



MARCH 2002

Matthew 6:33:

Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

FIRST PLACE

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www.firstplace.org

Mark Your Calendar!

First Place Conference

September 20-21

Temple Baptist Church

1508 Hardy St.

Hattiesburg, MS

Watch for more information coming soon!

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

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Newsletter Sheila Robbins

Dear Friends,

On November 22, 2001, I woke up very early. It was Thanksgiving Day and we were expecting 30 family members for lunch. I had an overwhelming sense that God wanted me to get up and spend time with Him. Since it was only 4:00 a.m., I began explaining to God that this was going to be a long day and it was a little early for me to be getting out of bed. The Holy Spirit was persistent, so I finally got up, went into the living room and picked up my Bible. God led me to the first chapter of the book of James. Since I was sleepy, I read the chapter several times, meditating on what I read.



Later that night, the entire chapter came rushing back into my mind. We had just gotten the news that our daughter, Shari, had died from the injuries she suffered after being struck by a drunk driver. I had the stark realization that God awakened me early because He was grieving for me in advance and wanted to prepare my heart for what lay ahead. God led me to the chapter that morning because I needed to know that I was going to go through the biggest trial of my life.

I have continued studying the first chapter of James during these last three months and have found many truths to be learned. Since that Thanksgiving Day, God has been teaching me about the difference in trials and temptations. A trial is a season of testing which will develop perseverance in us. Temptation is designed by Satan to deceive us to the point of enslavement.

James 1:13-15 says, *"When tempted, no one should say, 'God is tempting me.' For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full grown, gives birth to death."*

All temptation begins with a single thought. If we fantasize on the temptation, we begin to desire whatever is tempting us. At this point we must make a choice; resist or give in. It has been my experience that if I let the thought take root for even a second, I will usually give in to it.

Dr. John Bisagno, our pastor for thirty years, stated it simply as:

TEMPTATION, HESITATION, PARTICIPATION.

Most of us are in First Place because we have a problem with the temptation to overeat. If we are overweight, we are usually not tempted to overeat on fruits and vegetables. Instead, we find ourselves drawn to high fat, sugary foods such as candy, cookies or cakes.

I once heard Charles Stanley say, "temptation is when God-given desires are taken beyond God-given boundaries." God has given us every good food to eat. When we go beyond what is good and nourishing for our bodies by binging on whatever our particular temptation happens to be, we fall into sin against our own body.

What kind of death is James talking about in verse fifteen? It certainly could be physical death, but I believe in most cases Satan is content if he can kill our self-esteem and destroy our testimony for God. The enemy leaves us alive but ineffective, while desiring for us to believe that consequences are not a natural result of disobedience.

Today, let's choose God and His wonderful plan for our life. God will bless our obedience beyond our wildest dreams.

Carole Lewis
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Talkin' With Kay

Dear First Place Friends,

Please join with me and the First Place Staff in congratulating eight of our First Place family members that have recently reached their lifetime First Place weight goal.

CONGRATULATIONS!

- ❖ LAURIE ADORNETTO from Clarence Center, New York, lost 13-1/2 pounds in 3 months.
- ❖ ROBERTA CARINGER from Springfield, Missouri, lost 30 pounds in 10 months.
- ❖ VALERIE ELLEGOOD from Decatur, Illinois, lost 73-1/2 pounds in 16 months.
- ❖ BARBARA MCCARTNEY from Nelson, Nebraska, lost 26 pounds in 6 months.
- ❖ AMY NIESON from Forest Grove, Oregon, lost 17 pounds in 4 months.
- ❖ JUDY POWELL from Decatur, Illinois, lost 24-1/2 pounds in 4 months.
- ❖ BECKY WISTWATER from Decatur, Illinois lost 65-1/2 pounds in 15 months.
- ❖ MISSY ZESSIN from Florala, Alabama, lost 10 pounds in 3 months.

Praise God! Each of these members has received a gift from First Place. May He receive the glory for the success they have experienced.

We want to encourage you to fill out the form on page 163 in your Member's Guide and mail to the First Place office when you reach your lifetime weight goal in First Place. We encourage members to set a weight loss goal with each session in First Place. You may attain your short-term session goal



Kay Smith
Associate Director
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each time, but please wait to send this form until you have reached your ultimate lifetime goal.

We have many First Place members and leaders who reached their lifetime goal before the new materials were released. Please take time to complete this page and send it to the First Place office at 7401 Katy Freeway, Houston, TX 77024. You will also receive a gift from First Place, and your success will encourage and inspire others.

We would love to have a written personal testimony about your First Place journey, along with before and after pictures, for our First Place E-Newsletter.

