



MY BROTHER,
MY FRIEND

BARBARA RAINEY

A warm welcome

FROM ME TO YOU



ONCE AGAIN WE ARE IN THE SEASON SO MANY LOVE. Yet many of us feel stressed by all the pressure we women feel to make it perfect. Adorning your Christmas tree with these and other names of Jesus will help you keep the focus of this season where it belongs; on our Savior. And that is what our hearts most long for.

Read the stories collected here during the month of December to learn more about the Babe in the manger. Teach your children Who Jesus is. Engage your family in conversations about Him during these days. By introducing your family and others to Jesus' family names, you will be helping them know He can be trusted throughout every day of the coming year.

May you and yours know the deep personal love of Jesus, the Creator of families.

Barbara Rainey

IDEAS FOR USING ADORENAMENTS

all year long

- Each of these house-shaped ornaments has a name on the front and a verse on the back. As you decorate your tree, ask someone to *read the name* and the corresponding verse before placing it on the tree. Do the same with all four chalkboard houses.
- *Decorate* a wreath with all four ornaments topped with a large red bow.
- *After Christmas* let each child choose one of the family names of Jesus to hang in his or her bedroom for an ever-present reminder of His nearness every day.

WHY KNOWING
Jesus' Family Names
MATTERS



IN THE BEGINNING, GENESIS TELLS US,
THE TRINITY WORKED TOGETHER TO CREATE THE
HEAVENS, THE EARTH, ALL CREATURES AND LASTLY
MAN AND WOMAN. FROM THERE INSTRUCTIONS WERE
GIVEN TO ADAM AND EVE TO MARRY AND HAVE
CHILDREN; THUS, THE IDEA OF FAMILY ORIGINATED
IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN BEFORE THE FALL.
THOUSANDS OF YEARS LATER, JESUS EXPLAINED
MORE OF GOD'S INTENTIONS WHEN HE DEFINED HIS
RELATIONSHIP TO US AS OUR BROTHER, OUR FRIEND,
AND OUR TEACHER. AND BEFORE HE WENT TO
CALVARY, HE PROMISED THE PROVISION OF HOMES
FOR US IN HEAVEN WITH HIM;

ALL MADE POSSIBLE
BY THE CROSS.

LEARNING THESE *family names* OF JESUS HELPS US SEE HIM IN A VERY PERSONAL FAMILIAR WAY. LIKE US, JESUS HAD A FAMILY ON EARTH, TOO: HIS MOTHER, MARY; HIS ADOPTIVE FATHER, JOSEPH; AT LEAST TWO BROTHERS, ONE NAMED JAMES, WHO WROTE THE NEW TESTAMENT BOOK NAMED AFTER HIM, AND PROBABLY A SISTER OR TWO. HE LEARNED TO SHARE TOYS AND A SLEEPING SPACE, HE KNEW SIBLING RIVALRY, AND UNDOUBTEDLY HE HAD CHORES AND SCHOOLING, JUST LIKE KIDS TODAY.

AS YOU CELEBRATE THE BIRTH OF JESUS, THE FIRST CHRISTMAS GIFT EVER, THANK HIM FOR SHOWING US HOW TO DO FAMILY AND FOR THE PROMISE OF A PERFECT FAMILY ONE DAY IN HEAVEN. BECAUSE CHRISTMAS CAME, WE HAVE A LOT TO ANTICIPATE IN THE FUTURE!

JESUS IS MY BROTHER

“My mother and my brothers are those who
hear the word of God and do it.”

LUKE 8 : 2 1

TEN-YEAR-OLD JACOB O'CONNOR WAS WATCHING ONE OF HIS FAVORITE TV SHOWS WHEN, BETWEEN EPISODES, HE NOTICED SOMETHING WAS WRONG. HIS TWO-YEAR-OLD BROTHER, DYLAN, HAD JUST BEEN DANCING IN THE KITCHEN, WAITING FOR HIS NANA TO PUT HIM DOWN FOR A NAP. NOW IT WAS QUIET, TOO QUIET. WHERE WAS DYLAN?

AND WHO HAD SLID OPEN THE DOOR TO THE BACKYARD?

