



TRANSFORM YOUR LIFE WITH THE BIBLE'S WAY TO WEIGHT LOSS



April 2004

Matthew 6:33:

But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

FIRST PLACE

Phone:

(800) 727-5223

(713) 688-6788

Fax:

(713) 688-7282

To Place Orders:

(800) 446-7735

Fax: (800) 860-3109

www.firstplace.org

The First Place E-Newsletter is published monthly by First Place. Address all correspondence to First Place, 7401 Katy Freeway, Houston, TX 77024-2199.

Telephone . . . (800) 727-5223
or (713) 688-6788

Fax (713) 688-7282

Web site . . . www.firstplace.org

National Director Carole Lewis

Associate Director . Kay Smith

Leadership Training

Director Nancy Taylor

Newsletter . . . Sheila Robbins

Dear Friends,

I love our E-Newsletter theme this month, "New Beginnings." In fact, I am writing a new book using the "beginning again" theme for several chapters. I believe that our continual need for a new beginning is so important to God that He will use absolutely any circumstance in our life to get our attention.

While driving to the office this week, I heard a sermon on a local Christian radio station by Dr. Charles Stanley entitled *How God Gets Our Attention*. As I listened, I was reminded of how God has used each of the ten ways Dr. Stanley mentioned to get my own attention, and still use these ways today to reach me. I pray that as you read this article, God will impress your heart if He is using one of these ways to get your attention right now.



Carole Lewis

National Director
Carole@firstplace.org

1. A Restless Spirit—*Esther 6:1*

How God used a king's sleeplessness to get his attention

God has used this method many times to get my attention. My publisher began talking to me about writing a new book last fall before Cara and I completed The Mother Daughter Legacy manuscript. (For those of you who have asked, the book will be available April 2, 2004 from Gospel Light, or at your favorite bookstore.) As I resisted the idea of writing another book before I felt rested from writing the last one, my spirit became exceedingly restless. I found it impossible to settle down to much of anything; because all I could think about was that I did not want to write this book.

Two weeks ago during meetings at Gospel Light, I realized they were serious about the book and wanted the release to coincide with the launch of the new First Place Kits. Upon returning home, I began to pray about writing the book and immediately the restlessness was gone. (Why didn't I think of this the previous two months?) God used my restless spirit to get my attention.

(Continued on Page 2)





Carole Lewis

(Continued from Page 1)

2. A Word Spoken To Us— *1 Samuel 3:9*

How God used Eli's words to get Samuel's attention

God has used a word spoken from someone to get my attention many times. The one that stands out most vividly in my mind is December 1984. This was a desolate time in my life and I desperately needed to hear from God. He used a dear friend, who told me that God had impressed her heart for the past three weeks that He wanted to do something great with my life, but I must first surrender everything to Him. Because of my friend's words, I ultimately did just that, and God began to do His work through me as I gave up the control of my life to Him.

3. Blessing Us In An Unusual Way— *Romans 2:4*

How God rewards us through His kindness

God constantly uses the blessing of living on Galveston Bay to get my attention. As I walked back to my house one morning after picking up the newspaper, I was astonished to see a gorgeous full moon shining through the trees. This month the full moon sneaked up on me because of cloudy, overcast skies for several weeks. I stopped right there and thanked God for the tremendous way He is blessing us by allowing us to live in a place where we see His glorious creation at every glance. We watch the sun and the moon come up outside our bedroom window, and the changing majesty of the sea is ever present before us.

4. Disappointment— *Numbers 14:26-35*

How God used the disappointment of the Israelites' ban from the Promised Land to get their attention and bring them to repentance

Disappointment is one of the paramount ways

God uses to get my attention. Whenever I am disappointed in a situation or another person, the disappointment refuses to leave until I get with God and pour out my disappointment and pain. As I pour out my disappointment, God shows me once again that I have put my trust in someone or something other than Him.

5. Unusual Situation— *Exodus 3:2*

How God used a burning bush to get the attention of Moses

I do not believe that anything happens by coincidence. When I find myself in an unusual situation, I immediately ask God what He is saying. Last Friday morning, I went over to our Mission Center to speak to the ladies in the Christian Women's Job Corp. When I arrived, I discovered that the person following me had cancelled and I could take all the time I needed. I knew as I was speaking, the Holy Spirit had taken charge. When this happens, I always feel as though I just step back and watch as He speaks. The next morning in my quiet time, God impressed my spirit that this "unusual situation" occurred to get my attention, so that I would know He wanted to use the message from the day before in the new book.