In I Samuel 17, God shares a beautiful story of how a young man's trust in God's power gave strength to an entire army. David visited the Israelite army camp and found them paralyzed with fear, from a champion named Goliath, which no one was willing to fight. David, remembering the times in his past that God had delivered him from enemies, agreed to fight Goliath. Look at verse 52. God's victory through David turned a weak army in to "shouting warriors."

Share your victories in First Place with others. We all face giants in our First Place journey. Your personal testimony about God's power in your daily life will give courage to others. Wait, I think I hear more shouting!

May God Bless Each of You!

Kay Smith



Leadership Training

Developing A First Place Team

Being the leader can be a lonely position, especially if one is without a network of support. Leaders may find themselves burnt out and feeling overwhelmed when faced with the burden of leading and coordinating a First Place ministry on their own. When a leader feels lonely and discouraged, they become ineffective in leading their First Place flock. Maintaining effective leadership is contingent upon the leader receiving encouragement, support and counsel from other effective leaders. There are a few areas of the country that offer area leader meetings, where First Place leaders come together on a regular basis for encouragement, sharing of ideas, and for prayer.

If you are not aware of a leader support group in your area, may I suggest that you reach out and find other First Place leaders who would be willing to meet together for support. When a group of leaders get together, they form a team. A team represents a group of individuals who come together to accomplish the same goals and purposes—usually to win or to seek victory. Just like an athletic team seeks victory over their opponent, a First Place leadership team comes together to seek victory—to be victorious over discouragement, and in the process become effective leaders. To reach this goal of effective leadership a First Place team needs these four elements of teamwork:

☛ **TRAINING.** Although training is not required to lead a First Place class, it is beneficial. Leadership training is available at First Place workshops, conferences, and Fitness Weeks. Many times area leaders will attend these events as a team, further increasing their effectiveness. If these First Place events are

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Leadership Training Director
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not available to your group, then use Bible-based leadership resources as training materials. John Maxwell, an expert on leadership and the founder of INJOY, an organization dedicated to helping people maximize their leadership potential, has many resources available on CD, tapes and books. To look at some of these resources, visit the website at www.injoy.com. These resources are not First Place specific, but the leadership principles taught apply to any leadership position. Rick Warren, pastor of Saddleback Community Church has said, “When a leader stops learning, he stops leading.” Training is essential to continued leadership.

☛ **ENCOURAGEMENT.** John Maxwell has said, “Encouragement is oxygen to the soul.” We cannot survive without encouragement and we certainly cannot lead without it. When leaders meet together, they share common struggles, challenges, and concerns. Usually, in a group of leaders you will find that as one leader is experiencing a specific situation, another leader has just come through a similar circumstance and can give encouragement. Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 tells us, “*Two are better than one . . . For if either of them falls, the one will lift up his companion.*” When leaders are part of a team, they have others who will lift them up when they fall. The prayer partner request forms, located in the leader materials, can be used by leaders to share their needs with one another, opening up the opportunity for prayer and encouragement.

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Leadership Training (Continued)

☛ **AFFIRMATION.** A confident leader is one who has been affirmed by others. I would define affirmation as receiving confirming comments regarding ones actions. Leaders call First Place and have concerns about a situation and want to know if they handled it in a proper way. Many times I have the pleasure of saying, “You did exactly what I would have done!” The sigh of relief is heard over the telephone receiver and I know that they have been affirmed. This leadership article is one way to affirm leaders that they are doing the right things or making the right choices. Leaders become tentative and discouraged when they are unsure in their leadership abilities. A team of leaders will affirm one another in their respective ministries, building confidence in their leadership abilities. One word of caution—ultimately it is not our wisdom, strengths or gifts that make us confident, it is the daily leaning on God and His Word that gives us confidence to lead effectively.

☛ **MAINTENANCE.** *“Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you.*

Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.” 1 Corinthians 15:58

As leaders, we need to maintain a level of balance in our lives so that we can persevere in our leadership, even during stressful times. The support of a team of leaders enhances our motivation to remain faithful in our ministry to others. It is hard to maintain leadership without the other elements of teamwork: training, encouragement, and affirmation from others. Just as Paul exhorted the Corinthian Christians to stand firm and fully execute their ministries, I exhort all First Place leaders to stand firm; let nothing keep you from maintaining an excellent level of leadership.

Dear First Place leader, I pray that you will find that group of leaders in your area who will be willing to learn ways to become better leaders through training, have words of encouragement and affirmation to share with you and be there to insure that you maintain an effective level of leadership.

That’s teamwork!
Nancy Taylor

Leadership Tips

QUESTIONS: “We are getting ready to start our second session. What do we do? Do we repeat what we did the first time? How do we use the leader guide after the first session?”

