
My String of Pearls

THE GIFT OF A BEAUTIFUL LEGACY



ROCSY CARLISLE

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About the Author

Rocsy Carlisle is the wife of an adoring pastor, mom of two princesses, and blessed receiver of a legacy from God-loving ladies of several generations! She enjoys coffee, chocolate, sunshine, music, and organization; and is especially passionate about discipling people!

Letter from the Author

Dear Reader,

It is my greatest desire to know that you know Christ Jesus as your personal LORD and Savior, and are becoming more like Him in every way! He loves you extravagantly! I wrote these pearls of wisdom to pass on to my girls, students in our church, you, and whom you want to leave a spiritual legacy. Pass them on!

With joyful prayers,

Rocsy Carlisle

Introduction

Pearls have long been worn as feminine jewelry, and have been handed down through generations as special gifts. Pearls represent wisdom that has been cultured over time. A pearl is considered a valuable gemstone. It is unique from other gemstones; however, because it's the only one found in a living organism. It is cultured over time after an irritant has bothered an oyster. When life gives you an irritant, make a pearl! Learn a valuable lesson, and leave a beautiful legacy. Proverbs 1:8-9 tells about listening to your parents, and remembering what they've taught you; and you will be blessed. We want to receive and leave a spiritual legacy like a string of pearls from a great grandma through other generations to a great-granddaughter. My String of Pearls will help you receive and give a treasure like a string of pearls that will bless those after you!

Your reward for the work through this book will be exponentially greater if you read the Scripture verses from your Bible listed after the chapter titles. They're short, but an investment in your life!

There's a Pearl Craft at the end of this book. Making a string of pearls can be a visual reminder of what you've learned, and want to pass on. If you're not feeling crafty, and/or want to give a longer-lasting physical reminder, you can always purchase a piece of pearl jewelry to gift someone with a copy of this book, or what you've learned.

Pearl 1

Love the LORD

Matthew 22:37

My Story of Meeting Jesus

I was exposed to the love and truth of Jesus at my earliest memories. As a very young girl, I recall understanding that God loved me. I spent lots of time with G.G., and one night I got to sleep over. After a bedtime Bible story, she asked if I wanted to invite Jesus into my heart. I didn't understand that my sin had separated me from God; so, I really wasn't quite ready for this big step in my faith, but I prayed a prayer, and thought that I was "saved" at that point for many years.

As a teenager, I feared that if I died I would be separated from God, but was a "leader" in my youth group at church, and kept putting off the Holy Spirit's conviction of my sin with that memory of praying as a child.

Finally, on December 24, 1995, while sleeping over at my Papa and Gramma Reva's house, I woke my sister, Cory, and asked her if she ever feared separation from God if she were to die. She said, "No!" She had trusted Christ on Halloween night a couple of months prior! She asked, "Why? Do YOU?" I confessed, "Yes." She said, "We can fix that, right now!" (Remember that I was a leader in my youth group; so, I knew how to lead someone else to Christ. In fact, for months to ease myself to sleep, I'd been quoting a prayer of salvation that I had heard.) I told her, "I know what to do. I just want to pray aloud with you here; so, I won't forget it!" I prayed, then, and trusted Jesus to save me from my sins!

From that moment forward, I've known that I'm forgiven, and will be with God forever! I pray and read the Bible every day, and tell others how to know Jesus, too!

Your Story of Meeting Jesus

You can write your testimony - your story of God saving you. Remember to include what your life was like before you trusted Jesus; when you trusted Jesus; and what your life has been like since you trusted Jesus to forgive you, and give you eternal life.

If you don't have a testimony, and you're ready to trust Jesus, "we can fix that, right now!"

How to Become a Christian

Admit you're a sinner. Read Romans 3:23. Sin is an archer's term that means missing the mark; so, sin is simply missing the mark of God's holiness.

Believe Jesus is God's Son, lived a sinless life, died on the cross to forgive us of our sins, rose again to give us eternal life, and will return to take believers to Heaven for eternity. Read Romans 6:23.

Commit your life to Jesus by confessing Him as your Savior and LORD. Read Romans 10:9-10.

You can pray a simple prayer to God telling Him that you're a sinner; believe that Jesus, God's Son, died on a cross to forgive you of your sins, rose alive three days later, and went to Heaven to give you eternal life; and want Jesus to be your LORD or boss (say, "Jesus is LORD," and surrender your life to Him.)

This pearl is your greatest treasure!