JACOB WALKED TO THE DOOR AND SAW DYLAN'S SHOE FLOATING IN THEIR POOL. AND THEN HE SAW DYLAN. HE WAS FLOATING THERE, TOO.

RUNNING TO HIS *rescue*, JACOB PULLED HIS LITTLE BROTHER'S BODY FROM THE POOL AND LAID HIM ON THE DECK. HE'D SEEN SOMEONE IN A MOVIE DOING CPR, SO HE STARTED PRESSING ON HIS BROTHER'S CHEST LIKE HE'D SEEN THE ACTOR DO. DYLAN FINALLY THREW UP A LITTLE WATER ... AND STARTED BREATHING AGAIN. JACOB RAN TO GET HIS GRANDMOTHER, WHO CALLED 911.

JACOB—A FIFTH GRADER—*saved* HIS BROTHER'S LIFE.

SOMETIMES IT CAN BE SO EASY TO GET FRUSTRATED WITH OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS WHETHER THEY ARE YOUNG OR OLD, RIGHT? **BUT BROTHERS AND SISTERS ARE FRIENDS FOR LIFE.** THAT CONNECTION DOESN'T CHANGE WHEN WE GO TO DIFFERENT SCHOOLS, OR WHEN WE GROW UP,



OR WHEN WE LIVE IN DIFFERENT CITIES WITH DIFFERENT JOBS. THEY ARE THE PEOPLE WHO WILL ALWAYS SHARE OUR STORY, OUR HOME. THEY KNOW *where we come from*. BECAUSE IT'S WHERE THEY'RE FROM, TOO.

A GOOD BROTHER IS FAITHFUL NO MATTER WHAT. AND THAT'S THE KIND OF BROTHER JESUS IS.

DO YOU REMEMBER THE STORY OF THE PRODIGAL SON IN THE BIBLE? THE YOUNGER SON ASKS HIS DAD FOR HIS PORTION OF HIS DAD'S MONEY, RUNS AWAY, AND WASTES ALL THE MONEY ON BAD THINGS. DID YOU KNOW THAT IN THOSE TIMES, THE OLDER BROTHER SHOULD HAVE GONE TO LOOK FOR HIS YOUNGER BROTHER TO BRING HIM BACK *home?*

THE OLDER BROTHER IN THAT STORY WASN'T LIKE THAT. BUT JESUS IS. HE SHOWED US HE IS OUR BROTHER BY COMING TO EARTH TO FIND US AND *rescue us* LIKE JACOB RESCUED DYLAN. AND JESUS IS THE BEST OLDER BROTHER BECAUSE HE CAME TO LOOK FOR US—GOD'S CHILDREN—AND GAVE UP HIS LIFE TO BRING US BACK TO GOD. IN FACT, HE DIDN'T JUST SAVE US, HE TRADED PLACES, AND DIED INSTEAD OF US.

TALK ABOUT IT. WHAT MAKES JESUS THE BEST. BROTHER. EVER? WHAT MIGHT JESUS WANT YOU TO DO DIFFERENTLY AS A BROTHER OR SISTER? ARE YOU LOVING YOUR SIBLINGS WELL OR ARE YOU STANDING BACK NOT GETTING INVOLVED LIKE THE OLDER BROTHER IN THE PRODIGAL SON STORY?

"There is a friend who sticks closer than a brother."

PROVERBS 18:24

JESUS IS MY PROVIDER

“Thanks be to God for His inexpressible gift!”

2 CORINTHIANS 9:15

OSCAR CACERES WAS JUST THREE YEARS OLD WHEN HE GOT REALLY SICK: WITH CANCER. EVEN WORSE, AFTER ALL OF THE MEDICINE THE DOCTORS COULD GIVE HIM, **NOTHING WAS WORKING**. DOCTORS NEEDED TO DO A BONE MARROW TRANSPLANT. THAT’S WHEN DOCTORS TAKE SOME OF THE SOFT, SPONGY TISSUE INSIDE OF SOMEONE ELSE’S BONES—THE STUFF THAT MAKES OUR BLOOD—AND PUT IT INSIDE OF A PERSON WITH CANCER SO IT CAN MAKE HEALTHY *blood*.

