



**MAY 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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**Mark Your Calendar!**

**First Place Conference  
 September 20-21**  
 Temple Baptist Church-  
 West Campus  
 5220 Old Highway 22  
 Hattiesburg, Mississippi

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*Dear Friends,*

**A**s I was driving to work this morning, I heard a powerful message from Charles Stanley on the conscience. Dr. Stanley said that our conscience is something God has placed within each of us so that we can distinguish between right and wrong.

Paul says in I Timothy 1:18-19, *“Timothy, my son, I give you this instruction in keeping with the prophecies once made about you, so that by following them you might fight the good fight, holding on to faith and a good conscience.”*

If God wants us to hold on to our faith and a good conscience, what exactly does that mean? I believe it means that God intends for us to live life to the full with a clear conscience, a conscience void of any guilt toward man or God.

**HOW DO WE KEEP A CLEAR CONSCIENCE?**

- Program our minds with God’s Word. Our First Place Scripture memory CD’s are powerful and will do the job of re-programming a damaged conscience. When we memorize God’s Word, we are placing truth where the lies of the world system have taken root.
- Learn to be instantly obedient to the leading of our Lord. If God has called us to eat differently than the people around us or to exercise our bodies when most of the community is still asleep, then we must practice obedience to His call.

**WHAT IF OUR CONSCIENCE HAS BECOME SEARED?**

Paul told Timothy in I Timothy 4:1-2, *“the Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron.”*

In First Place, we know that our conscience has been seared when:

- Our conscience tells us not to eat (you fill in the blank) and we eat it anyway.
- Our conscience tells us to get out of bed and exercise and we go back to sleep instead.
- Our conscience urges us to get up and spend time in prayer and we resist the call.

Dr. Stanley said that God always wants us to do the right thing and He has given us a conscience as a divine alarm system to protect us. The searing of our conscience comes when the alarms go off time after time and are ignored. Finally, they don’t even go off any more.

If you are in First Place and are having no success at all, could it possibly be that you have seared your conscience to the point that the alarms have been silenced?

My husband, Johnny, has cancer and one of the drugs he took has caused neuropathy, or numbness in his arms and legs. His limbs aren’t totally numb but he lacks the quick response to stimulus that most of us feel. We were sitting on the patio visiting the other night and after a while I said, “I’ve got to go in. I’m being eaten alive by mosquitoes.” Johnny said, “That must be why they aren’t biting me, they have you.” The next morning, his legs

*(Continued on next page)*



## From Carole. . . (Continued)

were covered with bites. He was being bitten, but his alarm wasn't going off.

That's how it is with sin; after a while, the alarms quit going off. The remedy for a seared conscience is quite simple but easy to resist in today's culture. All we have to do is return to God at the point we left Him. We must get on our knees and be honest with God; tell Him when we don't feel anything and ask him to cleanse our heart and mind so that our conscience will function correctly again.

When minister Joe Wright was asked to pray at the opening session of the Kansas Senate, he prayed the following prayer, which shows what happens when our consciences become seared.

"Heavenly Father, we come before you today to ask your forgiveness and to seek your direction and guidance. We know your Word says, 'Woe to those who call evil good,' but that is exactly what we have done. We have lost our spiritual equilibrium and reversed our values. We confess that:

- We have ridiculed the absolute truth of your Word and called it Pluralism,
- We have exploited the poor and called it the lottery,
- We have rewarded laziness and called it welfare,
- We have killed our unborn and called it choice,
- We have shot abortionists and called it justifiable,
- We have neglected to discipline our children and called it building self-esteem,
- We have abused power and called it politics,
- We have coveted our neighbor's possessions and called it ambition,
- We have polluted the air with profanity and pornography and called it freedom of statement,
- We have ridiculed the time-honored values of our forefathers and called it enlightenment.

Search us, Oh, God, and know our hearts today; cleanse us from every sin and set us free. Guide and bless these men and women who have been sent to direct us to the center of Your will and to openly ask these things in the name of your Son the living Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen"

**Carole Lewis**  
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## PRAISE UPDATE!

Thanks to so many of you who have lifted our family in prayer since November 22, 2001, when a drunk driver killed our 39-year-old daughter, Shari. For those of you who are new to First Place, let me bring you up-to-date on our family situation prior to Shari's death. My husband Johnny has had stage 4 Prostate cancer for 4 ½ years and my 89-year-old mom, who is confined to a wheelchair, has lived with us since 1999.

I just must share some of the prayers God has answered and miracles He has bestowed on us as we continue walking with Him.