Pearl 2

Baptism - First Step of Obedience

Matthew 3:13-17

Be baptized. It's the first step of obedience as a follower of Jesus! Jesus was baptized by immersion, going all of the way under water, getting totally wet; so, we do, too. We follow His example, and identify with His actions. Baptism is a picture of Jesus's death on the cross, burial, and resurrection. It doesn't save you from your sins; it's a SYMBOL of what happened when you previously trusted Jesus as your Savior and LORD. It's like wearing my wedding ring in that it doesn't make you saved like wearing my ring doesn't make me married. However, it shows everyone else that I'm happy that my life is committed to Jesus like my ring shows my commitment to Chris, my husband!

I went through the motions of baptism between the time I prayed as a little girl with G.G. and when I truly trusted Jesus for salvation and eternal life as a teenager. During that time, I had a desire to obey God, because I knew it was a good thing to do, and I like following rules. A few years after I'd trusted Jesus as Savior, I decided that I needed to be baptized as a follower of Jesus and to identify with Jesus. Therefore, I went through the water again, but this time, with MUCH meaning, not just motions. At eighteen years old, I was baptized! That's when I finally started to GROW fast as a Christian! I hope you won't wait long after you've trusted Jesus for salvation, but obey quickly and GROW!

Pearl 3

The Value of Quiet Time

Mark 1:35

Once you've committed your life to Jesus, your life purpose is to know Jesus better and to make Him known to others. First, we'll talk about knowing Him. To know Him well takes time and communication. To communicate with God, we pray, and He speaks to us through the Bible, God-loving people in church, circumstances, and prayer. No matter in what way He speaks to us, His truth ALWAYS matches the Bible truth! So, you need to learn how to have a personal time with the LORD at least every day; I call it a Quiet Time. Quiet Time is composed of two parts, speaking through prayer to God, and listening to God through reading the Bible.

Quiet Times are crucial to your walk with the LORD! Mark 1:35 tells us about Jesus's Quiet Time. If Jesus had QT with the Father, God, we need to get refocused on Him every day, too. I suggest the morning as the best time for QT, because Jesus did, and it allows us to follow the LORD's plan for us all day! Also, if you spend time with the LORD when you first rise, you'll always have time for Him! My sister, Cory, reminded me that since our parents taught us the value of rising early, we always have time for our Greatest Priority!

We communicate with people we love to get to know them better, and it's a joy! Getting to know God is great, too! Enjoy Him! Grab a Bible, and spend some precious time with God!

Pearl 4

How to Pray

Matthew 6:5-14 & I Thessalonians 5:17

Since prayer is part of your Quiet Time with the LORD, and QTs are necessary to knowing the LORD well, you need to learn how to pray. The best example to follow is Jesus! We can find His teaching to His disciples (followers of Jesus) on how to pray in Matthew 6:5-14. We can pray privately (not for show,) and be personal (not wordy babbling.)

I taught our girls that you can break down Jesus's model into five basic parts of prayer. You can count them on your fingers.

1. *Praise*

For what can we praise God?

"God, You are _____!" (wonderful, holy, all-powerful, etc.)

2. *Confession*

What sins do we need to confess? (Confession is simply agreeing with God about our sins.)

"God, I'm sorry that I _____." (angered easily, was proud, etc.)

3. *Thanks*

For what are we thankful?

"Thank You, God, for _____!" (saving me, family, the Bible, etc.)

4. *Prayer for Others*

For whom can we pray?

"God, please, help _____." (my girls grow in their relationship with You, etc.)

5. *Prayer for Ourselves*

What do we need today?

"God, please, help me _____." (be courageous to share Your truth with others even if I get left out of some social events, etc.)

Finally, we close our prayer with the words, "In Jesus's name we pray, Amen."

It's important to at least talk to the Father through prayer in your Quiet Time, but

1 Thessalonians 5:17 tells us to pray continually. You can talk to Him all day!

Pearl 5

How to Read the Bible

Hebrews 4:12, 2 Timothy 3:16, Psalm 119:11, & James 1:22-25

The Word of God is super-duper important! It's the way God speaks to us 99% of the time, and any other way He speaks to us ALWAYS lines up with the Bible. The Holy Bible is the ONLY Word of God. There's SO much of it, we'll never know all of it, but we can devote our lifetime to doing our best to learn all that we can from it!

There are many ways to approach reading the Bible. I like to know who wrote the text, to whom he was writing, for what purpose, and when; then, dig in. Pray that Holy Spirit would help you understand, and read a chapter. Look for text that seems special, and pray how you can apply it!

I pray that you love it, hide it in your heart, and live it out!

Pearl 5
How to Read the Bible
Activity Page

Who wrote the text?