6. Failure— *Joshua 7,8*

How God got the attention of the Israelites by turning their failure in battle into victory

God uses my failures more than my successes to get my attention. When I fail at something, it is usually a failure on my part of not responding properly in some area. When I fail at weight control, it is always because I take my eyes off of God's power and grace to help me succeed. When I experience failure in a relationship, it is usually because I have failed to respond as God would to the person. We are never failures unless we quit

(Continued on Page 3)





Carole Lewis

(Continued from Page 2)

trying. Is God trying to get your attention through some failure you are experiencing right now?

7. Dries Up Our Finances— *Judges 6*

How God brought poverty to cause the Israelites to cry out to Him for help

This is exactly what God used in December 1984 to get my attention. Johnny's business failed during the 1980's oil and gas downturn in Houston, and we lost literally everything except our home. God stripped all our material trappings to get my attention, so that I would be willing to listen when He sent a word to me by way of a friend. I learned more during that time of financial desolation than I have ever learned during times of prosperity.

8. Tragedy— *Numbers 21:5-6*

How God used tragedy to get the attention of the Israelites

I do not believe that God causes tragedy to come into the life of a believer. I do believe that God uses literally everything that happens to us to get our attention. Johnny's cancer diagnosis in 1997, and the death of our daughter, Shari, in 2001, mightily grabbed our attention. The cancer taught us to treasure every moment of every day, because our marriage is precious and should never be taken for granted. Shari's death pointed up the fact that any of us could be snatched from this earth in an instant, when we least expect it. Knowing this has made us want to do all we can to bring others to Christ.

9. Sickness or Affliction— *Acts 9:8*

How God used Affliction to get Saul's attention

God used this one in my life twice in the mid 1990's to get my attention. I told a dear friend who has a retreat ministry, that I would speak for three of her Women's Conferences that year. I didn't

bother to ask God, because I wanted to go, and the honorarium I would receive would allow me to bring Johnny in for a few days of rest and recreation. I spoke at the first conference in Charleston, South Carolina and developed a terrible cough during my last message. Johnny flew in, but the weather was bitterly cold and we were freezing as we walked the streets of Charleston.

These events did not get my attention and I was determined to keep the other two engagements. About six weeks before the second retreat, I developed a bulging disc and was in intense pain for three weeks. Finally, at the end of three weeks of misery, I picked up the phone and humiliated myself by having to tell my friend that God had showed me for that period of time. He was only going to let me speak for First Place events. I had to ask her forgiveness for not praying before agreeing to speak at the conferences. She graciously forgave me and asked another speaker for the last two retreats.

As I wrote about the times God has used one of these ten points to get my attention, I prayed that He would get your attention as you read this article. The secret of being an overcomer in this life is to recognize the hand of God in everything that happens to us, and then to take our circumstances and place them in the loving hands of our God.

Thank you, God, and thank you, Dr. Charles Stanley, for speaking to my heart and to the hearts of my First Place friends.

**Blessings to you,
Carole Lewis**

Carole@firstplace.org





Talkin' With Kay

Dear First Place Friends,

Springtime brings such excitement, full of new beginnings. Recently, our five grandchildren spent a few days with us during spring break. A fun project the first day was for the older ones to build and paint a birdhouse. The very next day we were amazed at the warfare going on in our backyard with birds claiming and defending their new beginnings. I pray to have the same energy this spring, as I continue personal temple remodeling through First Place.

I read about some healthy warfare going on in the field of nutrition lately over the USDA Food Pyramid. A new beginning for this pyramid is already underway by a panel of experts, aiming to educate the public in more detail about the importance of food choices inside each panel. Two main topics are whole grain foods and fats. I have had many questions about how this will affect the First Place exchanges. Years ago, the First Place Live-It went a step further to educate members about the importance of choosing mono and poly-unsaturated fats. We added information to our program about the importance of eating high fiber foods; however, I think it would be a great idea to emphasize the importance of choosing whole grain products. A new beginning with whole grain products will not only benefit your health, but also your weekly weight loss.

A few of our First Place leaders have sent me a great website, the Harvard School of Public Health, which has some great health related articles. They have developed the Healthy Eating Pyramid that takes into consideration and puts into perspective the wealth of research conducted during the last ten years relating to healthy eating. You can find this site at www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource. They have some great printer friendly files that are very interesting.

The choices we make from the Bread/Starch Food Group are very important. Carbohydrates are an important part of a healthy diet, because they provide fuel for the body. Many foods rich in whole grain carbohydrates are good sources of essential vitamins

Kay Smith

Associate Director
kays@bigcountry.net



and minerals. Food companies make it more difficult than it should be to spot a whole grain food. Aware that the consumers are interested in whole-grain products, companies often make foods sound like they are whole grain and healthy when they are not. You must read labels carefully. You want to see on the label whole grain wheat, oats, rye, or other whole grain cereal. For example, the words "made with wheat" probably do not indicate a whole grain product.

