



## July 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**  
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National Director . . . . . Carole Lewis

Associate Director . . . . . Kay Smith

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. . . . . Nancy Taylor

Newsletter . . . . . Sheila Robbins

## Dear Friends,

I just returned from five days in Anchorage, Alaska, where I participated in Heartcall Alaska, 2002, a women's conference attended by 1,030 women. What a blessing to meet so many wonderful women and to soak up the unspoiled beauty of our 49th state.

I was assigned my seminar titles many months in advance. I knew the first one, *First Place in the Marketplace*, would be easy to present. The second one, *The Greatest Source of Self-Esteem*, was a different story. Even though this is not an issue I personally struggle with, I know many people who battle issues of low self-esteem every day. As the time for the Conference approached, I prayed that God would give me the words to say that these women needed to hear from His heart.

Several weeks before the Conference, the Lord woke me up early, as he often does, and gave me some great material that I thought was the core of my next book. I was so excited about what He had spoken that I immediately got out of bed and went straight to my computer to jot down every word. Because I was in the throes of making major life decisions concerning my Mom's care, I missed the fact that this information was also the core of my seminar on self-esteem.

To make a long story short, I took handouts for a seminar I had previously done at one of our First Place Conferences and planned to use them for my seminar on self-esteem. After returning from my morning walk at 9:00 a.m. on the day I was to begin the first seminar, the Lord spoke to my spirit and said, "You missed it. I gave you the talk for Anchorage two weeks ago." Well, if you've ever worked for God, you know that I had my marching orders, right then and there!

It was easy to recall the main points of the information God had given me:

- **God Knows**—where you've been, where you are, and where you're going.
- **God Cares**—where you've been, where you are, and where you're going.
- **God Created you to Win**—in spite of where you've been, in the midst of where you are, and to use you where you're going.

Because of the Scripture I have memorized the last couple of years, God began to give me scriptures and personal illustrations to go with the main points of the message and in less than two hours I had a new seminar. You know what? God did an awesome job of teaching that seminar.

I met the most wonderful new friend in Anchorage. Her name is Bobbie Sue Starke and she lives in Great Falls, Montana. While having lunch the day of my first seminar, Bobbie Sue told me her story of growing up with very low self-esteem and how God had changed her life. She graciously agreed when I asked her to give her testimony at each of my three seminars.

She said something in her testimony that I think was profoundly of God. She said that at one critical point in her life, a pastor's wife said something to her that began the process of change that has continued for twenty-five years. This pastor's wife said, "Bobbie Sue, if you don't get a handle on who God is, and how much He loves you, you are going to spend the rest of your life being someone else's problem and never anyone's answer."

First Place has the keys to unlock the doors imprisoning anyone suffering from low self-esteem. The main key is Scripture memory. Memorizing God's truth will replace the tape of lies that play in your brain. Start today and become someone's answer. God is ready to help because He knows and He cares.



### Carole Lewis

First Place National Director  
[clewis@firstplace.org](mailto:clewis@firstplace.org)

# Talkin' With Kay

## Dear First Place Friends,

**F**irst Place is growing tremendously, but the fight against obesity and health disease is not so positive. Statistics prove that American families are not making healthy food choices and an active lifestyle a priority.

In 1900, the leading causes of death in this country were infectious diseases. This was made worse by nutritional deficiencies. Today, chronic diseases are often caused or worsened by nutritional excess. There is a terrible irony here. We have the cheapest, most lavish, and varied food supply in the world. Yet, we are dying from abundance. More than 60 percent of American adults are overweight, including 27 percent who are obese, almost double the rate of 25 years ago. One in eight school-age children is obese. Type two diabetes is now an epidemic, mostly because of our bulging waistlines.

We can each give testimony to the great benefit we receive from the Spiritual disciplines that lead to spiritual growth and a closer daily walk with our Lord in First Place. I believe each of us need that closer walk with our Lord to handle temptations that our society offers.

Let's look at some of the facts in a new book **Food Politics**, by Marion Nestle, Professor of Nutrition and Food Studies at New York University:

- Food companies produce 3,800 calories of food a day for every American, up from 3,300 calories in 1970. If you are on the 1,500 Exchange Plan, you can see you are not doing your part, which means, someone else is consuming even more than these figures and will need your help to find a First Place program.
- Of the more than 11,000 new food products that came on the market in 1998, more than two-thirds were candy, snacks, baked goods, soft drinks, ice creams, and similar items.
- The money spent advertising any single new product often exceeds the total spent every year to educate the public about healthy eating. (This statistic definitely points out the benefit of First Place to all.)
- Typical servings have grown exponentially; 7-ounce muffins (equal to seven slices of bread, plus added fat and sugar), 64-ounce soft drinks, and half-gallon buckets of popcorn at the movie theaters. Larger portions equal



**Kay Smith**  
Associate Director  
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higher profits, more calories, more weight and chronic disease.

