



**"No Cross,  
No Crown"**

# The Cross and Crown

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Do me a favor: Stop and take a look at your surroundings, concentrating on seeing what you don't ordinarily see. Right now, for example, I'm sitting in my home office, which is, to put it charitably, rather cluttered. Somehow, as I work here day to day, I manage to ignore the mess all around me. Unless I'm trying to find something that's been buried in the debris, I can blind myself to everything other than my screen, keyboard and mouse.

Humans have the amazing ability to filter out information. Were it not so, we would be overwhelmed by all the details. If you've ever taken a walk with a young child, you're probably familiar with the experience of having to stop and examine every little detail – small, insignificant things that you no longer notice but which are rife for exploration to a young, inexperienced and inquisitive mind. They're still amazed by things that we've trained our minds not to see.

When I first moved to Philadelphia, living in Center City, I was shocked to see homeless people every time I left my apartment. I'm ashamed to say that, over time, my mind learned to filter them out, rendering them as just part of the landscape. Apparently, the homeless can tell the difference, too: As a wide-eyed, newly minted Philadelphian I was constantly hit up for change, but, now that I'm perceived as a hardened city dweller, entreaties come far less often. This is not something that I'm proud of.



In Genesis 18, the Lord told Abraham, "The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is so great and their sin so grievous that I will go down and see if what they have done is as bad as the outcry that has reached me." And what was their grievous sin? God later spelled it out: "Now this was the sin of your sister Sodom: She and her daughters were arrogant, overfed and unconcerned; they did not help the poor and needy." (Ezekiel 16:49)

I won't claim to know the solution to the crisis of need at home and throughout the world, but I can't ignore what God is saying to me. No longer can I remain arrogant and unconcerned, doing nothing for the needy, while I live with more than enough. Lord, restore my vision and soften my heart.

*When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. (Matthew 9:36)*

# Thanks for Praying!

We thank the Lord for the vision that he's giving us for our community. It can be frustrating, because the need is so great and we're so small, but we're grateful and confident because of partners like you! Please pray with us for

- our Thanksgiving and Christmas community outreaches,
- new believers who have expressed interest in baptism and church membership, and
- the financial and human resources that we need to carry out our mission.







Youth Group Relaunch!

## 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 you in praying about, please let us know.

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

 PO Box 15191 Philadelphia, PA 19130
 17 <sup>th</sup> & Tioga Streets (3501 N 17 <sup>th</sup> 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 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?

When engineers first attempted to give computers vision, hooking them up to video cameras so that they could acquire information the way that humans do with their eyes, there was more information than the computers could process. Until the programmers were able to "teach" the computers how to ignore visual information, the cameras had to be restricted to black and white, to reduce the amount of input.

**Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!** (Romans II:33)



Highway Mission Tabernacle ♦ Resurrection Life Church ♦ PO Box 15191 Philadelphia, PA 19130

Welcome@ResLife.AG ♦ Church: (215) 226-1000 ♦ Otis: (215) 266-5976

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