There is a world of information available to us through the Internet. Some of the sites I have visited with good advice concerning fiber are: www.mywebmd.com. You will find a search window on the home page, just type in fiber. The University of Minnesota Extension Service publications titled, "Fiber in the Diet," is available on the Internet at www.extension.umn.edu/living.

Successful new beginnings often come in small steps. Scott Wilson has some great suggestions in his article for adding fiber to your plan. I also got an email recently from Mark Gutierrez, a very successful First Place leader in California. (You can read his testimony on the First Place web site.) Mark mentioned two of his favorite sources of fiber are in the Kashi cereal. Some of his favorites are "Go Lean Crunch" and "Good Friends Cinna-Raisin Crunch," "Heart to Heart," and the original "Good Friends." He often mixes these choices with yogurt. Two servings of this will give you 16 grams of fiber, and that is about half of what is recommended for each day. I plan to see if these are available in my area. Send me your favorite high fiber foods and I will share them next month.

Please try to make this spring a time of new beginnings as each of you evaluate your eating plan, focusing on fiber.

May God Bless Each of You!
Kay Smith





Leadership Training

The Birthing Pains of New Beginnings

Nancy Taylor

Leadership Training Director
ntaylor@firstplace.org

Have you ever noticed the sigh of relief that comes with a new beginning? After hours of labor, I let out a great sigh of relief when I looked at the newborn son cradled in my arms. Watching my son drive off for the very first time, I slowly relaxed as he began his new driving experience. I sat in the leather seats and drank in that new car smell, as I buckled the seat belt and began a wonderful relationship with my new red Honda, affectionately named, "Her Honda Highness." All of these memories are new beginnings that started with a sigh of relief.

"Relief from what?" you may ask. Every new beginning is preceded with pain in some degree or another. I experienced nine months of growing discomfort and eight hours of labor pains before I could begin the new experience of parenting. High anxiety preceded my son earning his driver's license. Even now, as I recall the first time I rode with my son as he drove, I tense up from my neck all the way down my spine! The old red Caravan was on its last leg before trading it in for the new Honda. The Caravan's last year was spent more in mechanics garages than in our own garage. The sigh we experience at a new beginning is a result of being relieved from the journey of pain that brought us to this new threshold experience.

Whenever someone finally "gets it" and begins to lose weight on the Live-it, I am compelled to ask, "What was it that helped you get serious about starting?" Usually they respond with, "I just couldn't stand being like that anymore!" It reminds me that the key to success in any new endeavor is that **the motivation to change must be stronger than the desire to remain the same.**

In other words, the pain of remaining the same must become greater than the pain of change before any progress will occur. This reminds me of the traffic in Houston, Texas. One of the most congested freeway interchanges in the entire country is located right outside our office door! People have experienced for years the headache and hassle of traffic jams on the Katy Freeway. Finally, the freeway is being expanded to allow for more traffic flow. However, the construction is causing its own form of pain to all those who have to find detours and alternate routes to their workplace each day. I have heard it said more than a few times, that it is all going to be worth it when we have new roads with more lanes to drive on. You see, the pain of remaining stuck in traffic with no progress in sight has become greater than the pain of the construction, which will bring us new roads with better traffic flow.

If you are a new First Place leader, you probably experience some labor pains before giving birth to your leadership. You may be one who had never been in a First Place class before leading one of your own. If this is the case, you came to a point that you knew you couldn't stay the way you were and you knew others were in the same condition. Some of the most effective leaders are ones who have "been there." You then may have struggled with self-doubt and challenges that made you question whether this was the right thing to do. Taking the steps to begin a First Place class was painful or difficult, but you must have exhaled a sigh of relief after

(Continued on Page 6)





Nancy Taylor

(Continued from Page 5)

that first session, knowing that it really was worth it!

If you have been leading for a while, you may be in the place where you want to take a break or step down and let someone else take the leadership role. This is the birthing pain of leading for the long haul. The last few weeks of each session, I begin to tire and long for a break. Some members have dropped out, some have not lost even one pound, and some have whined and complained through the entire session. But at the end of the session, it is the members who have lost weight, memorized the scripture, and experienced freedom from strongholds that make it all worth it! They now have a new beginning and thus, I have a reason to lead a new session of First Place.

Are you in a painful, hard or difficult place? If you answered "yes," then things are looking up! One of two things is about to take place. You are either at the point that the pain of staying the same is becoming greater than the pain of change or you are in the process of changing. Either way, you are about to give birth to a new beginning!

Lead On!

Nancy Taylor

Leadership Tip

After completing our first session of First Place, what do I teach the second 13-week session?

