



Sisters in the Spirit Ministries Newsletter

Empowerment for the Christian Woman

The Gratitude Attitude

COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS

A Joyful 'toon by Mike Waters



Praise the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits—
— PSALM 103:2 NIV

By Rev. Dr. Katrina White Brown

Here's another way of describing the gratitude attitude - call it anyhow thanks. No matter what happens, give thanks anyhow. No matter what your situation looks like, give thanks anyhow. Even when it seems like your whole world has fallen apart, give thanks anyhow.

When you have a relationship with the Lord, the gratitude attitude gives you the ability to "rejoice always, pray continually, and give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)

Now, before you start developing feelings of inadequacy because you aren't "considering it pure joy, my brothers and sisters when you face trials of many

kinds," like the Apostle James did, (James 1:2) know that life will always run interference to keep you from giving thanks in all things. And there's been a lot of that going on in 2021. Many of the faithful of God have had some devastating events occur this year: the death of parents, spouses, siblings, and children; the diagnosis of cancer, Alzheimer's Disease, COVID 19, heart disease, kidney failure, and diabetes requiring amputation of limbs; the loss of housing due to fire, flood, and lack of finances; and the betrayal of beliefs as we all watched the assault on the U.S. Capitol, on the rights of peaceful protesters, and the abuse of power and authority. The gratitude atti-

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 the chorus of:

Take Me to the King
By Tamla Mann

*Take me to the King
I don't have much to bring
My heart is torn to pieces
It's my offering
Take me to the King*

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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



Sisters, do you have a favorite scripture? One that you go to for empowerment, encouragement, or enlightenment? One of my favorites comes from the book of Esther - 4:14. It's one of only two books in the Bible that bears a woman's name, and it is an amazing example of God's sovereignty and loving care for His people.

Here's a brief overview of the book: The King of Persia got rid of his wife Queen Vashti because she wouldn't allow herself to be demeaned and devalued by him. She was a beautiful woman and the king mandated that she parade around in front of his friends in the nude, to show off her beauty. After the king banishes Queen Vashti for her disobedience, he is in need of a new queen. He sees the beautiful Esther among the Hebrew slaves, and immediately falls for her.

Esther becomes the Queen of Persia. It happened during the time that the Jews were being persecuted in that country. She was the queen, yet she risked her own life to stand up for the lives of her people. Reading Esther we can be encouraged to know that God has a time and purpose for all things that happen in our lives if we just trust Him.

When paraphrased, Esther 4:14 convicts the queen to act. Her uncle pointed out to her that by keeping quiet at a time like this; a time when her people needed her abilities, was of no value. Her uncle told her that deliverance and relief for the Jews will arise from some other place, but you and your relatives will die. She then understands that "perhaps you were made queen for just such a time as this."

For such a time as this. All things happen in God's time and for God's purpose, whether or not you are a believer. Those of us who have faith in God know that God's time is not our time, but God's time is always on time. My mother's generation explained that God may not come when you want Him, but He's always right on time. There is purpose in God's timing.

Sisters, I want to encourage you to know that you are either being prepared or you have been prepared for such a time as this. We have all had a rough season in one way or the other, and it may continue for a little while longer or even a lot longer. But know this - God is in the midst of it all. God knows us better than we know ourselves, and He always has us in His heart and mind. Whatever you are dealing with, remember that you have what you need "for such a time as this."

The passage doesn't mean that you won't feel uncertain, anxious, or even fearful about the times we are in. But Sisters, trust and believe that there is nothing that you can't handle in this, or any other time, because God has promised to supply all of our needs.

In my spirit for my Sisters, is that you be empowered by the knowledge that you can make, even in such a time as this.

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

Using My Voice to Share My 16-Year Journey

By Chanell Burnette

*Fluvanna Correctional
Center for Women*



Editor's Note: I first learned about Sister Chanell from one of our Newsletter readers who is engaged in prison ministry. She has befriended Sister Chanell and gets SIS Newsletters to her.