- ❖ Beth Moore dedicated her newest Bible study video series, Beloved Disciple, to Shari's memory. Shari had done all of Beth's studies and loved her so much. My dear friends and First Place leaders, Jan Jarrett and Kathy Runion, called me from Greece the night of the filming to tell me how precious Beth was as she talked about our family. I believe God will continue to use Shari's life and death to bring glory to Himself.
- ❖ God provided a wonderful lady to live with our family and take care of Mom. With a heavy travel schedule this summer, this is a tremendous answer to prayer. Pray for Imelda as she adjusts that she will be blessed by living in our home.
- ❖ Shari's husband, Jeff, has been allowed by his company to take a paid leave of absence from work to finish the house that he and Shari were building. The company is also loaning Jeff the money to complete the job. This is a miracle too great to comprehend, but just like our God!
- ❖ Lisa DeLeon, the 18-year-old girl who hit Shari, has accepted a 12-year sentence and will be eligible for probation after serving 6 years. Pray for Lisa's salvation and restoration of her life while she is in prison. The plea bargain is a direct answer to my prayers that the family would not have to relive the tragedy by having the case go to trial.

Well, I could go on and on, but suffice it to say, God is faithful.

*Carole*



# Talkin' With Kay

Dear First Place Friends,

One of the most frequent requests I receive from First Place Leaders and members is, "Please help me understand the food exchange plan, especially how to count packaged foods." I received two e-mails this past week within an hour requesting this information. I would like to share those e-mails with you and then give some steps that will help those of you who are struggling in this area.

*The first e-mail is from Vicki Mobley who is leading a small group in her home, and plans to start a program at her church after the initial 13 weeks. She writes:*

"We have bought all the First Place materials, yet we are having a hard time understanding the exchanges and nutritional panels. We are all losing weight; the exercise and discipline are fantastic! Having a quiet time in the morning has made such a huge difference in our lives! Is there anyway we can get clarification on the exchanges and nutritional panels? Also, what about "breaking down" regular recipes? In the Bible Study, Surrender, it states that the menu was developed using the Mastercook software, is this available to us? Also, a lady at LifeWay Christian Bookstore told me the material used to include a cookbook. Is this still available to us? My group loves the snicker treat!"

*The second request came from Terri Smith of Marion, Indiana. She writes:*

"Is there some kind of conversion chart to help figure the number of meat, breads, etc., in prepackaged foods (canned, frozen or whatever)? Lean Cuisine used to put the American Diabetic information on their frozen meals, but now only the Weight Watcher points are given."

- ✓ We do have two great cookbooks available through Gospel Light at 1-800-4Gospel. They are the First Place Recipe Book and First Place Favorites and sell for \$15.00 each. Both are full of great First Place recipes with exchanges listed.
- ✓ The computer software program mentioned can be bought wherever computer programs are sold. It is called: **Cooking Light** by Mastercook.



**Kay Smith**  
Associate Director  
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- ✓ I prefer to exchange recipes using the **Recipe Conversion Chart** on page 148 of our Member's Guide. In the June issue of the First Place E-newsletter, I will show you how to use this chart.

## UNDERSTANDING THE FOOD EXCHANGES:

- Turn to page 44 in your Member's Manual. Using a highlighter, **highlight each food group** and the **number of calories** in each. These facts are also on your Commitment Record (CR) so that you can refer to them at any time. Or you can just print this page and cut out the table below:

	Carbohydrates (in grams)	Protein (in grams)	Fat (in grams)	Calories
<b>Bread/Starch</b>	15	3	trace	80
<b>Meat</b> (Lean)	--	7	3	55
(Medium Fat)	--	7	5	75
(High Fat)	--	7	8	100
<b>Vegetable</b>	5	2	--	25
<b>Fruit</b>	15	--	--	60
<b>Milk</b> (Fat Free)	12	8	trace	90
(Very Low Fat)	12	8	3	105
(Low Fat)	12	8	5	120
(Whole)	12	8	8	150
<b>Fat</b>	--	--	5	45

- Read the information at the beginning of each Food Group.
- Read each Food Group list and highlight the foods you usually eat. Later, it might be beneficial to go back and highlight some new foods you would like to eat.
- Determining the count of a frozen dinner (Grilled Chicken and Penne Pasta by Stouffer's Lean Cuisine):

*(Continued on next page)*



## Talkin' with Kay (Continued)

### DETERMINING FOOD EXCHANGES FOR FROZEN DINNER:

Grilled Chicken & Penne Pasta  
by Stouffer's Lean Cuisine

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1 Package	
Servings Per Container 1	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 360 Calories from Fat 70	
<b>Total Fat</b> 7g	11%
Saturated Fat 3	15%
Polyunsaturated Fat 1.5g	
Monounsaturated Fat 2g	
<b>Cholesterol</b> 40g	13%
<b>Sodium</b> 870g	36%
<b>Total Carbohydrates</b> 47g	16%
Dietary Fiber 5g	22%
Sugars 6 grams	
<b>Protein</b> 26g	

