

familiar friday - our crown of life
(a repeat daily)

"be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life." rev 2:10

the cheerful little girl with bouncy golden curls was almost five. waiting with her mother at the checkout stand, she saw them, a circle of glistening white pearls in a pink foil box.

oh mommy, please, mommy, can i have them? please, mommy, please?" quickly the mother checked the back of the little foil box and then looked back into the pleading blue eyes of her little girl's upturned face.

"a dollar ninety-five. that's almost \$2.00. if you really want them, i'll think of some extra chores for you and in no time you can save enough money to buy them for yourself. your birthday's only a week away and you might get another crisp dollar bill from grandma."

as soon as jenny got home, she emptied her penny bank and counted out 17 pennies. after dinner, she did more than her share of chores and she went to the neighbor and asked mrs. mcjames if she could pick dandelions for ten cents. on her birthday, grandma did give her another new dollar bill and, at last, she had enough money to buy the necklace.

jenny loved her pearls. they made her feel dressed up and grown up. she wore them everywhere; sunday school, kindergarten, even to bed. the only time she took them

off was when she went swimming or had a bubble bath. mother said if they got wet, they might turn her neck green.

jenny had a very loving daddy and every night when she was ready for bed, he would stop whatever he was doing and come upstairs to read her a story. one night as he finished the story, he asked Jenny, "do you love me?" "oh yes, daddy. you know that i love you." "then give me your pearls." "oh, daddy, not my pearls. but you can have princess, the white horse from my collection, the one with the pink tail. remember, daddy? the one you gave me. she's my very favorite." "that's okay, honey, daddy loves you. good night." and he brushed her cheek with a kiss.

about a week later, after the story time, jenny's daddy asked again, "do you love me?" "daddy, you know i love you." "then give me your pearls." "oh daddy, not my pearls. but you can have my baby doll, the brand new one i got for my birthday. she is beautiful and you can have the yellow blanket that matches her sleeper." "that's okay. sleep well. God bless you, little one. daddy loves you." and as always, he brushed her cheek with a gentle kiss.

a few nights later when her daddy came in, jenny was sitting on her bed with her legs crossed indian style. as he came close, he noticed her chin was trembling and one silent tear rolled down her cheek. "what is it, jenny? what's the matter?" jenny didn't say anything but lifted her little hand up to her daddy. and when she opened it, there was her little pearl necklace. with a little quiver, she finally said, "here, daddy,

this is for you."

with tears gathering in his own eyes, jenny's daddy reached out with one hand to take the dime store necklace, and with the other hand he reached into his pocket and pulled out a blue velvet case with a strand of genuine pearls and gave them to Jenny. he had them all the time. he was just waiting for her to give up the dime-store stuff so he could give her the genuine treasure.

so it is, with our heavenly Father. He is waiting for us to give up the cheap things in our lives so that He can give us beautiful treasures. isn't God good? are you holding on to things that God wants you to let go of? are you holding on to harmful or unnecessary partners, relationships, habits and activities that you have become so attached to that it seems impossible to let go? sometimes it is so hard to see what is in the other hand but do believe this one thing ... God will never take away something without giving you something better in its place.

- author unknown

i think of the things many are holding onto so tightly. things that are keeping us from getting something better from the Lord. it's time to let go. time to "LET GO AND LET GOD!" a dear friend requested i make her a framed message of that years ago. in the pursuing years i too have begin to understand the message of letting go. it is so true what our Lord

said: "without Me you can do nothing." john 15:5

though my mouth does the speaking, my feet do the moving and my hands do the lifting, i know it is You alone that accomplishes anything of worth. "unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it." psa 127:1 Lord, i am merely an instrument for You to play. i pray You will pick me up and make beautiful things come forth. in the name of Jesus!

soon, and very soon, our Lord is going to load us with treasures beyond imagination. "do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." luke 12:32

every time you chose the right way instead of the easy way; every time you trusted Him when there was no hope in sight; every time you defended His name and were laughed at and mocked; every time you tried to lighten another's load; every tear you shed and stand you took has not gone unnoticed by your Lord. these were not done for reward, but out of love, and for that reason alone the reward will be the greater.

Lord, strip me of anything but Your presence. as king david cried out so do we. "do not cast me away from Your presence, and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me." psa 51:11 in Your presence is fullness of joy and at Your right hand, pleasures forevermore. there is nothing on earth i desire more than You.