Sister Chanell told our reader about her goal of becoming a writer. Chanell's aspiration is to be a journalist upon her release from incarceration; scheduled for 2024. In fact, Sister Chanell is participating with the Prison Journalism Project (PJP). The story that appears here, *Using My Voice to Share My 16-Year Journey* was written by Sister Chanell and was originally published by the PJP.

In corresponding with Sister Chanell, I invited her to submit her writings for publication in the SIS Newsletter. Her beautiful piece entitled "*Breathe*" is printed on page 5.

Jesus said to His disciples "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." (Matthew 25: 35-36) Jesus was simply saying to treat all people we encounter as if they were Jesus. This is no easy task, but what we do for others demonstrates the love that "makes disciples of all nations." So, feed the hungry; give the homeless a place to stay; care for the sick; and visit those in prison.

With almost 10,000 women incarcerated in jails or prisons in Virginia alone, we all have abundant opportunities to show God's love by reaching out to those who are imprisoned. Write letters; donate needed items - for example white socks are always appreciated; and talk to correction department officials about the possibility of doing a prayer and praise service at a correctional facility.

To contact Sister Chanell send your letters to:

Chanell Burnette #1188812
6A-216B FCCW
P.O. Box 1000
Troy, VA 22974

My voice is all I have and my words are my power, the weapon I use to shape my destiny. I choose my words very carefully to impact those who read them.

I have recently begun to lift my voice up and share my journey through these past 16 years of incarceration. I share my peregrination in hopes of providing insight into the real prison experience — the pain, the heartache, the desperation. This is the part of the story often left untold.

As I look around the Fluvanna Correctional Center for Women, I am deeply troubled by the things that I see.

This change is in part because the prison population has grown younger. Society is incarcerating babies. They are locking away children who are doomed to spend a nonsensical amount of time trapped behind bars. They are children who may have lost their parents to the carceral system, some for decades.

Growing up without parents is traumatizing for a child, and many do not share their experiences with others. Instead, that pain stays bottled up inside until the fateful day it explodes, resulting in their own encounter with the justice system. Poor kids (my own included).

I don't know how we fix this, but it could start with a little bit of

compassion. Those placed in a position of authority over us must lead by example. This is not what currently occurs behind these walls. If those in charge make clear that they do not care about us, then how can they expect us to care for one another?

The sad reality is that they do not care if we care for one another, either. Our lives do not matter to the administration. This attitude trickles down the line right into the inmate population.

I find myself severely disturbed by the things that I witness on a daily basis.

It is true that incarceration is an uphill battle and only the strong survive. You can allow it to make or break you: The choice is ultimately yours.

But too many are sinking all around me. I chose to swim because I have two wonderful sons to be an example for. Growing up without me has been devastating enough, so I choose to show them that it is possible for good to arise out of a bad situation. Disappointing them or my family again is not an option.

