



**"No Cross,
No Crown"**

The Cross and Crown

a publication of Highway Mission Tabernacle and Resurrection Life Church, Philadelphia, PA

Edition XLV | December 31, 2023 copyright ©2023, Highway Mission Tabernacle

Every night when I was growing up, our family met in the family room for devotions at 7:30. We each took turns reading out loud from the Bible – my father, in his steady baritone, reading from the Revised Standard Version, and the rest of us reading, at various times, from the King James Version, the Living Bible or the Amplified Bible.

If you've had me as a Sunday School teacher, you've probably heard me rhapsodize about my father's wisdom. There were two things in particular that strike me as wise in the way he conducted our family's devotions.

First, our devotions were held at a specific time. My father let us children choose the time, and we picked 7:30 because there was nothing good on TV then. While that wasn't the most spiritual reason, it helped lessen our distractions, keeping us from rushing through the time lest we miss our favorite program. Beyond that, though, there was wisdom in setting a specific time for devotions. When there's no set appointment, it's easy for things to slip off the radar or to be out-prioritized, especially when there are several people's schedules to coordinate. In our family, we knew not to plan for anything at 7:30, because that time was earmarked for devotions.



The second wise thing was having each of us read the Bible out loud. It's a lot easier to gloss over a passage when you're just listening to it, or even when you're reading it silently to yourself. We engage with a text differently when we actually pronounce its words out loud. Reading out loud calls for more contemplation; – rather than gobbling down whole sentences and paragraphs, we must digest the text word by word, giving the Word its due.

At the turn of the year, I like to encourage people to embark on a Bible-reading journey. While I wholeheartedly recommend reading the Bible through in a year, I know that this can be an intimidating task. You shouldn't stress over it. Bible reading should not be a chore. Just commit to reading one chapter every day and stick with it! You might miss a day here or there, but come back to it. You'll thank me later.

Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it. (Revelation 1:3)

Thanks for Praying!

We're looking forward to ringing in the new year with prayer! Thanks so much for partnering with us! Please continue to pray with us for:

- a real move of the Spirit in our church and community in 2024,
- healing in bodies, minds and relationships, and
- God's direction and provision as we move ahead.







Pastor Emeritus Otto Wegner, speaking on Christmas Eve

We're praying with you!

If you're on our mailing list*, you're on our prayer list! If there's anything specific that we can join with you in praying about, please let us know.

Thanks so much to those who keep in touch! It's so encouraging to hear from you!

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* **Important:** If you'd rather not be on our mailing list, we won't be offended! Just call or drop us a note, and we'll remove you. (We'll still keep you on our prayer list!)

If you'd rather receive this letter via e-mail, please let us know!

Did you know?

Right Now Media is a kind of YouTube of Christian content, with a library of over 25,000 streaming videos. It includes overviews, topical studies and commentaries, as well as dramatic content for children and adults. The Bible studies can be done in small groups or by individuals and families, and many include resource materials and teachers' guides. All of this is available to you free of charge, through Highway's subscription. You can sign up at <https://rnm.rlc.ag>. Feel free to contact us for help getting started!

Oh, how I love your Law! I meditate on it all day long. (Psalm 119:97)



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