BUT NOT JUST ANYONE CAN DONATE BONE MARROW.

DOCTORS HAVE TO MAKE SURE THAT THE HEALTHY PERSON HAS THE SAME KIND OF BLOOD, AND A LOT OF OTHER THINGS. BOTH PEOPLE’S BONE MARROW HAS TO “MATCH.” AND OSCAR’S DAD—WHO WAS ALSO NAMED OSCAR—KNEW THERE WAS ONLY A VERY, VERY SMALL CHANCE FOR HIM TO MATCH HIS SON AND BE ABLE TO HELP HIS LITTLE BOY. (OUT OF EVERY 100 PATIENTS, ONLY ONE PATIENT WILL HAVE PARENTS WHO ARE ABLE TO MATCH THEIR BONE MARROW.)

BUT OSCAR’S DAD DIDN’T LOSE HOPE. AND AFTER HE WAS TESTED, ALL THE DOCTORS WHO TOLD HIM HE WOULDN’T MATCH WERE SURPRISED: HE WAS THE MATCH FOR HIS SON! “I FELT LIKE I WAS WALKING ON AIR. I WAS SO HAPPY,” HIS DAD SAID.



OSCAR AND HIS DAD HAD THEIR OPERATIONS—AND THE MATCH WORKED! LITTLE OSCAR IS NINE YEARS OLD NOW AND ENJOYS RUNNING AROUND WITH HIS LITTLE *sister*.

WE OFTEN HEAR FROM THE TIME WE ARE SMALL THAT GOD PROVIDES ALL OF THE GOOD THINGS WE SEE. WE'RE TAUGHT TO BE THANKFUL. BUT WE ARE ALSO A LITTLE LIKE THREE-YEAR-OLD OSCAR WHO COULDN'T POSSIBLY UNDERSTAND THAT HIS DAD WAS HAVING AN OPERATION TO SAVE HIS LIFE AND WAS THRILLED TO BE DOING THIS SO HIS LITTLE BOY COULD *live*.

GOD DOESN'T JUST CAREFULLY PROVIDE FOR OUR SMALLEST DESIRES—LITTLE THINGS LIKE MUSIC AND ICE CREAM AND SNOW THAT MAKE US HAPPY. HE ALSO GAVE US *Jesus*, WHO TOOK AWAY THE "CANCER" OF SIN THAT WAS KILLING US BY GIVING US WHAT WE NEEDED TO MAKE NEW LIFE—HIS BLOOD— NOT JUST FOR NOW ON EARTH BUT HIS BLOOD SAVES US FOREVER!

HAVE YOU THANKED JESUS TODAY THAT HE GAVE HIS BLOOD FOR YOU TO LIVE FOREVER?

"And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus."

PHILIPPIANS 4:19



JESUS IS MY TEACHER

“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.”

JOHN 14:26

DO YOU USE A GPS? MOST PHONES NOW HAVE A GPS SYSTEM, WHICH IS LIKE A MAP—BUT EVEN BETTER BECAUSE IT KNOWS EXACTLY WHERE YOU ARE ON THE MAP. IT THEN TELLS YOU EXACTLY WHERE TO GO AND WHICH TURNS TO TAKE SO YOU CAN ARRIVE AT YOUR DESTINATION. GPS GIVES OFF A SIGNAL TO A SATELLITE IN SPACE, FAR ABOVE EARTH, AND THAT SIGNAL TRACKS YOUR MOVEMENT. GPS IS EVEN USED TO KEEP TRAINS, PLANES, OR EVEN SOME CARS FROM CRASHING, BECAUSE IT CAN TELL WHERE THEY ARE, TOO!

TWO *brothers* FOUND OUT HOW VALUABLE THEIR GPS WAS ONE FOGGY, FRIGID OCTOBER NIGHT IN THEIR BOAT OFF THE SHORE OF NORWAY. THEIR BOAT SUDDENLY SANK—WITHIN ONE MINUTE. THE BROTHERS QUICKLY USED THEIR GPS TO LOCATE AN ISLAND AND THEY SWAM THERE TOGETHER. RESCUE WORKERS SAW THEIR GPS SIGNAL WHICH HELPED THEM LOCATE THE ISLAND. THE BROTHERS WERE FOUND IN 30 MINUTES AND RUSHED TO AN AMBULANCE.