To whom were they writing?

For what purpose (why) did they write?

When did they write it?

Is there something special you noticed as you read?

How can you live it out?

Pearl 6

Hiding God's Word in Your Heart

Psalm 119:9-16, Proverbs 2:1-5, & Ephesians 6:17

Memorizing the Bible takes time, discipline, and effort, but you'll never regret hiding God's Word in your heart. You'll have it always with you ready for the LORD to use in your daily life's circumstances!

There are many ways to practice memorizing the Bible! My favorite way lately has been writing it on popsicle sticks, the computer, and chalkboards, and repeating and reviewing them during snack time with our girls while using heirloom dishes! I remember things that I write and see often better. Some people like to sing songs of Bible verses and/or make motions to words. Find what works best for you, and do it!

Hiding God's Word in your heart shows that you value what He says. For example, a young couple separated by miles might read tirelessly and memorize letters from their beloved. God loves us; we love God! Therefore, we love God's Word!

Also, Jesus quoted the Bible to rebuke Satan when He was tempted by the devil. Satan twisted Scripture, but Jesus was prepared, and knew the truth! Satan used the same trick of lying that he's notorious for since Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden, twisting God's Word. If the devil would try to tempt Jesus, Adam, and Eve by twisting the truth of Scripture from his Father, he will do the same to us. If we have God's Word in our heart, we're more ready to recognize and reject lies from the devil! Let's use our sword well that is talked about in Ephesians 6:17!

The Holy Spirit can convict our hearts of sin, and comfort and encourage us with Scripture stored up in our heart, also! Like a good can of peaches or raspberry jelly, if we don't store it, it won't be there to use it when we need it!

Pearl 7

Church

Hebrews 10:25 & Acts 2:42-47

Get involved in a local body of believers! Church is important to God. It's Jesus's Bride! There is the Universal Church - meaning all believers of Jesus as Christ. Also, there's the local church - a smaller group of believers who live near you.

Hebrews 10:25 reminds us that we need to be meeting together with other believers often and regularly. Acts 2:42-47 gives us a great example of how church is supposed to function. There are tons of instructions to churches in the New Testament, but simply this wraps up her purposes:

WORSHIP - setting your mind's attention and your heart's affection on God,

FELLOWSHIP - oneness, closeness, sharing, being together,

EVANGELISM - sharing the Gospel,

DISCIPLESHIP - teaching and learning how to follow Jesus with your life, and

MINISTRY - meeting people's needs with God's love.

I think that healthy believers need to be involved in a worship time with the whole church, a small group time, and a time to serve often, like on a weekly basis. Satan is like a lion, looking to devour the isolated and broken-down or weak. Church will keep you from being vulnerable to the devil. We are able to do more good in service and encouragement to others when we're together! Are you worshipping God with your whole church regularly? Are you growing in a small group? Are you serving regularly?

Pearl 8

Spiritual Gifts

1 Corinthians 12:4-11

Each believer receives a spiritual birthday gift when they trust Jesus as their Savior and LORD. Find out what your spiritual gift(s) is(are), and use them to serve the LORD in the church! How do you discover your spiritual gift(s)? Ask the LORD. Sometimes, you know what it is. Often, it's obvious to other people who know you well; so, listen to God-loving people in your life. Also, this takes time and experience. Therefore, try serving in different areas and opportunities. Eventually, a gift will be unwrapped! Serving the LORD with your spiritual gift is very fulfilling, because it glorifies God, and blesses others!

Pearl 9

Work

Colossians 3:17, 23-24 & Proverbs 3:5-6

It's fun to know God's purpose for your life! Working is good! God designed work; in the beginning, He gave Adam and Eve the job of caring for the garden and animals in it. We need God to guide us in working for His glory, and the good of others and ourselves. People who live to please others, become frustrated. People who live to please themselves are unfulfilled. People who live to please God experience peace, love, joy, and satisfaction!

Numerous times in my life, I've been grateful that God led me! The following are a few. July 1997, the LORD called me to serve Him in ministry. July 1998, He led me to sing and make music in my heart to the LORD. July 1999, He led me to sing, teach, and marry a youth minister. A short time later, He revealed to me that the youth minister was Chris Carlisle, to my astonishment and elation! While studying at Southwestern Oklahoma State University for my education degree, He shifted my focus from English to Elementary. Several years later, while teaching fifth grade and expecting our first daughter, He let me know that I would soon be a stay at home mom! Later, He let me know that I needed to shine the light of Jesus as an Aide at a school. In another season, I noticed that my husband and church needed secretarial and janitorial help. I got to serve my grandparents with my sister for a season. My latest mission has been homeschooling our girls! What a blessing to work for the LORD!