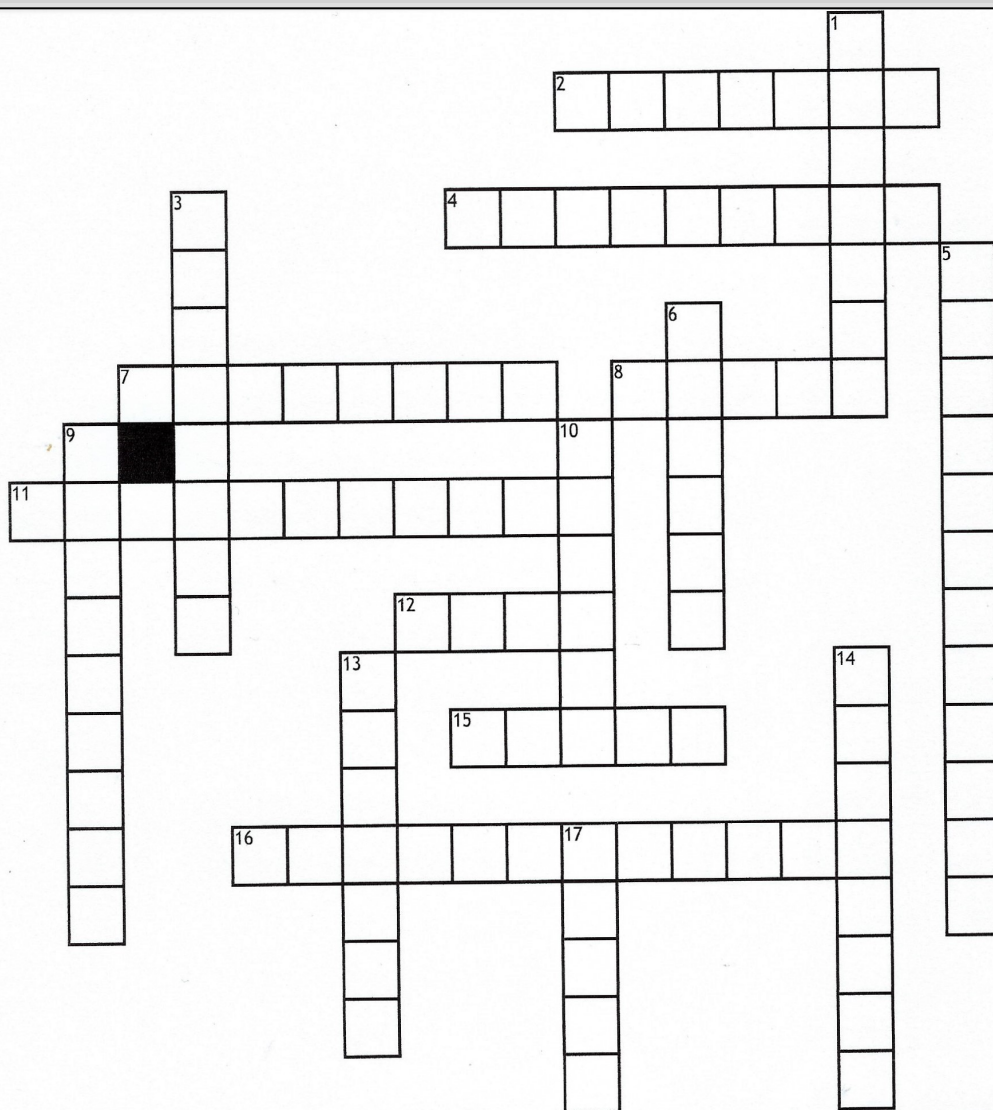
Society already marginalizes those of us who have been to prison. I don't ever want my children or my family to be weighed down by the title society will place on me — ex-con, ex-felon. I

Continues on page 5

Psalms of Thanksgiving

This crossword puzzle is full of thanksgiving!

Just for Fun



Across

2. Therefore will I give thanks unto thee, O Lord, among the _____, and sing praises to your name (Ps. 18:49)
 4. I will offer to you the _____ of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the Lord (Ps. 116:17)
 7. At _____ I will rise to give thanks unto you because of your righteous judgements (Ps. 119:62)
 8. Unto you, O God, do we give thanks, for that your name is near your wondrous _____ declare (Ps. 75:1)
 11. Rejoice in the Lord, you righteous; and give thanks at the _____ of His holiness (Ps. 97:12)
 12. Sing unto the Lord with thanksgiving; sing praise upon the _____ unto our God (Ps. 147:7)

15. O give thanks unto the Lord; call upon His name; make known His _____ among the people (Ps. 105:1)

16. I will give thanks in the great _____; I will praise you among much people (Ps. 35:18)

Down

1. Praise ye the Lord. Oh give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good; for His _____ endures forever (Ps. 106:1)

3. Sing unto the Lord, O ye saints of His, and give thanks at the remembrance of His _____ (Ps. 30:4)

5. Offer unto God _____; and pay your vows unto the most High (Ps. 50:14)

6. Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving, and make a _____ noise unto Him with psalms

9. And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare His works with _____ (Ps. 107:22)

10. So we your _____ and sheep of your pasture will give you thanks for ever; we will show forth your praise to all generations (Ps. 79:13)

13. I will praise the name of God with a song, and will _____ Him with thanksgiving (Ps. 69:30)

14. Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise: be _____ unto Him, and bless His name (Ps. 100:4)

17. For in death there is no remembrance of thee; in the _____ who shall give thee thanks? (Ps. 6:5)

Using My Voice

Continued from page 3

am so much more than that.