We do live in a society that sets us up to become overweight, but we cannot put all the blame on industry. Americans buy and eat these products. We vote with our forks and our pocketbooks. Our supermarkets are filled with produce and other healthy foods. But, more and more Americans go to McDonald's and Pizza Hut. Here is what we have learned over the years:

- ✓ Advertising works. The food industry spends more than any industry except automobiles. No one is immune to its effects, and education helps.
- ✓ Nutrition does not have to be confusing. It's basically simple, and positive: base your diet on whole grains, fruits, and vegetables; eat less meat and processed foods. Include nonfat dairy products, which are rich in calcium and other nutrients. Calories do count, so avoid the empty ones in candy bars and soda pop.
- ✓ Eating should be a pleasure, but all pleasures must be moderated. The urge to eat is something you can control. (Some of us in First Place have needed the support of others and the strength of God to do so.)

The facts in this article make me very proud that I chose to join First Place. I will continue this journey. It has also given me an urgency to spread the good news that God is in the business of victory against all odds!

**May God Bless Your Efforts,**  
**Kay Smith**



# Leadership Training

## Continual Feast

I love to receive e-mails and phone calls from leaders all across the world! They always have wonderful testimonies to share about the success of their First Place members. Many times, the good report is followed by, "but, there is this one member who..." The leader goes on to describe this one member who has a negative attitude, which is affecting the other members in the class. Attitude is everything! John Maxwell has said, "The negative attitude can spread like a cancer." When one member or leader has a negative attitude, then death will follow - death of vision, death of a dream, death of hope and the list goes on. It is the responsibility of the leader to model a positive attitude and to stop a negative attitude before it takes over the entire class.

I have recently discovered a verse that has revolutionized my attitude and I hope it will do the same for you and your members. Proverbs 15:15 says, *"All the days of the afflicted are bad, but a cheerful heart has a continual feast."* (NAS) The week I was memorizing and meditating on this verse I was to fly to California for a workshop. The morning my plane was to depart I arrived at the airport two hours early due to all the extra security. I checked my bags and went through the security line with ease. It was going to be a great day! Shortly after this thought went through my mind, I was greeted at the gate with the word, "Cancelled" flashing at the check-in desk. The waiting area sat eerily vacant and my first instinct was to panic and enter into a really bad day. The Holy Spirit tapped me on the shoulder and the words of Proverbs 15:15 swept through my mind. I laughed out loud and then looked around to see if anyone had seen me! God was up to something! He was calling me to try His Word and see if it is true. So, I took the challenge and set out to prove His Word. At that moment I chose to have a cheerful heart and looked to see what feast might await me.

After standing in a long line for about 30 minutes, I discovered that all flights to Dallas had been cancelled due to bad weather. My itinerary had called for a stopover in Dallas and then on to Oakland. As I stepped up to the counter, I greeted the clerk with a smile, as I had chosen to be cheerful. She said, "I am sorry but you will have to change airlines and you will be on a non-stop flight, arriving in Oakland two hours early. My dimples deepened as I grinned even bigger and said to myself, "Continual feast!" I entered the airplane and discovered that I had the entire row of seats all to myself. I was able to read, study and rest for the entire three hour flight. It was quite a feast! I had tried God's Word, chosen to obey its truth, and found it to be true. People can choose to be afflicted or choose to be cheerful; it is a choice.

Negative attitudes are contagious and will spread like a cancer in your First Place class if left unchecked. However,



**Nancy Taylor**  
Leadership Training Director  
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by choosing to believe and live out God's Word through a positive attitude, a continual feast awaits!

Here's to a continual feast!

**Nancy Taylor**

### Leadership Tip

To encourage class participation, I asked my class to bring in newspaper or magazine articles related to any aspect of First Place, such as weight-loss, exercise and nutrition. In class, I gave each person an opportunity to give a report of their findings. This lends itself to wonderful discussion on relevant topics and provides excellent Wellness Spotlight topics. My class this session has been great about sharing articles without being asked. I would love to share the following article one of my ladies shared with me. She brought it to class because it happened to include our memory verse for the week. Enjoy!