This question continues to surface very often, as new leaders are drawing close to the end of their very first session. Here are some suggestions:

- Plan to offer an orientation meeting for anyone who is interested in joining First Place for the first time. You will want to conduct this meeting about 2 weeks prior to the start of your new session.
- Make a copy of the blank session overview form, found in the leader guide pages 82-83 and use it to plan your entire session.
- Choose one of the First Place Bible studies to use the next session. There is no set order in which you are to complete the studies. New and returning members will complete the same study.
- The first two meetings are basically the same as the first session. You will present the food plan, how to fill out the CR and review the nine commitments. Returning members will only benefit from a review of the food plan. You will also want to plan an activity that will help them get to know one another during the second meeting.
- You will want to combine both the new members with the returning members. This will be motivation for the returning members and encouraging for the new members. New members bring enthusiasm back to the returning member and the returning member can help guide the rookie member.
- Survey your members to find out their interests, and ask what they hope to gain from participating in First Place. This will help you plan further activities for the class.
- You will want to assign the most important wellness worksheets again, such as Finding Your Healthy Weight and Choosing Your Calorie Level to help the new member get started and to help the returning member re-evaluate where they are and where they want to be.
- Then choose the wellness worksheets from the Member Guide and the Bible study that will help the members reach their desired goals, based on the member survey.
- To make things more interesting, ask members, especially the returning members, to volunteer to facilitate discussion of a day or week of the Bible study. You may also want to ask them to research a topic, such as high blood pressure, weight training, or fiber and make a report of their findings to the class.





Bev's Footnotes

Purpose Meets Passion

Genesis 1:1 "In the beginning, GOD". Before our "New Beginnings," God is already there. Our First Place group is currently in the Bible Study, "Begin Again." When I told the group which study we were using, one of my members said sadly, "That is the story of my life. No finishes, just beginning again and again." I was about to get caught up in the moment of sadness when the Spirit of the Lord stopped me and allowed me to view all of the diets and exercise programs I had begun. I had so many new beginnings I couldn't count or remember them all. I could have viewed each "new beginning" as a failure but, realized that each one was actually a learning experience, a stepping-stone to where I am today. In each one of my new beginnings, God was already there. He has a purpose in placing us on the starting line of our beginnings. His purpose is that His children are successful in all that they do. God has a passion for us to feel successful rather than feel like a failure for having to begin again.

My main purpose in a "new beginning" is to lose weight and become thin. God's purpose and passion is that I become healthy and live a long abundant life. When we stand on the starting line of a new beginning, we need to come to the place where our purpose in being there meets the passion our Father has for our success in each new endeavor.

You may say, "I know that my purpose is to exercise, but how do I become passionate for exercise?" Before you begin each day, know that God is there before you begin and look at it through God's creative eyes.

Begin each day like it is the very first day of your exercise program. Create a new day for your exercise, just as God did something new each day in the creation. At the end of each day look at it and say just like our Father said, "It is good."

Beverly Henson

Certified Personal Trainer
Bevh1952@bellsouth.net



Exercise Genesis

**Seven days of Creative exercise.
God is there before I begin.**

Day One: Weight training arms and upper body. Strength training and Stretching. Walk 2 miles/ cardio/ with a bit of speed (treadmill or walk outside.) *At the end of the day look at it and say, "It is Good!"*

Day Two: Strength training/ abs and back/ exercise ball/ stretch. Aerobics with the First Place/Body and Soul Video. *End of the Day say, "It is Good!"*

Day Three: Bicycle ride 5 miles. *It is Good!*

Day Four: Strength training Legs and lower body/ stretch, Pilates. *It is Good!*

Day Five: Longer Cardio 3 mile walk. *It is Good!*

Day Six: Play day, tennis, skate, hike, kayak, recreational activity. *It is Fun!*

Day Seven: Day of REST and reflecting. Can you say, "Whew!" *Now it is time to begin again in the morning.*

By becoming creative in your planning, your purpose in exercise will meet the passion the Father had for creating the world for us to live in. In reflecting on each day and saying it was good, you will begin to look for the positive rather than the negative. Begin looking at each day through the Father's eyes. Remember! God is already there before we begin. Our Father thrives on our "new beginnings."

Press On!

Bev Henson





Hope Again!

The winter is fading in Texas and unlike my friends in the Northeast of the United States; my yard and flowerbeds are lush with green. The yard sways with hearty blades and the beds are filled with tiny blooms; unfortunately, they are all weeds. Our winters kill the plants we love, but make no impact on the weeds we hate! It is time to give new plants room to sprout and flourish. It will take a lot of time on my knees and dirt under the fingernails.