Let's look at the label for this frozen dinner:

- **Total Calories 360** - Your best friend when determining the count is "common sense." I estimated from the picture that this product is going to be meat (2 oz.), bread (pasta) (2 servings), vegetables (2 servings) and fat (2 servings).
- **Subtract 110 calories** (2 oz. of meat), **160 calories** (2 bread servings), and **50 calories** (2 vegetable servings) from total calories.
- **Remaining calories: 40**
- **Subtract 9 calories** - Lean meat can have up to 3 grams of fat so 6 of the 7 fat grams have already been counted in the 2 oz meat serving. The one remaining fat gram is 9 calories and we will ignore it except to subtract the number of calories.
- **Remaining calories: 31**
- **Subtract 24 calories** - The Nutrition Facts panel on the box indicates there are 6 grams of sugar, which

is 24 calories. In First Place we do not exchange sugar as any food group. They are just extra calories and we will ignore them.

- This calculation has brought us within 7 calories of the 360 total calories and that is close enough. I often check other information on the Nutrition Facts panels: Did it have enough protein to count 2 meats? This one had 26 grams of protein, which is well above the 14 grams in two ounces of meat. (See page 44 and again on page 55 of the Member's Guide.) The extra grams of protein are coming from the amounts of protein we receive in vegetables and bread choices.

#### **Exchanges for Grilled Chicken & Penne Pasta: 2 meats, 2 breads, 2 vegetables**

Note: I am not promoting frozen dinners; it was just a good example to use. I cooked this dinner according to directions and weighed the meat. It was two ounces. I was pleased to see that as I measured the pasta and then the vegetables, they were exactly what I had guessed. Many frozen dinners show vegetables on the box, and then when you cook them, you may find a tablespoon of vegetables. I find if you buy the proper foods, lean meats, lots of vegetables and other good food choices, you can cook a healthy meal for the entire family in about the same length of time it takes to cook a frozen dinner.

This process may seem a little confusing in the beginning, but after you calculate a few products, it becomes easier. I have had several members ask why we don't just count points, which is popular at this time. Counting points may seem easier, but there is a great advantage to understanding and counting exchanges. This will insure that you are eating a balanced food plan, a positive influence on your health.

A real key to remember when you are calculating exchanges for products, "close" is good enough. Making good food choices is the goal. Your numbers do not have to be perfect. I pray this article will be some help to you, but you must do your homework.

**May God give each of us the wisdom to make wise choices!**

**Kay Smith**



# Leadership Training

## Recipe for Restoration!

Spring is here again. The flowers are blooming just like always. Everyone is battling with allergies, as always. Everyone in my First Place class signed up for another session, like always. Do you see a pattern here? It reminds me of a phrase I often say, "It's the same ole', same ole'." When I took a look at my roster for the new First Place session, it didn't look new at all! I had all the same ladies, no new members! A red flag went up! This could be the ingredient for a complacent, mediocre class. I didn't panic; I prayed, "Lord, I need a word from you for my class!" Just as He is always faithful to do, He gave me a word.

As a leader, you may find yourself in this same ole' boat with me! Do you have all the ingredients for a complacent, mediocre class? Do you look around and see the same faces? Do you feel you have given them all you have to give? Well, I believe God has a word for you, as well. Let's look at what the Lord has to say in His Word.

First Place is about restoration. Restoration is a restoring to an improved condition. In First Place, we encourage our members to seek Christ first through the nine commitments so that their lives will improve and become balanced. So, as leaders we are in the ministry of restoration. No matter how many sessions a person is in First Place there is always room for improvement or restoration. We must be alert to complacency creeping into the lives of our members, so that the restoring work in their lives will continue.

After asking the Lord for a word, Isaiah 43:18-19 came to my mind. As I turned the pages of my Bible to Isaiah 43, I noticed that the heading for chapter 43 was God's Greatness in The Restoration of Israel. In this chapter I learned that God was reassuring Israel of His greatness, power, and ability to do what they saw as impossible- release them again from captivity. The Lord was reassuring me that He was still able to work in the lives of my members and restore their lives emotionally, mentally, spiritually, and physically. Then, I found God's Word for my class: Isaiah 43:18-19, "Do not



**Nancy Taylor**

Leadership Training Director  
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*call to mind the former things, or ponder things of the past. Behold, I will do something new, now it will spring forth; will you not be aware of it? I will even make a roadway in the wilderness, rivers in the desert."*

His message to us when we find ourselves doing the same ole' thing is:

### **1 Do not look at the past successes and failures.**

Jeremiah 29:11 tells us that the Lord has plans for us to experience victory in the future. It is His plan for each of us. However, we cannot experience what He has planned for us if we are stuck in the past. Sometimes, we live way too long on past successes. I remember telling people for several years after my second child was born that, yes, I had lost 25 pounds before and was very successful, even a lifetime member of Weight Watchers! But, they could tell by looking at me that my past success was not helping me in my present. I had also memorized many scriptures in college. I even had a wooden file for all my scripture cards. Yet, as a young mom I could not recall needed scriptures when experiencing stressful times. It was only when I looked to the future, a future God had planned for me, that I began to do the things necessary in the present to experience victorious living for a lifetime.