I would like to prove to society that our mistakes do not define us as individuals. Many of the world's most talented individuals are trapped inside these cinder block walls. But we remain oppressed, depressed, marginalized and ostracized.

I am only one person: one voice elevated and resonating through the silence. I am constantly trying to encourage others to join in the fight for our justice. Sadly, I stand alone too often.

The determining factor is the mindset of the individual. True change must come from a hunger within, a desire to win and overcome.

Breathe

By Chanell Burnette

Stop.

Now breathe.

People, how often do you take time out of your hurried day, your busy schedule, to pause and just take a deep breath?

We live in a very fast-paced era where time always seems to be of the essence and never quite enough. We never seem to have enough hours in a day to get it all done, right? I know this because it is the same for me, even though I am incarcerated.

As the super-intelligent God-made earth spins faster on it's axis, we also must use enough intelligence to slow ourselves down at times in order to replenish all the energy we have expended.

Rejuvenation.

It is perfectly fine to take time to rest sometimes. Our bodies require it as well as our psyche. It is mandatory if we are to operate at maximum capacity.

This is something I too, must work on. Let's do it together. We can start small by pausing for five minutes out of each day and doing absolutely NOTHING! Learn to cherish yourself, your space, your quiet. I live in an environment where quiet is almost non-existent. Blessed is the one who can have time and space to be alone. Bask in it and never take it for granted. Enjoy yourself and just ...

Breathe.



THE FIGHT BETWEEN THE TWO WOLVES

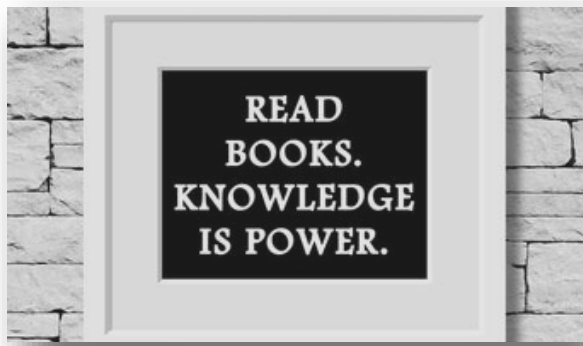
An old Cherokee chief sat down to teach his grandson about life. "There's a fight going on inside me," he tells the young boy, "a fight between two wolves. One wolf is evil. It's full of malice, anger, greed, self-pity and false pride. The other is good. It's full of peace, love, joy, kindness, and humility."

"This same fight is going on inside you and everyone else on the face of the earth," said the chief.

The grandson was quiet, pondering this revelation for a moment before asking, "Grandfather, which wolf will win?"

The old man smiled and replied, "the one you feed."

Good and evil exist within each of us. It's our responsibility to own that reality and do whatever we can to nurture the good. It is neither simple nor easy however. Paul wrote about this constant struggle between good and evil. "I don't really understand myself, for I want to do what is right, but I don't do it. Instead, I do what I hate. (Romans 7:15) Paul described the experience of any Christian struggling against sin or trying to please God without the help of the Holy Spirit. We can never underestimate the power of sin, and we can never attempt to fight Satan in our own strength. We must feed the good within us by studying the Word of the Lord; nurture a right spirit through trust and obedience to God; and winning the battle between good and evil by taking hold of the tremendous power of Christ that is available to us to give us victory over sin through the Holy Spirit.



