



THE CROSS *and* CROWN

“No Cross, No Crown”

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

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I'm enjoying reading through some of the materials that are being digitally preserved in Highway's archives. This past week, our archivist shared Highway's first church manual, dated November 1, 1899. One statement stood out to me: "All members are expected as part of their religious duty to determine for themselves before God how much they can and will give regularly and cheerfully to the work of the Lord." (Commas must not have been in vogue, back then.) This statement derives from II Corinthians 9:7, "Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."

There are many ways that we can give. We can give sparingly, liberally, generously, or sacrificially. However, if we're only giving "reluctantly or under compulsion," we're missing the point.



Although Paul was speaking specifically about monetary offerings, it's not a stretch for me to extend this teaching to every kind of offering. Pastor W. Howard Roberson once told me of a time when he was getting ready to speak at a camp meeting, if I remember correctly, but he really didn't want to be there. He discussed this with God, praying in his spirit along the lines of, "Well, God, I don't want to be here, but I came out of obedience." He told me that the Holy Spirit replied, "You might as well just go home!"

In a very real sense, it's true that *how* we give is as important as *what* we give. Whatever we give – our finances, our talents and skills, our time and energy – if we're giving begrudgingly or out of a sense of duty, we can't expect God to be pleased. We need to step back and ask him to give us cheerful hearts.

One of the perils of ministering in a small church is that of doing things only because someone's got to do them. Candace can tell you about the times when I've complained about having to set up chairs or shovel snow or stay late to lock up the building. These may not be things that I enjoy doing, but they are an offering that I should be able to make cheerfully! I need to pray!

I encourage you to take a look at the gifts that you're offering to God – and, specifically, at how you're offering them. I'm talking about your tithes and offerings, the work you do for the church, and even the way that you interact with your family, your neighbors and your coworkers (which, let's face it, is how we minister most often). If there are areas where you need more cheerfulness, be honest about it, and ask God to give it to you!

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord

(Colossians 3:23)

Thanks for Praying!

We're gearing up for the fall! We need your help. Please join us as we pray for:

- rest for those who have labored so long and diligently in sowing season,
- good ground for the seed that was sown; may it be well-watered fertile,
- laborers ready and equipped to bring in the harvest, and
- much good fruit!



Our children and youth sharing at our end-of-summer block party

We also received news last Sunday that one of our members from the 1980s and 90s was involved in a car accident. Please join us in praying with her as she recovers.

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 for, please let us know. (We will only publish your requests in this newsletter with your permission.)

We really do love hearing from you! Every message and phone call helps us keep going!

✉	PO Box 15191 Philadelphia, PA 19130
🌐	17 th & Tioga Streets (3501 N 17 th Street) Philadelphia, PA 19140
📞	Church/Academy Office: (215) 226-1000
💻	Welcome@ResLife.AG

* **Important:** If you'd rather not be on our mailing list, we won't be offended! Just call or write us, 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, or subscribe to it at crossandcrown.online/subscribe !

Did you know?

According to the internet 😊, smiling signals your brain to release hormones that boost the immune system as well as endorphins that help reduce pain. A study in the journal *Psychophysiology* claims that people who smiled during stressful tasks had lower, healthier heart rates than those who didn't.

A cheerful heart is good medicine. (Proverbs 17:22)



Highway Mission Tabernacle ♦ Resurrection Life Church ♦ PO Box 15191 Philadelphia, PA 19130
Welcome@ResLife.AG ♦ Church: (215) 226-1000 ♦ Otis: (215) 266-5976
HighwayTabernacle.org ♦ ResLife.AG ♦ Sunday services at Noon: ResLife.stream

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