Let me encourage you to work for the LORD in whatever you do! You'll glorify God, be blessed, and be a blessing to others!

Pearl 10

Spousal Significance

2 Corinthians 6:14-18

This is the second most life-altering decision you will make; therefore, choose wisely and carefully! Listen to the LORD closely! Your husband must love the LORD more than you! You want his first priority to be his relationship with the LORD, and second priority to be his relationship with you! You want a spiritual leader in your man; so, don't be unequally yoked! Your spiritual beliefs should align! Also, DON'T DATE someone whom you know has different beliefs than you! If you don't date them, you won't marry them! It's not fair to you or the other person to pursue something that will waste your time and end in frustration. Look for God-loving character in this man. You should be able to think, "He makes me want to be a more God-loving woman, and helps me do that!" A man who does that will respect, honor, love, lead, and bless you all of your life! Also, a man like that is easier to submit to and help!

Begin becoming a God-loving lady, and pray for a God-loving husband. Settle for nothing less!

Pearl 11

Dating

Proverbs 4:20-27

G.G. taught me a little song from Proverbs 4:20-27 that I think can easily apply to dates. You may have heard it, too!

I was told that a DATE is a

Divine

Appointment

To

Edify.

In other words, it is a time to build another up.

I think it's wise to stay in public places for accountability and protection of your physical body and reputation. Each person should be respectful to the other, and never touch private parts, nor tempt the other to commit sexual acts. To help guard the other's heart and mind, you need to speak and dress modestly. Also, you need to NOT lie down together. This sounds funny, maybe, but Holy Spirit showed me during college years QTs that when people lie together in the Bible, they had babies! With that said, it's just a great idea to stay out of each other's bedroom, dorm room, or apartment alone.

Do plan dates that allow you to visit and get to know the other person, and their family and friends; have fun; and glorify God! Just one more little tip, they'll, probably, act like their friends, and treat you how they treat their momma. Watch them!

Pearl 12

Friendships

Proverbs 11:13, Proverbs 27:6, & Psalm 45:13-15

Be the friend that you want to have. Don't gossip. Be honest and trustworthy. It's a good idea to think the best of your friends even when your relationship doesn't seem perfect at times; give her the benefit of the doubt, and consider life from her perspective. Never speak poorly of her! Keep her good secrets confidential. Rarely, she may need you to tell a caring adult if she's in trouble. You'll know when that is by thinking, "Would it be better, safer, or healthier for her if I tell a trusted adult?"

A trustworthy friend is a treasure, hard to find, and valuable to keep! If one of you needs a little loving correction, do the hard thing, and pray and communicate about it, gently.

It's better to have good friends than to have many friends. Be a good friend, and choose good friends. Since before our oldest daughter's birth, I've prayed that you, girls, will choose friends whom you lead to Christ, and that they'll make God-honoring choices with you! Psalm 45:13-15 was my inspiration for those prayers.

Pearl 13

Forgive

*Matthew 6:14-15, Matthew 18:21-35, &
Ephesians 4:32*

God forgives you as you forgive others! We have been forgiven for everything by Jesus; therefore, we can forgive others in the same way. It doesn't excuse what they did, but it frees you from it. They will have to answer to God for what they did.

Don't grow bitter and grumpy because of unforgiving others! It's really sad, and will ruin your life by stealing your joy and others' joy around you. It's NO fun being around people who are always angry at someone! I've seen examples of this. When you hold sins against someone, like a list held against their body, you can't be close to them. Let it go to the LORD!

Sometimes, you have to KEEP forgiving a person. It's a decision in your mind that your heart will follow.

Forgive completely, like it never happened. That's how God forgives us!

Pearl 14

Love Others - Share Your Faith

*1 Peter 3:15, Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 1:8,
Romans 3:23, Romans 6:23,
Ephesians 2:8-9, & Romans 10:9-11*

Love the LORD and people. What's more loving than leading others to Christ! Just be careful to do this with gentleness and respect! Pray for lost people. Serve them, and build rapport. Share your testimony - what God's done in your life before you knew Christ, when you trusted Jesus as your Savior and LORD, and since you trusted Him. Share Scripture with them. I especially like Romans 3:23, Romans 6:23, (sometimes Ephesians 2:8-9,) and Romans 10:9-11. Help them pray to trust Jesus as Savior and LORD! When you share your faith, you're obeying Jesus!