The Gratitude Attitude

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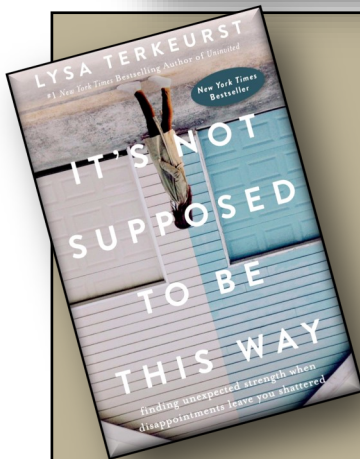
tude compels you to be thankful anyhow. It's hard to be thankful anyhow, especially if you've lost your family, your home, your finances, your health, and perhaps, even your faith.

Although this is the time that we celebrate the Thanksgiving holiday, the gratitude attitude is not just for a season - it's for a lifetime. And know that the gratitude attitude doesn't always manifest automatically when you accept the Lord, even though it should. We must be intentional about giving thanks anyhow—we must be purposeful in developing the gratitude attitude, and we must actively seek ways of expressing gratitude, because God's plan for His people is designed to give us hope and a future. Armed with this knowledge, you can fight any circumstance and thank God anyhow, because you know that your blessing is on the way.

Developing the gratitude attitude is a three step process:

1. **BE INTENTIONAL ABOUT BEING THANKFUL.** Opening your eyes once again after you've had a chance to sleep calls for a "thank you Lord." Even if you didn't have a restful sleep, thank the Lord anyhow because you received yet another opportunity to get it right. Many others didn't get the wake-up call for another day.
2. **IN ALL THINGS GIVE THANKS.** Joy and pain; sunshine and rain - God has purpose for all things that happen, or that He allows to happen in the lives of His people. You wanted God to say yes, but your prayers were answered with a no—thank Him anyhow. You were expecting to reap a harvest of plenty but received a bare minimum—thank Him anyhow. When you have a relationship with the Lord, everything is either a blessing or a lesson. Be thankful for whichever one you receive.
3. **TRUST GOD AND STOP DEPENDING ON YOUR OWN UNDERSTANDING.** God loves you unconditionally, and knows everything about you and your situation. He wants the best for you. Stop trying to figure out what God is doing and start trusting His Word, that He is "able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us." (Ephesians 3:20). Your gratitude attitude invokes God's power within you. Your anyhow thanks confirms your trust that God is in control and is working things out for your good.

When God is your plan A, you don't need a plan B. Whether you experience favor or failure; righteousness or ruthlessness, know that "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to His purpose." (Romans 8:28) We are all purposed to praise and give thanks to the Lord, who provides all of our needs.



IT'S NOT SUPPOSE TO BE THIS WAY BY LYSA TERKEURST

Lysa Terkeurst has some very cogent life observations. She says "humans are very attached to outcomes. We say we trust God but behind the scenes we

work our fingers to the bone and our emotions into a tangled fray trying to control our outcomes. We praise God when our normal looks like we thought it would. We question God when it doesn't. And walk away from Him when we have a sinking suspicion that God is the one who set fire to the hope that was holding us together."

This book is about how life: has gone wrong; is going wrong; and will go wrong. *It's Not Supposed to be This Way* is all about the "d" word - disappointment. Lysa says that "disappointments are an inevitable part of life. Yet despite the way they sometimes throw our worlds completely off-kilter, they don't have to signify the end. In fact, they are often what must be for something new to begin."

She is painfully aware of the devastating impact disappointment makes. In the Spring of 2019, Lysa, who leads the Proverbs 31 Ministries, shocked the Christian communities with news that she had filed for divorce from her husband Art after nearly 25 years of marriage, due to his infidelity. Even though the couple had been in counseling for nearly two years, Lysa shared that he refused to repent and give up his affair, so she was finally seeking divorce.

The shockwave didn't diminish. Shortly afterwards, Lysa was diagnosed with breast cancer. She and her doctors decided that the best approach to beating the cancer was through a double mastectomy. She has been declared cancer-free, but she is facing several reconstructive surgeries as part of her healing.

When you read *It's Not Supposed to be This Way*, have a few - no, have a box of tissues handy. Lysa goes deep into her pain, and she acknowledges that "I still don't have the answers to the "why" questions. She knows however, who does have the answers. "I have seen so many glimpses of God's faithfulness in the midst of walking through these things. And I've learned how to have a deeper trust in God even when - especially when - life doesn't make sense."