Winter for many is a distressing time with dreary days, bare trees, and shorter hours of sunshine. Spring is a time of renewal in nature and also in the spirit of many people. It is a time when nature gives us a living reminder that life can spring from a land that seems dead. It is the season of remembering that the ultimate 'hope' is in the resurrection of Christ.

History is crowded with people who seek encouragement in seemingly hopeless times. Perhaps one of the most intriguing accounts is the life of the biblical Job. He had lost his possessions, his children and his health. His spouse became so discouraged and despondent that they became emotionally isolated from each other. His friends confronted him with their insights but they were out of touch and hurtful. It seemed as though God was silent. Job questioned and struggled but continued his faith in God.

We can learn much from Job, but he did not know what we know.

"At least there is hope for a tree: If it is cut down, it will sprout again, and its new shoots will not fail. Its roots may grow old in the ground and its stump die in the soil, yet at the scent of water it will bud and put forth shoots like a plant. But man dies... and is no more."
Job 14:7-10 NIV

What a beautiful picture from God's nature - "at the scent of water" it will sprout again. What a heart breaking view that nature has more hope of renewal than people.

But he did not know what we know.

Dr. Bill Heston

University Chaplain,
Howard Payne University
Brownwood, Texas
Bheston@hputx.edu



Dr. William Heston was minister of pastoral care at Houston's First Baptist Church; clinical member of the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, and a marriage therapist licensed by the state of TX. He has also led seminars at First Place Conferences."

"... Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen! ..." Luke 24:5c - 6a NIV

Job in his despair still believed that the Lord he is God, even though he did not know the full story. How much greater is our hope this side of the resurrection.

To give hope room to flourish it will take time on your knees and a little dirt under your fingernails.

- ✓ **Clear a spot** - whether it is replanting a flowerpot or simplifying your day that is cluttered with 'choking weeds' like too much mindless TV. Make room for good things. This will require stopping some bad habits and setting boundaries in relationships that negatively affect your spiritual and personal goals.
- ✓ **Plant the good** - carefully pulling the weeds and leaving the "sleeping" plants takes determination, concentration and attention. You may need to be reminded of what had bloomed before the cold winter and encourage them to bloom again. Remembering positive qualities and activities are key to helping them sprout and grow. Reconnect with people you see living a life that is worth living and follow their ways.
- ✓ **Commit to care** - sometimes the first step is the hardest but success requires continued attention. Giving the right nutrients, clearing recurring weeds, and a balance of sun and water are all required for continued health. For the believer it is no different. The temptation of letting things take care of themselves will cause all of the effort to be short lived. Steady attention, balance and commitment are ingredients of a life of hope.

It is a new season. For those who are hoping for springtime renewal it will come if we kneel in prayer, work with diligence and remember that "He is risen - He is risen indeed!"

Bill Heston



Hints & Pinches

Seasonal Changes and a New Beginning

There are new beginnings that sometimes occur collectively and sometimes individually that we often think of as just ordinary, but they can still have an effect on us. For instance, a change in the seasons, in the weather, or in the scenery on the route we drive to work can impact our lives. Then, there are those things like learning your memory verses, reading the Bible, attending your First Place class (even when you don't want to), sticking to the Live-It plan, in other words your nine commitments. These things also influence us and this type of change could be classified as extraordinary and life-changing.

With your new beginning, start each week with just one change in your Live-It plan.

- ✓ No time in the morning for breakfast? Make it the night before. Keep a supply of hard cooked eggs in the refrigerator. Peel in the morning and make a muffin sandwich to eat on the run.
- ✓ Take some part-skim ricotta cheese, add a pack of artificial sweetener per 1/2-cup, flavor with a little lemon, almond, or vanilla extract and keep refrigerated for a treat to eat with an apple or pear.
- ✓ Don't like to drink milk? Take a few whole wheat crackers and 2 ounces of sliced 2% cheese for another breakfast on the go.
- ✓ For a nutritious and low calorie lunch, pack some raw, or lightly steamed (then chilled) vegetables, such as broccoli, cauliflower or carrots. Add a small container of dip (or individual package of reduced-fat salad dressing) and you've got a great snack or lunch addition.
- ✓ A thermos can keep things hot, as well as cold, which opens up a host of lunchtime possibilities. How about soups, or pastas, or even stir-fry's? A wide mouthed thermos container can be the brown bagger's best friend. Just fill with piping hot food and seal. It will stay hot until lunchtime.
- ✓ If time is the issue for dinner, we talked last month about getting out the crock pot.

Scott Wilson

First Place Food Consultant
firstplacechef@hotmail.com



Scott Wilson is a certified executive chef with the American Culinary Federation. If you have any questions regarding food preparation, you may write him at 7075 Red Fox Lane, Cumming, GA 30040.

