



## Faith Connected Hearts when Research Found the Answers Prayed for:

A couple of months ago, a lawyer wrote my mother to advise her that a family member had died, and probate was underway. The purpose of the letter was really to make notice that the individual died and there was no money going to anyone. The deceased was disconnected from family and left the money to charity. My mom didn't care about the money, my mom wanted only to connect with any family members to be found. My mom is 97 and does not use a computer and therefore, she cannot research or find relatives. Although I do a fair amount of genealogy to conduct my professional work, and I have done a lot of family history too, this information was new about these potential family members. Mom was itching to know how she may be a relative and I had the scratch—research is much of my work and leisure.

Mom asked me to dig in and find out who these people were, how we are related, and who is left that we can contact. So, I called the lawyer who explained my mother's name came up in their research of family, I asked for the connection. I was told they didn't know the connection, but they did identify my mother's name itself as a connection. I started my research first by calling the other family members who were listed on the attorney's letter. The first contact wasn't a family member by blood or marriage, and she was of little help. The actual family member she lived with, was incapable of speaking for himself. Moving down the family line, I continued my research and contacted the others. One returned my call. When I advised the purpose of my call was to identify: If, and how, my mother was a relative, she said, "She wondered the same thing and asked if I found anything, could I let her know." The woman was sure she had nothing further to offer. However, after our talk, she was inspired and called her other sister. While they chatted, she learned that one of her sisters had married several times and one of her names was indeed, the same as my mother's name. She also identified one place where she had lived over thirty years ago. I gathered little pieces of pertinent information as we continued to speak.

This was a great tidbit of information because I could work with this information. I want to backstep a bit in my story here and share, the woman I had contact with was in her mid-eighties and she noted that when she was eight, her family was dismantled by the state and the siblings were sent to different homes to live. Life was very difficult for them, there were seven children, they were all young and separated from each other because mom and dad were dysfunctional. I heard the pain in the woman's voice as she recalled her wonderment of where her baby sister was all these years and how she was doing. She described her life as seeming to be missing something over the years, her sister. She reminisced of her love she had for her baby sister, now a woman whose whereabouts remained unknown. She felt disconnected, sad and a bit overwhelmed.

My mother is not a relative, but merely a woman living in the same state at one time and sharing the same name with this sister. My job was officially done for my mom, but the woman I was speaking to was deeply imbedded in my heart now. She did not have a someone to help her research, like I did for my mom. I had to find her the answers, and with God's help, I did. Her sister, I found, had passed away about 25 years ago. I was able to find an obituary, but I couldn't open it online. I provided the woman with the reference links, phone numbers and addresses associated with her sister's obituary so she could ask a librarian, or call the paper directly, to help her obtain a copy. I found her sister's grave. I found her birth date, her death date, her location of her home, etc., (all unknown before). I learned basic information about her family such as, where she lived and the names of the people she

had married. While this was a bit painful for the woman to absorb, the information provided answers. As I shared all details I had with her over the phone, she began to weep. These were tears of joy, she said, because all these years she wondered what happened to her baby sister. Now, she knew. She had closure. In addition, I also researched the baby sister's family, including her daughter and her granddaughters, possibly even a great granddaughter (or two). This meant that the woman I was trying to help, has lots more family than she ever knew existed. I was able to put a list of names together, phone numbers, and addresses. I created a strong starting point for her contacts and possible family connection line (her niece and grandnieces). Now she has lots of information and opportunity to reconnect, in some way with her baby sister, through her children. This brought the greatest joy to me, to help this woman. She was significantly blessed as well. God had a plan. I shared with her in that moment that I believe there was a reason the lawyer sent the letter to my mom. Of course, my mother would give it to me to handle and with God's help, we would find the answers. The woman said to me that she is truly thankful to God every day for the good life she has with a wonderful husband and family. She said she prayed for answers to come about her sister and now she felt God blessed her abundantly. I packaged up all the information I found and mailed it off to her. For me, this was truly a blessing reaped out of faith and one that possibly meant even more to me than it did for this woman. I was so moved by God's grace and compassion for this woman. Our conversation closed with both of us declaring how blessed are our faith connected hearts. How great and wonderful is our God to connect two strangers for one common purpose! His love never fails. This is the exactly the reason, I wish to help more people connect with family disconnected. God bless.

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