***It's Not Supposed to be This Way* is available on Amazon.com and at Barnes and Noble. —KWB**

Happy moments,
Praise God.
Difficult moments,
Seek God.
Quiet moments,
Worship God.
Painful moments,
Trust God.
Every moment,
Thank God.

Thoughts

and Blessings ...

Letters from our readers



CONGRATULATIONS SISTERS IN THE SPIRIT

Dear Sisters in the Spirit: Congrats! The ministry of Sisters in the Spirit (SIS) Newsletter serves many women in our communities. From its beginning, the newsletter covered stories of trials, and sorrow, but ended with triumph and bolder love, trust, and devotion to our Lord. The newsletter also brings fun to the reader in the 20-Seconds of Praise which times the COVID-19 hand washing requirement; a puzzle or word search and The Last Laugh jokes.

I enjoy reading SIS Newsletter and look forward to receiving it each month.

Doris J. Foster-Curseen
Cardinal, VA

FINDING PEACE IN THE MIDST OF PAIN

Dear Sisters in the Spirit: The article "Finding peace in the midst of pain" hit home. I know a couple of young men who have committed suicide. It's so painful for their family and friends, and also those who know the young children. It's very, very painful. I've listened to a mother crying so heart broken. Thank God three of us listened to her, prayed with her and for her, and loved her. The mother is better. The memory of this all came back reading the story about Jessie. Thanks for the article. It's an important discussion.

Lil White
Avondale, Arizona

Use this link to view on You Tube

<https://youtu.be/7vZmFKkDMnQ>

EMPOWERED

VIDEO SERIES

PARENTING WITH A LITTLE MORE JESUS

If you're a parent, you already know that parenting is the toughest job on earth. This video from Sisters in the Spirit Ministries can give you some simple tools and tips that will help you start and end your day with a little more Jesus!

HELP SUPPORT SISTERS IN THE SPIRIT MINISTRIES

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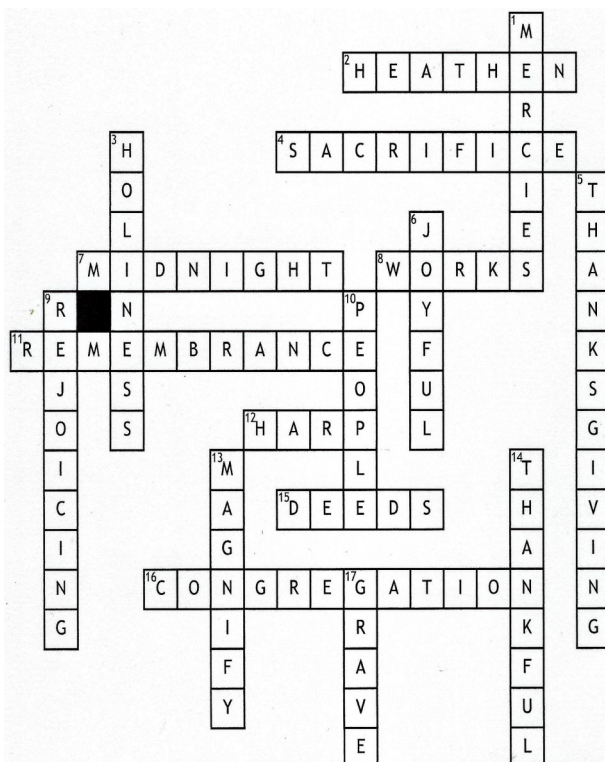
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Or Cash App \$SntheS

Contributions of \$30 or more will receive a
Sisters in the Spirit Ministries tee shirt.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY!

Psalms of Thanksgiving Crossword Answers



Join **Sisters in the Spirit Ministries** on the
2nd Monday of every month at the
Walter Reed Convalescent Center for the



10:30 am - 11:30 am
7602 Meredith Drive * Gloucester, VA 23061
It's Hallelujah Good Time!