Pearl 15

Be a Giver

*Psalm 24:1, Deuteronomy 12:5-6,
Deuteronomy 14:28-29,
Matthew 25:35-40, & 2 Corinthians 9:6-7*

God is the Ultimate Giver! He gave us life, everything we need to sustain life, every good thing, and, MOST IMPORTANTLY, His Son, Jesus! Everything belongs to God, and He gives to us!

You should give Jesus your life.

Also, you should give God a tithe, at least. A tithe is ten percent of your income given to your church. Offerings are extra money, more than your tithe, given for the furthering of the Kingdom of God.

Time is a great gift, too! Matthew 25:35-40 tells us that what you do for people, you do for God. You can recall what you did throughout the day, and recognize what you did for people, you really did for Jesus! What inspiration!

Pearl 16

Money Management

*Psalm 24:1, Malachi 3:10, Proverbs 21:20, &
1 Timothy 6:10, 18-19*

It's God's.

Tithe ten percent, at least, to your local church. If you give back to God first, you'll always have enough to give. Tithing is an act of obedience and faith. We're showing that our trust is in God, not money.

Save ten percent, at least, for emergencies and your future. You never know when you might have a need come up. It's wise to be prepared. It "makes sense" to save money, today, for your future; so it can work and "make cents" and dollars for later.

Spend eighty percent. You can use this for a home, utilities, insurance, a car, groceries, clothes...everything else.

It's a general guide. Live on a budget. Balance your checkbook ASAP! Have no debt, except your home, and pay that off as quickly as you can. Pay your bills quickly. Don't love it, because it's meant to be a tool, not an idol. Live out Biblical principles of being good stewards of God's money.

Pearl 17

Priorities

Deuteronomy 6 & Titus 2:3-5

These are so simple that they need little explanation.

- 1) God
- 2) Family
- 3) Church
- 4) Work

How you spend your time and money shows what is important to you. I'm not saying that you should spend more time at church than work. That's not practical. I am saying that this is the order of things most important in your heart. If these are out of order, life isn't good. When making decisions, you can check to see how your priorities would be honored. For example, if you're working so much that you have no time to worship God with your church, your priorities are out of order, and a change needs to be made for your heart and life to be well. This list helps us make decisions to maximize the resources God has given us to live abundantly!

Pearl 18

Beauty

*Proverbs 31:30, 1 Samuel 16:7,
1 Timothy 4:7-8, Psalm 139:13-14,
Ephesians 2:10, & 1 Peter 3:3-4*

Read these Scriptures above, and let them soak in like letters of encouragement. It matters more what God thinks about you than what anyone else does. Darling, you are beautiful! You're a masterpiece of God's with a divine purpose! Jesus in you makes you beautiful forever! You are wonderful! You are being changed from gorgeous to glorious! Praise God for His creativity and love!

Pearl 19

Eternity

Romans 8:18 & 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

My string of pearls wouldn't be complete without remembering eternity! This beautiful pearl was cultivated over my lifetime, but had a deeply painful polishing in a short season of about one and a half years. I learned grief when my Great Grandpa passed away; I was barely old enough to remember. I grieved again when my Papa died while I was in college. Later, as a wife and mom, I learned the blessing of a future eternity in Heaven with the passing of my G.G., a miscarriage of our precious Kade, the passing of Pretty (Great) Grandma, and passing of my Uncle Curly. These loved ones passed in a very short time. They were all in various stages of life, from a child in my womb to ninety-nine years old. They are all with the LORD in Heaven, now, praise Him! I have learned through them to walk this earth with eternity in mind! Regardless of the number of days on this earth, life here is short and eternity is long! Therefore, love the LORD, treasure your family, and live telling others about Jesus with NO regrets!

I look forward to being with Jesus and my loved ones again in Heaven, someday. We can grieve with hope because of eternity with Jesus! We'll see them, soon. Until then, let's live for Him!

Your Pearls

Add Your Own Pearls

What pearls would you like to add to share?

Pearl Craft

The girls and I have made paper pearl necklaces with these titles written on the pearls of paper. The supplies you will need are a piece of paper, pen, scissors, straight edge, glue, and string (we prefer elastic jewelry-making string.) You draw lines vertically on the paper so that you have nineteen long sections. Write one pearl title on each section. Cut the sections apart. Roll each strip of paper around your pen, leaving a tube to run the string through. Glue them; so, they stay rolled up. Slide them off of the pen. Let them dry. String them up! If you want to add pearl jewels from a craft store, they are pretty between paper pearls, too. These can be a visual reminder of “pearls” of wisdom that you want to pass on.