### **2 Become aware of what God is doing.**

In verse 19 God says He will do something new, but follows that with the question, "Will you not be aware of it?" Life is full of activities, stresses, conflicts, deadlines, and endless lists of responsibilities. With this in mind, we become distracted from the activity of God in our lives. For example, I had a hard Monday this week and just wanted to go

*(Continued on next page)*

## Leadership Training (Continued)

home, sit on my couch, and watch my favorite TV show. That day had been full of anxieties over bills, teenagers, and taxes! What I didn't know was that God was doing something new in my very midst. About halfway through my television program, someone knocked on my door. It was a young man, who looked like he had lived a short, but hard life. He was soliciting donations to the homeless shelter he lived in and wanted to give me his spiel. I listened, but all the while my thoughts were, "I am going to get rid of this kid as quickly as possible so that I can watch my show." That is when God tapped me on the shoulder of my conscience and said, "Share Christ with him." It was at that moment that I had a choice to either get in on what God had planned or go back to my own little world. Well, thank God, I chose His plan. I was able to share the gospel with this young man and as he left, he said, "Thank you for sharing those words with me." Habakkuk 1:5 says, "*Look among the nations! Observe! Be astonished! Wonder! Because I am doing something in your days- you would not believe if you were told.*"

**3 Believe God will make a way for you.** God says in verse 19b, "I will even make a roadway in the wilderness, rivers in the desert." Can you make a river in a desert? Would you even consider taking on such a task? It is too difficult for us, but not for God. If your members are just going through the motions of First Place without much enthusiasm and success, maybe they have been doing the same ole' thing for too long. First they need to quit looking back, focus on the future, become aware of God's activity all around them and then begin to truly believe that God can get them through a difficult or impossible situation. If God can make a river in a desert He can make a way for you to overcome any obstacle in your life. Like the lyrics of a familiar song, "God will make a way where there seems to be no way."

Don't allow complacency to rob you from the restoration work God wants to do in your life and in the life of your members. God's greatness is far above our weaknesses and He is at work always for our good. If you find you are sitting across from the same faces and doing the same things, let Isaiah 43:18-19 encourage you to look ahead, observe and believe that God is doing something new in you to restore your life to wholeness and health.

Nancy Taylor

## Leadership Tips

Ways to develop leaders within your group:

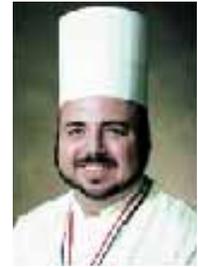
- ❖ Have members volunteer to lead a discussion on a portion of the Bible study each week. This will build their confidence and help them discover their gift of teaching.
- ❖ Ask a faithful member to help you assist with weighing in and begin to mentor this person by giving them more responsibilities as a session progresses.
- ❖ ASK - recently I suggested to one of my leaders to ask a specific person in her group if she would consider leading a group. Her response was, "Since my first session of First Place, I thought I would love to lead, but would never ask to lead. I was waiting for someone to ask me." We discovered a jewel - that would have been discovered much earlier, if we had just asked!

To find out who in your First Place class may be a potential leader; take a survey at the beginning of each 13-week session, asking them questions such as:

- ❖ Would you feel comfortable praying aloud in class?
- ❖ Would you be willing to teach the Bible study one week?
- ❖ Do you have any hobbies or talents you would like to share with the class?
- ❖ Would you be willing to help with evaluating the Commitment Records?

# Hints & Pinches

## SMART COOKING!



**Scott Wilson**

First Place Food Consultant  
[firstplacechef@hotmail.com](mailto:firstplacechef@hotmail.com)

### AT THE STORE

The first step to Smart Cooking is to buy smart in the grocery store. Follow these tips when you are shopping.

- Check the sell-by date versus the use by date on the fresh or refrigerated package.
- Make sure the package is sealed and not open or torn.
- Buy refrigerated or frozen food last, on your way to the checkout.
- Have them pack frozen and fresh foods together in the shopping bag to maintain temperature.
- In hot weather, transport the refrigerated or frozen products in an air-conditioned car or in a cooler, not unprotected in the trunk.
- Head straight home after shopping.
- When you get home, store perishables first to keep them fresh.

### IN THE KITCHEN

#### STORING

Before you cook and after you serve, it is important that your food is stored properly. Keeping your food at the proper temperature will help ensure freshness and avoid spoilage.