ANSWERS: When you have completed your first 13-week session, you start again; by first having another orientation to invite any new people to join. Those who have just completed the first session would not have to attend an orientation meeting. Next, you will go through the same process as the first session with setting up the class by determining all the details, such as when, where, and what time your class will meet. There is no need to separate returning members from new members. They may all go through the session together using the same materials. At the first and second meeting of the second 13- week session, you will follow the “Group Meeting Week One and Two” plan. The one change might be that you give those returning members the option of leaving when “Live-It” section of the Food Exchange Plan video is shown. You may also want to show that during the last

20 minutes of the class time. Make copies of the Session Overview and the Weekly Lesson Plan forms, which are found on pages 81-83 of the leader guide, and use to create your own lesson plans. You may want to repeat some of the more essential or important Wellness Worksheets each 13-week session and some you may only use when they meet a specific need in the group. You determine which Wellness Worksheets you will spotlight from the Member Guide and from the Bible study. Survey your class to see what needs or interests they may have. Use this information when planning the weekly wellness spotlight. You will also be able to use the Nine Commitments video in place of Wellness Worksheets for the spotlight on those weeks when you feel your members need a motivational word regarding one of the commitments. The Member Guide and Bible studies were created to give you more than enough materials, providing leaders an abundance of resources from which to draw from session to session in order to meet the needs of their First Place class.



Helpful Tips

Here is your guide to tossing food before it makes you sick. It's a healthy habit to develop, going through your fridge once a week and transferring the unknown to the garbage can.

- ◆ Leftover cooked foods or prepared salads such as tuna, egg, macaroni, etc.: 3-4 days
- ◆ Fresh poultry, fish or ground meats: 1-2 days
- ◆ Fresh steaks, chops and roasts: 3-5 days
- ◆ Opened packages of processed meats, such as cold cuts and hot dogs: 3-4 days
- ◆ Opened jars or cans of tomato sauce, beans, vegetables and the like: 3-4 days
- ◆ Hard-boiled eggs: 1 week

Head off smelly fridge odors with this recipe.

Combine 2 tablespoons baking soda with 1 quart warm water for washing the inside of the refrigerator, or use 1 cup vinegar combined with 1 gallon warm water.

For best results (*and to make sure that you're not spreading germs instead of eradicating them*) use a new sponge or one that you've put through the dishwasher.

In general, it makes sense to toss sponges after about 300 uses, or four weeks.

Chlorine bleach is best if used within two years; baking soda is good for three years from the date on the box; and ammonia lasts indefinitely.

Hints & Pinches

Spring Cleaning Your Refrigerator

Scott Wilson
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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.

Sure, most of us mean to wipe up every spill in the fridge the minute it happens, and we all know we should tightly seal food before stowing it and toss out leftovers when they're past their prime. But, we're human and not always so conscientious, which is why we end up with dried drips of Thanksgiving gravy on shelves and half-empty containers of spaghetti sauce, competing with Chinese takeout for space. Still, while tackling this mess may seem daunting, it's worth the effort. Just follow these tips for a clean, bacteria-free fridge in under an hour:

STEP 1: PULL AND TOSS.

Pull the plug and remove all food from the fridge. While you work, pack perishables in an insulated cooler or an ice chest lined with ice packs. Discard any foods that are past their prime, along with open jars of mayonnaise, mustard or other condiments that have been chilling for more than a couple of months. When in doubt, throw it out!

STEP 2: SOAP IT UP.

Starting at the top, clean the outside of the refrigerator with hot, soapy water. Next, tackle the

interior—including walls, shelves, floor and bins—with hot, soapy water or a solution of baking soda and water. Wash all removable shelves and bins, letting them soak in the sink to remove tough stains. Rinse and dry everything thoroughly. To make cleanup easier next time, line shelves and bins with small plastic trays or a double thickness of paper towels to catch drips.

STEP 3: CLEAN AND STORE.

Before returning food to the refrigerator, wipe the sticky film from the jelly jar, the crusty ring from the ketchup, and all other assorted messes from containers. Place a newly opened and dated box of baking soda on the back of a shelf to ward off odors.

To keep your goodies as fresh and tasty as possible, follow these simple rules.

Keep it cold.

Be sure your fridge registers between 35 and 40 degrees. All areas of the refrigerator should register below 40 degrees so that all food can be safely stored in any compartment. If your refrigerator is old or you have any doubts about the temperature and want to check it, you can buy a refrigerator thermometer (available at

(Continued on next page)



Hints & Pinches

(Continued)

hardware stores). Be sure to test different sections of the refrigerator to be certain that cold air is circulating throughout. Put perishables away as soon as you get them home. Wrap or rewrap meats, poultry and seafood, if necessary, to prevent leakage onto other foods, which can cause cross-contamination.