GPS SAVED THEIR LIVES!

DID YOU KNOW JESUS HAS GIVEN US SOMETHING LIKE GPS ONLY
far better?

Jesus TAUGHT SO MANY THINGS WHILE HE WAS ON EARTH. YOU CAN FIND THEM IN THE BOOKS MATTHEW, MARK, LUKE, AND JOHN. BUT YOU KNOW HOW HARD IT IS TO REMEMBER THINGS OUR PARENTS TELL US, OR THAT WE READ IN BOOKS?



AND EVEN IF WE REMEMBER, LET'S BE HONEST, SOMETIMES WE DON'T WANT TO DO WHAT'S RIGHT. ISN'T THAT TRUE?



SO WHEN JESUS LEFT EARTH, HE SENT HIS HOLY SPIRIT TO LIVE INSIDE THOSE OF US WHO BELIEVE IN HIM. LONG BEFORE GPS WAS INVENTED, JESUS' HOLY SPIRIT STARTED TEACHING CHRISTIANS RIGHT WHERE THEY WERE, RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF WHAT THEY WERE DOING—STEERING THEM IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION. HE TELLS US EXACTLY WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE TO *follow* WHAT JESUS TEACHES, RIGHT THERE WHILE YOU'RE FIGHTING WITH YOUR SISTER, OR THINKING ABOUT WHETHER YOU WANT TO DO WHAT YOUR MOM SAID, OR WONDERING HOW YOU CAN HELP SOMEONE WHO'S HURTING.

IN OUR STORY, THE BROTHERS' GPS COULDN'T HELP THEM SWIM TO THE ISLAND, OR MAKE THEM WANT TO DO WHAT WAS *wise*. IT COULD ONLY TELL THEM WHERE THE ISLAND WAS AND THE DIRECTION TO GET THERE. BUT JESUS' TEACHINGS ARE BETTER THAN GPS! HE ACTUALLY GIVES US THE POWER TO CHANGE ON THE INSIDE. AND THE DESIRE TO OBEY.

JESUS' WORDS WERE SPOKEN A LONG TIME AGO. BUT HE KEEPS *teaching* US WHAT HIS WORDS LOOK LIKE IN OUR LIVES TODAY, AND HE KEEPS CHANGING US RIGHT WHERE WE ARE. ASK HIM EVERY DAY TO TEACH YOU WHAT HE WANTS YOU TO KNOW ABOUT LIFE. HE LOVES YOU AND WILL ALWAYS SHOW YOU WHAT IS RIGHT AND BEST.

“Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with Him.”

JESUS IS MY FRIEND

“No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.”

JOHN 15:15

YOU MAY HAVE HEARD THE STORY OF A WOMAN NAMED HELEN KELLER, WHO WAS BORN BOTH BLIND AND DEAF. BUT HAVE YOU EVER HEARD THE STORY ABOUT HER *friendship* WITH HER TEACHER, ANNE SULLIVAN?

BEFORE HELEN MET ANNE, SHE HAD NO WAY TO COMMUNICATE WITH ANYONE ABOUT WHAT SHE FELT OR WANTED OR NEEDED. HELEN COULDN'T SEE OR HEAR OR SPEAK. CAN YOU IMAGINE HOW *lonely* YOU WOULD FEEL? HELEN DESCRIBES HERSELF AS “WILD AND UNRULY, GIGGLING AND CHUCKLING TO EXPRESS PLEASURE; KICKING, SCRATCHING, UTTERING ... CHOKED SCREAMS ... TO INDICATE THE OPPOSITE.”

BUT SHE DESCRIBES THE DAY SHE MET ANNE SULLIVAN AS “THE MOST IMPORTANT DAY I REMEMBER IN ALL MY LIFE.”