- First of all, keep your freezer at 0°F Your refrigerator should be kept at 36-40°F Use a thermometer to make sure your fridge is up to snuff.
- Next, follow these tips to get your food to the proper temperature as quickly as possible and keep it there:
- If you purchase fresh product and don't plan to use it within a day or two, go ahead and freeze it right away. Frozen uncooked meats may be thawed and refrozen, but there may be a loss of quality due to moisture loss through defrosting.
- Label and date your refrigerator's contents with the storage date. Leftovers should be eaten within 3 days. After that, put them in the freezer for long-term storage.

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.

- Use FIFO: First In, First Out. In other words, use older products first before you open a newer package of the same product.
- Arrange contents of the freezer and refrigerator in an orderly way. It will help you keep track of what you have and keep temperatures even.
- Have sufficient airflow around products. This will make sure they maintain the right temperature.
- Use shallow pans for large amounts of soups or stews. Large containers take longer to cool down.
- Separate large amounts of leftovers into smaller containers. This will help your food to cool down more quickly and help you to keep your space organized.
- Separate stuffing or gravies from cooked products when freezing.
- Store uncooked products on the lowest shelf to avoid uncooked product dripping onto food that is already prepared.
- Keep meat in the meat bin or coldest part of the refrigerator.
- Cover foods tightly to keep them fresh.
- Clean up spills with hot soapy water.
- To maintain temperature, don't stand there deciding what you want with the door open. Try to decide what you want before you go in.

#### THAWING

- If you purchase fresh product and don't plan to use it within a day or two, go ahead and freeze it right away. Frozen uncooked meats may be thawed and refrozen, but there may be a loss of quality due to moisture loss through defrosting.

*(Continued on next page)*



## Hints & Pinches *(Continued)*

- Bringing your frozen chicken back from the big chill can be done in several ways. Never thaw frozen meats or foods on the kitchen counter. Thawing in the refrigerator or microwave are the safest methods. Once the uncooked food has thawed, it is recommended you cook it before freezing it again.

### REFRIGERATOR

- Thaw covered uncooked foods on a plate on the lowest shelf to prevent them from dripping on prepared foods.
- Allow a day or more for large items to thaw.

### MICROWAVE

- Follow your microwave manual's defrost instructions.
- Microwave ovens vary. Defrosting times are approximate. Some microwaves may defrost faster than others.
- This method is not effective for large items.
- Use this method only if you are going to use the item immediately in another cooking process, or to continue cooking immediately in the microwave.

### COLD WATER

- Put the wrapped product in a sink full of cold tap water.
- Remove the food from the sink right after thawing. Then, sanitize the sink and other utensils used in the process.
- Use a large sink dedicated to the thawing process during the thaw.
- Do not let water used for thawing splash on food preparation surfaces.
- The product should be thawed within two hours. Cook immediately or refreeze.

I realize there is quite a bit of information here, but getting into the habit of following these steps will insure the safety of the food that you prepare for you and your family. Coming next month, Smart Cooking in the preparation, cooking, and serving of your foods.

**Scott Wilson**

### BBQ Chicken Breasts with Apricot Glaze

Serves 4

4 chicken breasts (about 1 1/2 lbs.)- <i>skin on and bone in</i>	1 tablespoon soy sauce
1/3 cup apricot preserves <i>(no sugar added)</i>	1 tablespoon water
	2 tablespoon plus 2 teaspoon ketchup
	2 teaspoon brown sugar or substitute

Preheat grill to medium. Grill chicken (skin on) 10 minutes, turning occasionally. Remove from grill and remove skin. In small bowl, combine preserves, soy sauce, water, ketchup and brown sugar; blend well. Return chicken to grill; generously brush with glaze. Continue cooking 10 to 15 minutes or until thoroughly done, turning often and brushing with glaze frequently. Serve each with 1 cup mashed potatoes and 1 cup seasoned green beans.

**Exchanges: 3 meats, 2 breads, 2 vegetables, 1 fat**

### Greek-Style Shrimp

Serves 6

1 teaspoon olive oil	1 1/4 pounds large shrimp, peeled and deveined
5 garlic cloves, minced	1 cup crumbled Feta cheese (4 ounces)
2 (28-ounce) cans whole tomatoes, drained and coarsely chopped	2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
1/2 cup chopped fresh parsley, divided	1/4 teaspoon fresh ground pepper

Preheat oven to 400°. Heat oil in a large Dutch oven over medium heat. Add garlic; sauté 30 seconds. Add tomatoes and 1/4 cup parsley. Reduce heat; simmer 10 minutes. Add shrimp; cook 5 minutes. Pour mixture into a 13 × 9-inch baking dish; sprinkle with cheese. Bake at 400° for 10 minutes. Sprinkle with 1/4 cup parsley, lemon juice, and pepper.