Use those bins.

Replace the cans of diet soda in the crisper with what's really supposed to be there: fruits, veggies, meats and cheese. For optimum freshness, vegetables need high humidity, while fruits need low humidity. And meat bins are designed to allow in additional cold air to keep the meat fresh without freezing.

Don't store in the door!

Don't stash highly perishable foods such as meats, dairy products or eggs inside the fridge door, since the door temperature fluctuates more than the temperature in other areas.

Clean inside and out.

To keep your refrigerator running efficiently, vacuum the front grill and motor to remove dust and dirt. Inside the fridge, wipe up leaks and spills immediately with hot, soapy water or a mixture of equal parts vinegar and water to prevent contamination of other foods.

*To borrow a popular phrase;
Just do it!*

Scott Wilson

Spring Recipes

Broccoli, Orange, and Baby Spinach Salad

Serves 2

2 medium oranges	1 dash pepper
1 teaspoon vegetable oil	2 cups small broccoli florets
1 teaspoon prepared horseradish	1/4 cup thinly sliced red onion, separated into rings
1 teaspoon honey	2 cups stemmed baby spinach
1/8 teaspoon salt	

Peel and section oranges over a large bowl and squeeze membranes to extract juice. Set orange sections aside, and reserve 1 tablespoon juice. Discard orange membranes. Add oil and next 4 ingredients (oil through pepper) to reserved orange juice. Stir well; set aside. Steam broccoli, covered, 1 1/2 minutes or until crisp-tender. Rinse broccoli under cold water; drain well. Add broccoli, orange sections, onion, and watercress to orange juice mixture, and toss well. Divide salad evenly between 2 plates.

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

Beef and Barley Soup

Serves 4

Cooking spray	1/3 cup uncooked quick-cooking barley
1 pound stew meat, cut into 1-inch cubes	1 teaspoon dried thyme
2 (10 1/2-ounce) cans beef broth	1/4 teaspoon garlic powder
1 cup water	1/4 teaspoon ground allspice
2 cups coarsely chopped green cabbage	1/4 teaspoon pepper
1 cup chopped carrot	1 bay leaf
1 cup chopped onion	

Place in a Dutch oven, coated with cooking spray, over medium-high heat until hot. Add stew meat; cook 5 minutes or until browned. Add broth and remaining ingredients; bring to a boil. Cover, reduce heat, and simmer 20 minutes or until meat is tender, stirring occasionally. Discard bay leaf. Each serving equals 2 cups.

Exchanges: 3 meat, 1 bread, 1 vegetable, 1/2 fat

Passover Vegetable Soup

Serves 4

4 cups fat-free chicken broth	1/4 teaspoon salt
3 cups chopped leek	1/8 teaspoon pepper
2 cups diced carrot	3 teaspoons chopped fresh parsley
1 cups diced peeled turnip	

Combine first 6 ingredients in large Dutch oven. Bring to a boil; cover, reduce heat, and simmer 1 hour or until vegetables are tender. Ladle soup into 4 bowls; sprinkle with parsley. Each serving equals 1 cup.

Exchanges: 2 vegetables





Fitness Week

October 10-17, 2002

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!

FITNESS WEEK INCLUDES:

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

Join the entire First Place staff, along with special guest speakers:

Rob & Vicki Heath

&

Worship Leader
Eulalia King

\$575⁰⁰

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(Registration Form on next page)

\$625⁰⁰

Includes Airport Shuttle

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DUE AT REGISTRATION**

Plus

One time payment: \$475 or

Two payments: \$239⁵⁰

Full Payment is due by OCTOBER 1, 2002

MARK YOUR CALENDARS AND MAKE YOUR RESERVATIONS TODAY!

Fitness Week

Limited to First 60 Registrations

October 10-17, 2002

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: _____

How many 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 needed? Yes No

Houston Airport - Hobby Houston Airport - Intercontinental

Name of Airline: _____

Flight #: _____

Time of Arrival: _____

TOTAL COST:

\$575⁰⁰

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

\$625⁰⁰

Includes Airport Shuttle

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

\$100 NON-REFUNDABLE DEPOSIT DUE AT REGISTRATION

TYPE OF CARD:

Master Card Visa

Discover American Express

Card #: _____

Expires: _____

Name as appears on card: _____

Make checks payable to:
First Baptist Church, Houston

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

FIRST PLACE
7401 Katy Freeway
Houston, Texas 77024-2199

or Fax: 713-688-7282

Registration Deadline: October 1, 2002
Full Payment Due: October 1, 2002