*Maurine Jones, whose husband of 70 years recently passed away, decided to move into a retirement center. She waited in the lobby patiently for some time. Finally, the director of the retirement center came and told her that her room was ready. As she stood up and maneuvered her walker toward the elevator, the director described the way her room looked. "I love it!" Mrs. Jones said with the enthusiasm of an eight-year-old receiving a new puppy. "But Mrs. Jones, you haven't seen the room yet." "That doesn't matter," she replied, "Happiness is something you decide on ahead of time. Whether I like the room or not doesn't depend on how the furniture is arranged...it all depends on how I arrange my mind and I have already decided to love it. It's a decision I make every morning when I wake up. I can be happy or sad; I can be grateful or grumpy. Because I am a Christian, I choose to see each day as a gift from God; because I am a Christian, I choose to be happy and grateful." This is what the Apostle Paul meant later in his letter to the Philippians when he said, "I do not complain...I have learned to be content in all circumstances."*

*Dr. Jim Moore*  
Senior Minister of St. Luke's United Methodist Church  
Taken from Houston Chronicle

# Hints & Pinches

## Summer Salads

It's hot out and we are looking for cool food, a cool kitchen, and a cool cook. When the temperature outside is sizzling, be smart, go for the greens, grains, and beans. Salads, of course, don't have to be made mostly of lettuce and other leafy vegetables. Black beans, Garbanzos, green beans, rice, pasta, barley and other hearty ingredients turn summer salads into easy, complete meals.

Mix up a large bowl of a hearty salad to keep in the fridge for no-sweat munching, or pack them in the ice chest for instant summer outings. Experiment with different grains by buying them in small amounts from the bulk bins of your local whole food stores.

### COMPOSING A MAIN COURSE SUMMER SALAD

Salads are like artworks: the best are assembled from multiple materials, with varying textures, colors, and weights. Vinaigrette or salad dressings are the culinary "paints" that hold them all together. Play around with ingredients to get the composition and balance that pleases you most.

- ▶ **Greens:** Remember a usual rule of thumb—the darker the green the more nutritional value. Lettuce is available all year round, but summertime yields seasonal greens with unique flavors. Use them on their own or mix them into a salad. For a peppery bite, pick up some arugula or watercress. Escarole, radicchio, frise and endive - all members of the chicory family - taste slightly bitter; they make a great counterpoint to fruit and goat cheese, and vibrant additions when added in small amounts to any salad. Used sparingly, sorrel perks up salads with its intensely tart, lemony flavor, making it a perfect complement to fish. If you can't find unusual greens, don't fret: baby spinach is a perennial flavor booster and so are celery leaves.
- ▶ **Grains:** Rice, pasta, bulgur, amaranth, quinoa (keen-wah); these all make excellent bases for building a hearty salad. Adding beans or lentils helps complete their nutritional value. Bulgur, or crushed wheat kernels, has a chewy texture and couldn't be easier to prepare: simply pour 2 cups boiling water over 1 cup bulgur wheat and let soak until tender. Then drain in a colander, pressing out excess water. Instant couscous, granular pasta, also cooks by absorbing boiling water (follow the package instructions

### Scott Wilson

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

for the proper amount) and it too makes a quick and easy base for salad.

- ▶ **Onions and Garlic:** Crisp, tender green onions or scallions, chopped with both the white and green parts used, add both color and a light, fresh flavor to salads, as do red onions. Vidalia is a variety of sweet onion, which is prized for their mild flavor and crisp, moist texture. Garlic always adds a robust perk, but if you want a milder flavor, blanch the garlic in boiling water for 10 seconds.
- ▶ **Vegetables:** You want vegetables that will stay crisp in the salad, even after a day or two in the fridge - like carrots, celery, bell peppers, corn and such. Of course, some vegetables like asparagus and green beans can be too crisp when raw, and profit from a quick blanch in boiling water, followed by a plunge into an ice bath. Potatoes should be diced and fully cooked, and red potatoes are both tasty and colorful. Sliced or diced cucumbers hold up best if you salt them and let them drain, then squeeze out the excess moisture; the cucumbers will stay crisper longer. Broccoli and cauliflower should also be blanched, and over time they may start to smell strong like cabbage, so they are best eaten right away.
- ▶ **Vinaigrette:** Use canola, mild olive oil, or corn oil when you don't want the oil flavor to dominate. Vinegars range from low intensity rice vinegar to powerful sherry wine and balsamic vinegars, or try an apple cider or other fruit vinegar. Fresh lemon, lime, tangerine, and orange juice add sparkle. Don't feel compelled to use only one oil or one acid—sometimes the best dishes are ones that layer complementary flavors together, and in some cases, using all of one type of oil or acid can be too much of a good thing. Soy sauce and mustard also perk up the

*(Continued on next page)*

## Hints & Pinches... (Continued)

flavors. Taste the mixture until the right balance is achieved.