**Exchanges: 2 meats, 2 vegetables, 1 fat**

### Grilled Honey Mustard Lamb Chops

Serves 2

2 tablespoons Dijon mustard	2 teaspoons honey
2 tablespoons fresh rosemary or 2 teaspoons dried rosemary, crushed	1/2 teaspoon coarsely ground pepper
	4 (4-ounce) lean lamb loin chops

Preheat grill to medium high heat. Combine first 4 ingredients in a small bowl, and stir well. Trim fat from lamb, and place chops on the grill. Grill 5 minutes on each side. Brush mustard mixture over chops. Broil chops 2 minutes on each side or until desired degree of doneness, basting occasionally with mustard mixture.

**Exchanges: 5 meats**

## First Place Mailbag

I started the First Place program 6 weeks ago but I wanted to let you know what a difference this program has made in my life. I have lost only six pounds, but I have developed a relationship with God that is a much deeper level than before First Place. I have been spending time daily in God's word and taking the time to have quiet time and do my bible study in the morning before I start my day. It has made such a difference in my life. I am starting this program in my church in a few weeks and I pray that it will make a difference in the lives of my church family. Thank you for letting me share how this has been working in my life.

**Sharon Fitch**  
**Great Commission Baptist Church**  
**Olive Branch, Mississippi**

I am one of those fortunate people who have never had a real weight problem. Sure, after the birth of each of my three children, I had 10-20 extra pounds to lose. However, this was no real problem. I never really dieted to lose it. After a few months or so, I got close to my pre-pregnancy weight, and that was the end of it. I was okay with my weight and dress size.

However, the word "exercise" was not in my vocabulary. With three children, how could I possibly have time to exercise? My husband, who is almost a fanatic about exercise, was constantly telling me, "You would have more energy and feel better if you would get some exercise." I would give him that "look" and think, "Yea, right. You stay home and keep the kids, while I go to the gym or the track. I'll be home in 2 hours!" For years, this was the scene at my house.

About 4 years ago, we had a new youth director join our church staff, and guess what? His wife is a First Place leader. When she offered a discipleship training class entitled "First Place", I thought, "This is during discipleship training time on Sunday nights; it won't interfere with my schedule." I decided to try the class.

I was a little intimidated by some who asked me, "Why are you in this class? You sure don't need to lose weight." In fact, I almost didn't go back. I explained to the group that I wanted to learn to eat healthy, not only for myself, but for my family as well.

I also desired the Bible study that went along with the First Place Class. Boy, am I ever thankful that I didn't give it up. It truly changed my life and that of my family. Healthy eating and family exercise have become part of our daily life. The whole family has run in several 5K races in our community. Our local newspaper even included our picture one week after all of us competed in a race. Occasionally, our schedules allow my husband and I to go the gym together. This is always a fun time for us as a couple.

God has blessed us with a wonderful rural home and 12 acres of land. We have our very own personal "cross country" track. We discovered that two laps around our pasture is exactly one-quarter of a mile. This is where we run, except after rain. By running at home, we don't have to worry about what to do with the children. They usually ride their bikes or just play outside while we are running. When it is too wet, we head to the gym. I have more energy than I have ever had in my life. Most days I can hardly wait to get up and get going on all the things that must be done in a day.

I am so thankful for the difference First Place made in our lives. I can truly testify that God will change your desires, habits, and lifestyle if you will only let Him.

**Melanie Myrick**  
**Kosciusko, Mississippi**



**Melanie Myrick and family**

Testimonies, photographs and letters are all welcomed for consideration. Address all correspondence to:  
First Place | 7401 Katy Freeway | Houston, TX 77024  
or e-mail to: [srobbins@houston.rr.com](mailto:srobbins@houston.rr.com).



## First Place Mailbag (Continued)

**M**y name is Rosemary Woolston and I live in Bundaberg, Queensland, Australia. I saw First Place advertised in a Koorong Bookshop catalogue, I prayed about it and approached other ladies in my church that I thought would be interested in the program. After consideration and an orientation night, we decided to give it a go. There are three members, myself, Beryl and Lynne. Originally, there was to be four, however, one lady, Judy, (our Pastor's wife) who has a very young baby, decided to wait until the next program to participate.

We bought the kits and a leader's kit and couldn't wait to launch the program; however, we had a few delays. Beryl went on two weeks holiday, and my mother passed away on March 24, and then came Easter. After several weeks of delay, I realized Satan was putting various barriers before us, and having the victory, so we decided to get started. Our very first meeting was held on April 4th in my home. The next week we met in Beryl's home and this week we will be meeting in Lynne's home.