ANNE BROUGHT WITH HER A DOLL. WHEN HELEN HAD PLAYED WITH IT, ANNE USED SIGN LANGUAGE TO PRESS LETTERS ONTO HELEN'S HAND: D-O-L-L, UNTIL HELEN COULD MAKE THE LETTERS HERSELF. HELEN DIDN'T EVEN KNOW WHAT LETTERS OR WORDS WERE YET. BUT SLOWLY, HELEN BEGAN TO UNDERSTAND THAT EVERYTHING HAD A *name*.

IN HER JOURNALS, ANNE DESCRIBES THE DAY THAT SHE BROUGHT HELEN TO THE WATER PUMP.

AS THE COLD WATER GUSHED FORTH ... I SPELLED "W-A-T-E-R"...
THE WORD COMING SO CLOSE UPON THE SENSATION OF COLD
WATER RUSHING OVER HER HAND SEEMED TO STARTLE HER
... A NEW LIGHT CAME INTO HER FACE. SHE SPELLED "WATER"
SEVERAL TIMES. THEN SHE DROPPED ON THE GROUND AND ASKED
FOR ITS NAME ... ALL THE WAY BACK TO THE HOUSE SHE WAS HIGHLY
EXCITED, AND LEARNED THE NAME OF EVERY OBJECT SHE
TOUCHED ...



LAST NIGHT ... SHE STOLE INTO MY ARMS OF HER OWN ACCORD
AND KISSED ME FOR THE FIRST TIME, AND I THOUGHT MY HEART WOULD
BURST, SO FULL WAS IT OF JOY.

BY THE TIME HELEN WAS 16, SHE COULD SPEAK WELL ENOUGH TO GO
TO *school* AND COLLEGE. SHE GRADUATED WITH HONORS AND
DEVOTED THE REST OF HER LIFE TO HELPING THE BLIND AND DEAF-
BLIND, LIKE ANNE DID. THEIR FRIENDSHIP CONTINUED UNTIL ANNE DIED.

ANNE REMINDS US A LITTLE OF THE KIND OF
friend JESUS IS. HE'S A FRIEND WHO IS CONSTANTLY WITH
US, COMING TO US TO HELP US TO REALLY SEE AND UNDERSTAND
THE WORLD. HE'S THE ONE WHO HELPS US TO TRULY BUILD LOVING
RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHERS AND WITH HIMSELF.

HOW DOES JESUS DO THIS? BECAUSE HE IS OUR FRIEND, OUR
TEACHER, OUR PROVIDER AND OUR BROTHER. HE IS EVERYTHING
WE NEED BECAUSE HE IS EVERYTHING. IN ALL THAT HE SHOWS US,
HE HELPS US BECOME THE FULLEST VERSION OF OURSELVES SO WE
CAN *love* AND HELP OTHERS.

"You are my friends if you do what I command you."

JOHN 15:14

GOD'S AMAZING LOVE

CHRISTMAS IS THE STORY OF GOD'S LOVE. THE PERFECT ONE CAME TO US EVEN THOUGH OUR SIN SEPARATES US FROM HIM. HE WENT TO GREAT LENGTHS TO LIVE A FLAWLESS LIFE AND THEN TO OFFER THAT LIFE AS A SACRIFICE FOR OUR SIN. BECAUSE OF THAT GIFT YOU CAN BE FORGIVEN AND *welcomed* INTO HIS FAMILY FOREVER.

WILL YOU ACCEPT HIS OFFER OF SALVATION BY ASKING HIM TO FORGIVE YOUR SINS AND TRUSTING HIM BY FAITH TO BE YOUR SAVIOR? IF SO, HERE IS A SUGGESTED PRAYER.



LORD JESUS, I NEED YOU. THANK YOU FOR DYING ON THE CROSS FOR MY SINS. I RECEIVE YOU AS MY SAVIOR AND LORD. THANK YOU FOR FORGIVING MY SINS AND GIVING ME ETERNAL LIFE. MAKE ME THE KIND OF PERSON YOU WANT ME TO BE.

Amen.

My Brother, My Friend

Ever Thine Home®

P.O. Box 242407

Little Rock, Arkansas 72223

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EXPERIENCING GOD IN YOUR HOME

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HIS *family* NAMES



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