- ✓ Purchasing convenient items in the grocery store (chopped peppers, onions, sliced fruits and vegetables, packages of cut meats with the vegetables included) may cost you a little more, but will save you prep time. If it's money you want to save, then purchase items closest to their natural state and you do the prep work.
- ✓ When eating out, keep two words in mind...plan ahead! You can't save up for the "all you can eat" buffet, but you can eat at those types of restaurants. Start with a broth soup, hit the salad bar (watch out for those prepared salads with added fat and sodium), load up on dark greens and fresh veggies, and top with a light salad dressing. Proceed to the main line and fill your plate with vegetables first, a starchy item, then check out the baked, broiled, or grilled items. As in cooking at home, trim off any visible fat and enjoy your night out.

The Live-It plan can be daunting. That is why we include a two week meal plan in each Bible study to help ease you into the plan. Whether you are just starting, or this is your new beginning, start with just one change each week. It will make a difference!

Scott Wilson

Breakfast Trail Mix

Serves 12

1-1/2 cups shredded wheat cereal
 1/2 cup dried chopped mixed fruit
 1/4 cup dry roasted peanuts

Mix and place in an airtight container. Makes about 4 (1/2-cup) servings.

Exchanges: 1/2 bread, 1/2 fruit, 1/2 fat





First Place Success Story

I am fifty-plus years old and have been on a diet since I was born, or so it seems. No, I take that back—when I attended kindergarten, all the girls had to wear dresses or skirts and blouses. My mother sewed all my dresses and never let me wear skirts, because I had no hips to hold them up. Did I say, “No hips?” Well, that soon changed as I developed (more outward than upward) into a young girl. One Sunday, when I was nine, my brother John, said he knew the reason my dress was called a house dress—I looked like a house in it. I never let him know how much those words hurt me and so began my life of dieting.

My list of diets included the grapefruit diet, Knox gelatin diet, fasting diet, and always the latest Teen magazine fad diets. After the first 10-15 pounds were lost on these diets, I'd binge until I was both physically and emotionally ill. My life in high school was miserable as a 5'6" teen weighing in at 170 plus pounds. Food held first place in my life.

In my early twenties the weight-loss organization called Weight Watchers came to my area. Membership was quite expensive, but I joined, determined to succeed. I lost 19-1/2 pounds in sixteen weeks, reached my goal weight of 139 pounds, and became a “Lifetime Member.” I took over as leader of the class and began another class in a nearby town. A year later I gained back all my weight, plus another 10 pounds, and was told I couldn't continue as a leader. I was a failure again, because food held first place in my life.

I would return to Weight Watchers every five years or so, pay my membership fees, follow the latest “new and improved program,” and lose weight until I'd reach my goal, again. A few months later, I would lose interest in the meetings and tire of eating foods that ‘normal’ people weren't eating. I would eat my way back up and over my starting weight. This was my yo-yo dieting life, and I knew it wasn't healthy. Finally, about ten years ago, I decided to stop dieting and accept me for what I told myself I was: A big fat, unhealthy, depressed failure as a human being. Food was always going to hold first place in my life and I wasn't going to fight it anymore.

I knew God had a better plan for me and He would never give up on me. I was raised a Christian and had turned away from Him many times in my adult life. I continued to pray the Lord's Prayer at bedtime, though I was only saying the words. Soon I began asking the Lord to give me the strength and determination to do something about my weight and health. I'd cry myself to sleep when I didn't get an answer and I couldn't take control of my life. My weight was at an all time high of 270 pounds, 100 pounds heavier than in high school.

It wasn't until I found First Place that I discovered I never “Let go and let God” to do His miracles in His own way and in His own time. The commitments that I made when I began First Place have made all the difference. Now, I don't diet to lose weight; I follow the “live-it” plan to develop a healthy lifestyle - physically, mentally, spiritually, and emotionally.

I know that I will continue to grow in these areas for the rest of my life as long as I follow the First Place commitments. I have lost over fifty pounds and am confident that I will reach my goal for the last time. This is so much more than a weight-loss program. I turned my life over to God and asked Him to hold first place. With God's help and the encouraging prayers of the group, I have once again found the peace and faith I had as a child when my grandmother taught me The Lord's Prayer and I sang “Jesus Loves Me” in Bible School. He never stopped loving me.

Luke 1:37 *“For nothing is impossible with God.”*

Helen Nemetz



Turkey or Chicken Salad Spread

Serves 6

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 cup leftover turkey or chicken, chopped | 1 teaspoon lemon pepper blend |
| 1 cup 2% cottage cheese | 1/4 teaspoon salt |
| 2 hard boiled eggs, chopped | 1/4 cup celery, diced |
| 1/3 cup light mayonnaise | 1/2 cup 2% sharp cheddar cheese, shredded |

Add first 6 ingredients to a food processor and finely process, add celery and cheese. Use as a sandwich spread, on crackers, or with romaine leaves as a wrap. Makes *about 6 (1/2-cup) servings*.