Our first week, we lost a total of 2.9 kilograms. 'Oops', I forgot, you don't have kilograms but pounds and stones. One kilo is equivalent to 2.2 pounds; therefore, we lost a total of nearly seven pounds between us. We were all very excited at the weight loss, but we also have come to realize that there are many other benefits that far outweigh losing weight.

We are all enjoying the Bible study so much, as well as the prayer journal; all of the aspects of the program are excellent! Initially, our desire to lose weight took first place in our lives; however, after just one week of doing First Place, we realize that giving Christ first place in our lives is

far more important and the weight loss is second place, an added extra. Praise the Lord!

My pastor asked me to share with the rest of my church family just what First Place is and how much we are enjoying it, so I did. We now have our whole church support. I also compile the weekly Church Bulletin / newsletter and have decided to include the memory verse each week so others can also be learning to memorize God's word. Every one is excited about the program and eagerly awaiting to see the results. I believe you are coming to Australia later this year? Is this to encourage Aussies to participate in First Place? If so, will you be converting the program to suit Australians? By this, I mean the food. I would love to be able to meet you when you are here. Our group will have completed the first 13 weeks of the program by then. We already have people wanting to join the next group.

Our church is small in number, about 40, and we can see that First Place can definitely be used as an outreach tool. We enjoy receiving the E-newsletter. Would you please send greetings from us 'down under' in your next edition? It is so encouraging to know that there are other people praying for you, even if they are half way across the other side of the world. Do you know if there are any other groups meeting in Australia? If so, where are they? If you don't mind I would like to keep you informed of our weekly progress? Looking forward to hearing from you and perhaps meeting you later in the year. Your friend in Christ!

**Rose Woolston**  
**Bundaberg, Queensland, Australia**

## COMING EVENTS

### FIRST PLACE WORKSHOP

May 4, 2002  
Faith Fellowship Four Square Church  
San Leandro, California  
Located East Bay of San Francisco  
Contact: Lou Margulies (510) 357-5723 or  
[lou@faithfellowship4square.org](mailto:lou@faithfellowship4square.org)  
Workshop Leader: Nancy Taylor,  
First Place Leadership Training Director

### FIRST PLACE WORKSHOP

June 29, 2002  
Edgewood Baptist Church  
Nicholasville, Kentucky  
Located 15 minutes south of Lexington  
Contact: Vicki New (859) 885-6211 or [edgewood@gx.net](mailto:edgewood@gx.net)  
Workshop Leader: Nancy Taylor  
First Place Leadership Training Director

### FIRST PLACE RETREAT

July 19-21, 2002 (Fri.-Sun.)  
Registration/Check-in: Friday, 5:00-7:00pm  
Check-out: Sunday, 12:00 Noon  
Place: Tall Timbers Conference Center  
Alexandria, Louisiana  
Contact: Pauline Hines, networking leader, [phines@uno.edu](mailto:phines@uno.edu)

### FIRST PLACE RALLY & WORKSHOP

July 26&27, 2002  
First Place Rally & Workshop  
Central Baptist Church  
Springhill, Louisiana  
Contact: Carolyn Smith (318) 539-3578 or [cenbap@cbt.net](mailto:cenbap@cbt.net)

# Success Story

**M**y story is much like those that I've read in the newsletters. I have been overweight all of my life. Weight problems are common to both sides of my family and I, like all of them, have tried every diet known to man including, but not limited to, Slimfast, the Atkins Diet, the Cabbage Soup Diet, pills and starvation. Same story...they work for a while then I gain more weight back than I lost. This process had left my 5-foot tall body weighing in at a whopping 258 pounds. You've heard the saying, "wide as you are tall?" Well, I believe I was the inspiration for that saying.

After 33 years of failure in this area, I had decided that I would just have to accept the idea that I was meant to be overweight and I should stop trying to lose weight so that I wouldn't get any bigger. Everyone else just accepted me as I was, and I was determined to just be happy with that. Then, one Sunday morning my cover was shattered. One of the sweetest, dearest ladies in our church stood up during the announcements and told the whole church that she was going to begin a weight loss program called First Place. At that moment, I felt as though everyone in our church was thinking to himself or herself, "Boy, that will be a great program for Jeana!" or "Surely, Jeana will join that program!" I looked at my husband and rolled my eyes and said, "Oh great! I'm sure they will expect me to join!" Sure enough, as soon as the service was dismissed, here came Sister Claudia headed straight for me. She asked, "Well, Jeana, you're going to join us aren't you?" I was so angry; my mind was thinking, "NO, I won't be joining you!" But my mouth said, "Sure, it sounds great!" The next thing I knew our first session was over and I had lost 30 pounds! I have always tried to put my all into everything that I've done for the Lord. I just never saw my weight loss as something I was doing for Him. I am now leading our group and have opened it up to the public. We've grown from 12 to 24 members and have had some great victories.

*Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.*

*1 Corinthians 6:19, 20*

I've learned how it feels to be in close communion with God through prayer, Bible Study, Scripture reading and Prayer Journaling. First Place is so much more than just a weight loss program. That, to me, is just a bonus that comes from obedience to God through His word.

I am not at my goal weight, yet. Satan tried to trip me up with a rare form of Cancer last year. It slowed me down a bit, but after God's healing through a mastectomy, chemo and radiation, the cancer is gone and God's temple is back under construction and feeling better than ever. Our group has lost 222 pounds so far this session, 12 of those are mine. I praise God for First

Place and for all people who were so willing to allow Him to use them to create such an awesome program.

Our verse this week is 1 Corinthians 6:19-20. This verse has changed my whole selfish outlook on taking care of my body. It's more than just my wanting to lose weight and my wanting to feel better or buy a small size clothes. God's temple is in ruins and I must restore it. This puts the real perspective in sight and shows us the urgency that it deserves.

*Jeana Shelton  
St. Clair, Missouri*



Before



After

**FIRST  
PLACE**

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

# FIRST PLACE CONFERENCE

## TEMPLE BAPTIST CHURCH-WEST CAMPUS

5220 Old Highway 11 ❖ Hattiesburg, Mississippi

September 20-21, 2002

### The **FIRST PLACE CONFERENCE**

is a national event, conducted over a two-day period. It includes:

- ❖ Seminars covering the four-sided person
- ❖ Keynote speaker
- ❖ Special music
- ❖ Training for beginning leaders
- ❖ Testimonies and sharing praises
- ❖ A First Place meal

This event would be beneficial to a person new to First Place, to one who has been in the program for any length of time, or to anyone seeking a more balanced life.



**Cost: \$45 per person or  
\$35 each for groups of 10 or more!**

Send registrations to:

### TEMPLE BAPTIST CHURCH WEST CAMPUS

Attn: Sandra Davis

5220 Old Hwy 11

Hattiesburg, Mississippi 39402

### Registration Deadline: September 6

Fax registrations to 601-554-9775

(Mail cost for conference to address above)

Attn: Sandra Davis



### LODGING INFORMATION

Rooms have been blocked at the following hotels. Please call the hotel direct to make your reservations. When making reservations, you must indicate that you are with the First Place Conference to ensure the special rate. After the deadline, the cost and availability will change. In order to guarantee your reservations, please make them as early as possible.

**PLEASE NOTICE HOTEL DEADLINES ARE VARIED.**

#### Host hotel:

#### HAWTHORN SUITES

10 Gateway Dr.

601-296-0302

\$69-small suite / \$79 large suite (63 rooms blocked)

Registration Deadline: 8/20

Full breakfast buffet | Full gym facility | Indoor pool

#### COMFORT SUITES

122 Plaza Drive

601-261-5555

\$69-suite (35 rooms blocked)

Registration Deadline: 9/1

Continental breakfast

#### BAYMONT INN

123 Plaza Drive

601-264-8380

\$52-per room (40 rooms blocked)

Registration Deadline: 8/30

Continental breakfast

#### HAMPTON INN

4301 Hardy Street

(in the same area as Comfort Suites & Baymont Inn)

601-264-8080

\$55-per room (35 rooms blocked)

Registration Deadline: 9/10

Continental breakfast

**FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION  
OR QUESTIONS, CALL  
SANDRA DAVIS AT 601-554-9755**

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

# FIRST PLACE CONFERENCE

## TEMPLE BAPTIST CHURCH-WEST CAMPUS

5220 Old Highway 11 ❖ Hattiesburg, Mississippi

September 20-21, 2002

Cost: \$45 per person or \$35 each for groups of 10 or more!

Deadline for all registrations: September 6, 2002

### 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 include check or money order with each registration form.**

#### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Is this your first time to attend a First Place Conference?  Yes  No

As a member?  As a Leader?

How did you hear about First Place?

Church  T.V., Radio, Newspaper, Magazine  On the Internet

E-Newsletter  Friend or Colleague  Other \_\_\_\_\_

**SEND REGISTRATIONS TO:** Temple Baptist Church West Campus  
5220 Old Highway 11  
Hattiesburg, MS 39402

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION OR QUESTIONS, CALL SANDRA DAVIS AT 601-554-9755.





# 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**

**\$575<sup>00</sup>**

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

**(Registration Form on next page)**

**\$625<sup>00</sup>**

Includes Airport Shuttle

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

**\$100 NON-REFUNDABLE DEPOSIT  
DUE AT REGISTRATION**

*Plus*

**One time payment: \$475 or Two payments: \$239<sup>50</sup>**

**First Payment is due by July 2, 2002**

**Second 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:

**\$575<sup>00</sup>**

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

**\$625<sup>00</sup>**

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

**\$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**