► **Legumes:** Of course, it's easiest to open a can of beans, but your salad will taste so much better with home-cooked beans. If you do use canned beans, be sure to drain and rinse them well. But if you were smart in the winter, you cooked up a batch of beans and froze them, just so you'd have them ready for a summer salad. Beans taste best if they are fully cooked but retain some texture and aren't mushy. Lentils cook very quickly but if you're not careful, they can overcook and become too soft for salads. Keep them firmer by cooking just until tender, then drain and rinse under cold water to arrest the cooking. Other favorite legumes include chickpeas, black beans, red beans, black-eyed peas, green peas, string beans, and white beans. You can use beans by themselves as the main part of a salad, adding vegetables and seasonings, or stir a cupful or so of beans into a grain salad or a mixed green salad.

► **Cheeses:** Cheese can add a pleasantly sharp contrast to the other flavors in a salad. Consider cheddar, Parmesan, Gruyere and Gouda, and for a more robust salad, toss in chunks or thick gratings of smoked cheese. Keep feta and blue cheeses on hand - even a small amount perks up any salad.

Other additions to consider include dried or fresh fruits, Italian peperoncini or other pickled peppers, nuts, sesame seeds, honey, horseradish, capers, and spices like cumin, curry powder, fennel seed, and ground chilies. Even if you don't have fresh herbs, crumble in a touch of dried herbs - especially oregano, dill, parsley, chervil, basil, and mint.

**That's all for now, now pass the salt and pepper.**

**Scott Wilson**

# Summer Salads

## Shepherd's Salad

Serves 4

**(This is a recipe given to me on the FIRST PLACE trip to Israel in 1997)**

|                                      |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| 1 cup cooked Garbanzo beans          | 1/3 cup sliced green onions             |
| 2 cups diced tomatoes                | 1/4 cup fresh lemon juice               |
| 1 cup diced green bell pepper        | 2 tablespoons water                     |
| 1 cup diced peeled cucumber          | 1 tablespoon olive oil                  |
| 1/2 cup fresh minced Italian parsley | Salt and freshly ground pepper to taste |

Combine all ingredients in a large bowl and refrigerate for 1 hour before serving. Serving size equals 1-1/2 cups.

**Exchanges: 1/2 bread, 1-1/2 vegetable, 1 fat**

## Summer's Bounty Salad

Serves 4

|  |   |
|--|---|
| 1 tablespoon chopped fresh basil (no substitute) | 2 cups broccoli florets, blanched                       |
| 2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar                   | 2 large tomatoes, thinly sliced                         |
| 2 teaspoons olive oil                            | 1/2 cup thinly sliced sweet onion                       |
| 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard                         | 1 cup fresh white corn kernels, blanched (about 2 ears) |
| Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste    |   |

In a small bowl combine first 6 ingredients. On 4 plates, artfully arrange the remaining ingredients evenly. Drizzle with the dressing and serve.

**Exchanges: 1/2 bread, 1 vegetable, 1/2 fat**

## Spinach and Strawberry Salad

Serves 4

|  |  |
|--|--|
| 1 1/2 tablespoons canola oil             | Dash cayenne pepper                      |
| 1 tablespoon cider vinegar               | 6 cups baby spinach leaves               |
| 2 teaspoons honey                        | 16 large strawberries, hulled and halved |
| 1/8 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper |  |

In a small bowl, whisk first 5 ingredients together. In a bowl, toss spinach with strawberries. Drizzle with the dressing.

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

# First Place Mailbag

I just want to say that the First Place program is an answer to prayer. I got a real wakeup call last fall when my wedding ring had to be cut off my finger. I had gained so much weight and was swelling so badly. I could hardly walk due to arthritis pain.

My doctor said that I needed to exercise more, so I started to swim three times a week. I decided that in order to get any good out of the exercising, I should begin to eat right. I pulled out some information on the exchange diet from the Heart Association and started following it. But I knew for me to continue, there needed to be a spiritual side to my program.