Exchanges: 2-1/2 meats, 1/2 fat for spread only
(Add bread exchange for crackers.)

Grab and Go Breakfast Muffin

Serves 12

- | | |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 cup all-purpose flour | 1 tablespoon baking powder |
| 1 cup Honey Bunches of Oats Cereal | 1/2 cup peanut butter |
| 1/4 cup sugar | 1/2 cup mashed bananas |
| 1/4 cup Splenda | 1 cup skim milk |
| | 1 egg, beaten |

In a large bowl stir together the flour, cereal, sugar, Splenda, and baking powder. In a small bowl combine the peanut butter, mashed bananas, milk, and egg until well blended. Stir into flour mixture until just moistened. Divide between 12 muffin cups and bake at 400°F for 20 minutes or until golden. Cool. Serves 12.

Exchanges: 1/2 meat, 1-1/2 breads, 1 fat





Coming Events

Area Leader Meetings

April 10, 2004

9:30 AM - 12:00 Noon (lunch included)
First Southern Baptist of Overland Park
Missouri, Kansas
Contact: Joe Ann Winkler
Phone: (913)262-6173
Email: mjaw15@everestkc.net

Saturday, April 17, 2004

9:30 AM - 12:30 PM (lunch included)
Fairview Loop Baptist Church
Fairview, AK
Contact: Judy Reeder
Phone: (907) 376-9759
Email: r8grand@gci.net

April 17, 2004

10:00 AM to 2:00 PM
Christ The Rock Church, Appleton, WI
Contact: Jenn Krogh
Phone: (920) 388-3531
Email: wifirstplace@hotmail.com

April 17, 2004

10:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. (free lunch included)
First Baptist Church, Paintsville, KY
Contact: Sherrie Moore
Phone: (606) 789-7247
Email: sherriemoore@yahoo.com

April 17, 2004

10:00 a.m. - 12:00 Noon
South County Baptist Church
St. Louis, MO
Contact: Patty Ward
Phone: (636) 296-8563
Email: wward@nightowl.net

April 24, 2004

9:00 AM - Noon
Calvary Baptist Church, Shreveport, LA
Contact: Lavahn Stillwell, (318) 687-5199
Email: LAVS777@aol.com

April 24, 2004

9:00 AM - Noon
Rural Dale Baptist Church, Trenton, MO
Contact: Twila Tillman
Phone: (660) 359-5331 or (660) 359-4400
Email: twila@classicnet.net

April 24, 2004

10:00 AM - 12:00 Noon
(light refreshments will be served)
June Chapko's Home, San Antonio, TX
Contact: June Chapko
Phone: (210) 359-8493
Email: chapkoj@aol.com
View the new Leadership Training DVD!

May 8, 2004

9:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon
Gospel Light Headquarters, Ventura, CA
Contact: Lynne Foster
Phone: (310) 328-5030, x7112
Email: tfbce@pacbell.net

First Place Workshops

April 17, 2004

First Place Health & Fitness Rally
Bonita Lakes, Meridian, MS
Contact: Beverly Henson
Email: bev1952@bellsouth.net
Phone: (601) 527-7910

April 23, 2004

Women on Missions Conference
Muldoon Road Baptist Church
Anchorage, AK
First Place Beginners Workshop to be held during the Friday morning and evening workshop sessions.
Contact: Judy Reeder
Phone: (907)376-9759
Email: r8grand@gci.net

April 24, 2004

3rd Annual Faith and Health Conference
9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
First Baptist Church, Augusta, GA
Agenda includes a 5-hour First Place Workshop
Contact: Frances Wilkinson
Phone: 706-667-4287
Email: fcwilkinson@gdph.state.ga.us

May 1, 2004

Oakdale Emory United Methodist Church
Olney, Maryland
Contact: Kathy Geehrehng
Phone: (301)253-6437
Email: kegeehrehng@aol.com
Guest Speaker: Beverly Henson

May 15, 2004

First Place Day of Wellness/
Body & Soul Workshop
9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
New Hope Baptist Church
Loveland, Ohio
Cost: \$25 (includes a First Place lunch)
Contact: Janet Kirkhart
Phone: (513)697-1863 or (937)444-1199
Email: Janet1stplace@hotmail.com
Keynote Speaker: Vicki Heath