Sisters in the Spirit Newsletter

This is a free monthly publication by **Sisters in the Spirit Ministries, Inc.**, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization founded to empower women in their knowledge and authority, to better operate in their God-given purpose.

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Visit our website:
sistersinthespirit.org



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SEND US YOUR THOUGHTS AND BLESSINGS ...

Our newest feature is a "letters to the editor" column. This is your time and space to share whatever comments about the newsletter with our readers. Please send your **THOUGHTS AND BLESSINGS** to
Sisters in the Spirit
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OR

Email to
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*"Every time I think of you,
I give thanks to my God."
Philippians 1:3*

THE LAST LAUGH



THE NIGHT WATCHMAN

A man got a job as a night watchman at a factory. The factory had been experiencing great losses lately, so the night watchman was ordered to check the bags and pockets of the workers as they left. One evening a worker tried to leave the factory with a wheelbarrow full of newspapers. The night watchman was immediately suspicious. "Hey Buddy, hold it right there," he ordered. "Let me take a look at what's underneath all those papers." The night watchman diligently went through all the newspapers and checked completely underneath the stack looking for contraband, but he found nothing but newspapers. The worker finally spoke up. He said "you see, I pick up all the extra newspapers in the lounges and take them to the recycling plant. That way I save a few trees and I make a little extra money."

For the next few months, the worker left every night with a wheelbarrow full of newspapers, and every night the watchman diligently searched through the papers and checked underneath. He never found anything. One evening the night watchman was ordered to come to his supervisor's office. Without a word of explanation, the supervisor fired the night watchman. "What!" protested the night watchman. "As long as I was on duty, absolutely nothing was stolen from this plant!" "Oh really," said the supervisor. "Then how do you account for the fact that our recent audit shows that we have lost 200 wheelbarrows?"

A LIVELY CONVERSATION

An executive was interviewing a nervous young woman for a position in his company. He wanted to find out something about her personality, so he asked her "if you could have a conversation with any person, living or dead, who would it be? The young woman gave careful consideration to the question, and thoughtfully answered, "I'd choose the living person."

SUPER BOWL TICKETS

Bob won a ticket to the Super Bowl on a local radio station. On game day he loaded up the car, drove to the stadium and found his seat, which - of course - was in the nosebleed section. A couple of minutes into the first quarter, Bob was watching the game through his binoculars and noticed there was a man on the 50-yard line, right next to an open seat. Every couple of plays, Bob checked, and the seat remained vacant. Shortly before half time, Bob decided that if the seat was still open at the beginning of the third quarter, he was going to try to claim it.

The seat stayed open, and Bob decided to go try it. He made his way down and asked the gentleman next to the seat if the seat was taken. The man replied. "the seat was supposed to be for my wife. We haven't missed a Super Bowl in 30 years. Sadly, she just passed away." Bob, embarrassed, said "I'm very sorry to hear that. I'm sure it must be difficult coming to the Super Bowl alone for the first time in 30 years. But these are the best two seats in the stadium. Couldn't you find any friends or relatives to come to the game with you? After all, it is the Super Bowl!" "No," the man replied, "they're all at the funeral."

KEEP THEM GUESSING

Here's a great way to liven up the Thanksgiving meal. When everyone is going around the table taking turns to say what they are thankful for, you say "I'm thankful for not getting caught." It'll keep everybody guessing what you did for the rest of the meal!

SOMETIMES KIDS ARE BETTER LEFT ALONE

Sandy eagerly began a job as an elementary school counselor. One day during recess she noticed a girl standing by herself on one side of a playing field while the rest of the kids enjoyed a game of soccer at the other end. Sandy approached the girl and asked if she was alright. The girl said she was. A little while later, Sandy noticed the girl was in the same spot, still by herself. Sandy, being concerned that the girl was being isolated, went up to her and offered friendship. "Would you like me to be your friend?" Sandy asked. The girl hesitated, then she said "okay." Feeling that she was making progress, Sandy then asked the girl "why are you standing here all alone?" "Because," the girl said with great exasperation, "I'm the goalie!"