My monthly book club brochure had the answer. It was offering the *First Place Book* and *Giving Christ First Place* Bible study. Both sounded like what God would want for me. I ordered them and started following the program on my own. I am now on my third Bible study. In the last eight months I have lost 54 pounds and have about 100 pounds to go. People at church and work are starting to notice.

**Becky Kloppman**  
*Warren Community Fellowship*  
*St. Helens, Oregon*

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The Thursday evening First Place group at Frazer Memorial United Methodist Church in Montgomery, Alabama, lost 270 pounds this session. I am praising God for this victory! Our "big loser" lost 32 pounds, and this is someone who can't exercise due to a medical condition! Eleven of our 21 class members lost in double digits.

We are not doing a full class during the summer, but the 15 faithful members, who attended regularly during the session, will continue to "Weigh & Pray" through the summer. We will continue to meet every week to weigh in, and the group members will keep their commitment records and turn them in. After weigh-in, we will have a time of sharing praise reports, have prayer requests and enjoy a 20-minute aerobic exercise session. Everyone will do a Bible study on their own and keep the other First Place commitments.

The First Place group has been WONDERFUL!! As the only leader last fall, I got so discouraged because of a high drop-out rate and a general lack of group unity. I considered giving up leading, but my boss reminded me that my part was to be faithful, to lead the group according to the First Place principles, and God was responsible for the end results.

As we have all learned, "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up." (Galatians 6:9 NIV)

My cup runs over and my barns are overflowing!

**(Ms.) Lowell Berenguer**  
*Frazer Memorial United Methodist Church*  
*Montgomery, Alabama*

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This is our First Place group at the First Place Victory Celebration at Piedmont Park Baptist Church in Greenville, South Carolina. For the 241 pounds lost, we donated approximately 241 pounds of food to our church food pantry.

**Piedmont Park Baptist Church**  
*Greenville, South Carolina*

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I just wanted to write and thank you for the wonderful First Place website. I just finished a session in Shreveport, Louisiana, and knew I wanted to continue on First Place when I went to Indiana to do a clinical rotation for physical therapy school. I got online and used the "Site Search" to find a class less than five miles from where I'm staying in Indiana. I am so grateful to have this group to pray for me and help me through this summer rotation while I'm away from my home and church family. Thank you, thank you, thank you for First Place.

**Traci Doll**  
*Calvary Baptist Church*  
*Shreveport, Louisiana*

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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. . .

Hello Carole,

It's been a few weeks since my last e-mail. I thought I would let you know the latest with our First Place group. Today was a very sad day, it was the last day of the session. We have all enjoyed the study so much, and God has done some incredible things over the last 13-weeks. Our weight loss has not been fantastic. We have lost 7.8 kgs (17 pounds), and God has changed us for the better.

I know I am walking much closer with Him. My husband, Brian, has recommitted his life to Christ because of First Place. It's funny, you know you're a Christian and think you're doing OK. Then comes First Place and God really speaks to you and you realize that there is much in your life that you have to make right before God. Isn't He a wonderful God! Praise His name!

Our class went for a celebration lunch today. We had a wonderful time as we do every week when we meet. Our whole congregation is excited about First Place. We have booked our tickets for when you are in Brisbane, Australia, and we are so looking forward to meeting you.

Thank you for your support and prayers. Looking forward to meeting you very soon

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

Dear Kay,

I wanted to share with everyone how the Lord has blessed our First Place group. We are a Southern Baptist Church and First Place qualifies for discipleship training. Our church offers scholarship money for anyone who needs it, so we were able to provide Members Kits for four people who could not afford them. Isn't the Lord good?

We are studying the *Life Under Control* Bible study this semester. I am leading a 20-member group and my husband is doing the Bible study. We are having so much fun.

It has taken me eight months to get to my 14-minute mile. I was at my goal weight for one week, but I seem to be fighting with two pounds. I can't seem to get them off and keep them off. Oh well, it will come; I know God is in control, right?

I am so grateful for the First Place program. So many folks in our church are being blessed by the program, and even our small community of 3,300 people are being blessed by the enthusiasm of our members—walking, biking, hiking, swimming, running, or whatever it takes to get that exercise commitment in.

Thanks again for your support and prayers.

**Brenda Billingsley**  
*First Southern Baptist Church*  
*Rushville, Illinois*

Here is a photograph and excerpts from an article that ran in two local newspapers about Ascension's successful First Place program. Members get comments wherever they go, about how good they look and questions about, "What is their secret?" We smile and answer—God—and then explain First Place.