May 29, 2004

Australia-Wide Leaders Workshop
9:30 AM - 12:00 Noon
Wollongong Church of Christ
Obriens Rd Figtree NSW2525
Contact: Barbara Lukies
Phone: 0242718800
Email: barblukies@firststplaceaustralia.com

Leadership Summit 2004

July 29-31, 2004

Houston, Texas
Keynote Speaker: Waylon Moore
Worship Leader: Eulalia King
Plus Bible Conference w/Beth Moore
Cost: \$75
Contact: Nancy Taylor
Email: ntaylor@firstplace.org
800-727-5223, Ext. 403

First Place Conference

September 17-18, 2004

New Hope Baptist Church
1041 Loveland-Maderia Road
Loveland, Ohio
Contact: Janet Kirkhart
Phone: 513-697-1863
Email: janet1stplace@zoomtown.com

REGISTRATION FEE:

\$50.00 Postmarked by August 20, 2004
\$60.00 After August 20, 2004

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO:

First Place-FOCUS

SEND CHECK AND REGISTRATION FORM TO:

Janet Kirkhart
C/O New Hope Baptist Church
1041 Loveland-Maderia Road
Loveland, OH 45140

F.O.C.U.S Week 2004

Focusing On Christ's Unlimited Strength

October 7-14, 2004

Round Top, Texas

\$625.00 (includes \$100 non-refundable deposit with registration)

\$675.00 w/airport shuttle
(includes \$100 non-refundable deposit with registration)

Registration deadline and full payment is due September 10, 2004. Contact Lisa Lewis at 800-727-5223, ext. 407 or llewis@firstplace.org.



F.O.C.U.S. Week

... Focusing on Christ's Unlimited Strength

October 7-14, 2004

Round Top Retreat ❖ Round Top, Texas



Round Top Retreat. . .in beautiful Round Top, Texas, is a beautiful Victorian-style retreat center located "Deep in the Heart of Texas." It is operated by the Goad family, who began this ministry on a full-time basis in 1984, to provide a home environment with all the charm of a country setting, where people can share God's Word.



LIMITED TO FIRST 60 REGISTRATIONS!

\$625⁰⁰

(includes \$100 non-refundable deposit with registration)

(Registration Form on next page)

\$675⁰⁰

Includes Airport Shuttle

(includes \$100 non-refundable deposit with registration)

**Registration Deadline and Full Payment
Due September 10, 2004**

Refund Policy -- If First Place cancels F.O.C.U.S. Week, a full refund will be given. All other requests for refunds must be received in writing by September 10, 2004. Upon receipt of request, the refund will be granted, minus the \$100 non-refundable deposit.

No refund given after September 10, 2004.

F.O.C.U.S. WEEK INCLUDES:

- ❖ Nutrition Information
- ❖ Complete Fitness Testing
- ❖ Inspirational speakers
- ❖ Rest and Relaxation
- ❖ Daily Exercise
- ❖ First Place Meals

Contact Lisa Lewis at
800-727-5223, Ext. 407
or llewis@firstplace.org

MARK YOUR CALENDARS AND MAKE YOUR RESERVATIONS TODAY!





Limited to First 60 Registrations

F.O.C.U.S. WEEK

October 7-14, 2004

Round Top Retreat ❖ Round Top, Texas

REGISTRATION FORM

Name: _____

Address: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State/Province: _____

Country: _____

Zip/Postal Code: _____

Day Phone Number: _____

Fax Number: _____

Email Address: _____

Church: _____

Number in Your Group _____

Please list the names of the people with whom you would like to room (minimum of two people to a room):

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Airport Shuttle from Bush Intercontinental Airport:

☐ No ☐ Yes Please book your flight to arrive at
Bush Intercontinental Airport by 1:00 p.m.

Name of Airline: _____

Flight #: _____

Time of Arrival: _____

TOTAL COST:

\$625⁰⁰

*(includes \$100 non-refundable
deposit with registration)*

\$675⁰⁰

*Includes Airport Shuttle
(includes \$100 non-refundable
deposit with registration)*

TYPE OF CARD:

☐ Master Card ☐ Visa

☐ Discover ☐ American Express

Card #: _____

Expires: _____

Name as appears on card: _____

Make checks payable to:

First Place

Return completed registration form with
\$100 non-refundable deposit to:

FIRST PLACE

7401 Katy Freeway, Suite 337
Houston, Texas 77024-2199

or Fax: 713-688-7282

Registration Deadline: September 10, 2004
Full Payment Due: September 10, 2004

Refund Policy -- If First Place cancels F.O.C.U.S. Week, a full refund will be given. All other requests for refunds must be received in writing by September 10, 2004. Upon receipt of request, the refund will be granted, minus the \$100 non-refundable deposit.

No refunds will be given after September 10

