life with a poor family on a farm and had to sleep on hardwood floors." God says, "say no more." Instantly, a fluffy pillow appears.

A few days later, 6 mice are killed in a tragic accident and they go to Heaven. God meets them at the gate with the same offer that He made the cat. The mice said, "all our lives we've had to run. Cats, dogs and even women with brooms have chased us. If we could only have a pair of roller skates, we wouldn't have to run anymore." God replies "say no more." Instantly, each mouse is fitted with a beautiful pair of tiny roller skates.

About a week later, God decides to check and see how the cat is doing. The cat is sound asleep on his new pillow. God gently wakes him and asks, "how are you doing? Are you happy here?" The cat yawns and stretches and says, "oh I've never been happier in my life. And those Meals on Wheels you've been sending over are the best!"

Mistaken Identity

A man was being tailgated by a stressed out woman on a busy boulevard. Suddenly, the light turned yellow, just in front of him. He did the right thing, stopping at the crosswalk, even though he could have beaten the red light by accelerating through the intersection. The tailgating woman was furious and honked her horn, screaming in frustration as she missed her chance to get through the intersection, dropping her cell phone and makeup.

As she was still in mid-rant, she heard a tap on her window and looked up into the face of a very serious police officer. The officer ordered her to exit her car with her hands up. He took her to the police station where she was searched, finger printed, photographed, and placed in a holding cell. After a couple of hours, a policeman approached the cell and opened the door. She was escorted back to the booking desk where the arresting officer was waiting with her personal effects.

He said, "I'm very sorry for this mistake. You see, I pulled up behind your car while you were blowing your horn, flipping off the guy in front of you, and cussing a blue streak at him. I noticed the 'What Would Jesus Do' bumper sticker, the 'Choose Life' license plate holder, the 'Follow Me to Sunday-School' bumper sticker, and the chrome-plated Christian fish emblem on the trunk. Naturally I assumed you had stolen the car."

He gets results!

A minister dies and is waiting in line at the Pearly Gates. Ahead of him is a guy who's dressed in sunglasses, a loud shirt, leather jacket, and jeans. Saint Peter addresses this guy, "Who are you, so that I may know whether or not to admit you to the Kingdom of Heaven?" The guy replies, "I'm Joe Cohen, taxi driver, of New York City." St. Peter consults his list. He smiles and says to the taxi driver, "take this silken robe and golden staff and enter the Kingdom of Heaven."

The taxi driver goes into Heaven with his robe and staff, and it's the minister's turn. He stands erect and booms out, "I am Joseph Snow, pastor of Calvary Church for the last forty-three years." St Peter consults his list.

He says to the minister, "take this cotton robe and wooden staff and enter the Kingdom of Heaven." "Just a minute," says the minister. "That man was a taxi driver, and he gets a silken robe and golden staff. How can this be?" "Up here, we work by results," says Saint Peter. "While you preached, people slept, while he drove, people prayed."