Shalom,  
**Carol Glaman**  
*Ascension Lutheran Church*  
*Fond du Lac, Wisconsin*



### WEIGHT LOST & FOOD SHARED

Prayer, Bible study and weight loss! Over 450 pounds slimmer, the 26 members of Ascension Lutheran Church's First Place program donated food items to the Food Pantry comparable to their cumulative weight loss. They were part of a 13-week program called First Place. The program incorporates prayer, Bible study and Scripture memorization with a healthy eating plan, fellowship and fun. Ascension's First Place group was an overwhelming success, and 23 of the original members have now begun a second 13-week commitment with a new Bible study. Inspired by their example and by the results that were dramatically noticeable, an additional 13 people have begun the program as well. "I never found losing weight to be this easy and this much fun before," said one satisfied First Placer.

First Place is an effective wellness program that stresses balance in the four areas of life—mental, physical, emotional and spiritual. It focuses on nutrition and healthy eating rather than counting calories. Each member designed their own eating plan with exchanges based on their age, weight and activity level. A frequent comment was, "I can't eat all the food I'm supposed to in a day."

One of the keys that made this First Place program so successful was the weekly encouragement. Once a week, each member drew a name of someone to pray for during the week. It was fun. It was successful.

And it continues to be successful. Praise the Lord. More information about the program in general and about the session starting in the fall is available online at [www.execpc.com/~ascenfdl](http://www.execpc.com/~ascenfdl) or by calling Ascension at 922-3353.



# Success Stories



**Bev Henson**  
Before: 273 pounds  
After: 150 pounds



Bev is now a certified personal trainer and encourages people to get out of the recliner and start moving into a healthier lifestyle. She is currently writing a book, "Gotta Get Moving," about her middle-age crisis and phenomenal weight loss. Bev will travel with Carole Lewis, First Place national director, on a five-city speaking tour in Australia later this month.

Bev continually gives God all the praise and glory for every victory in her life. "I am truly walking in the abundant life that is promised by God. First Place has blessed me with the knowledge of God and given me the direction to move on through Him. It is truly a wonderful life! I give glory to the Father and thank First Place for a new direction. I am a new creature through the glory of God. Thank you, First Place for the best days of my life."

Also participating in the State Games was Sheila Newbaker, another First Place member from Meridian, Mississippi. Sheila was the first woman to cross the finish line in the 2-mile walk, taking first place. Her time was 25 minutes.

**(See Sheila's success story on next page)**

The State Games of Mississippi were recently held in Meridian, Mississippi. These games are similar to the Olympics, but on a state level. Every year, thousands of athletes from all over the state come to Meridian for the opening ceremony—lighting of the torch, and march of the teams from each city and town. The Games are held over two weekend. Team sports are held the first weekend and the second weekend are the individual events. The purpose of the State Games is to promote fitness and give people of all ages and interests a venue in which to compete. The Games are sponsored by The Partnership for a Healthier Mississippi.

For one competitor—Beverly Henson—her love for kayaking, along with mountain biking, swimming and running has become a passion. Bev, age 50, claimed second place in the 5K Run. She took first place in the 50-meter free-style swim, setting a State Games record and claimed a second gold medal in the 100-meter backstroke, setting another state record. Following the kayak races where Bev received two second place medals, she headed to the mountain bike course where she took first place in the 6-mile hill climb, before calling it a day. Not bad for a lady who just five years ago weighed approximately 150 pounds more than she does today.



*Sheila Newbaker won a Gold Medal for the two-mile walk. Beverly Henson took three Gold Medals and three Silver Medals in running, swimming, kayaking and mountain biking.*

## Success Stories continued. . .

**A**lthough I had attended First Place several times before, I started again in January 2002. This time I was at a different point in my life—a miserable, desperate point—willing to do whatever it took to lose weight.

I was never overweight as a child. I married at 19 and weighed 140 pounds. I am 5'10" and was very thin then. However, over the years, never weighing myself, I slowly gained little by little.

Several years later when I had my first child, I was about 170-180 pounds. I wasn't too uncomfortable and didn't watch my weight at all; I never exercised and four years later I had twins. To say the least, life was hard. I gained a lot of weight due to the pregnancy and 10 weeks of bed rest. After the twins' birth, I was too busy to focus on healthy foods or exercise. I barely had a minute to shower. After 2-1/2 years of survival, I was huge and miserable and desperate for relief. I even scheduled an appointment with a surgeon to consider a breast reduction, but cancelled the appointment. Although I felt it would help, I knew I needed to lose weight everywhere.

If I could only lose weight! That is easier said than done. I wanted it so badly. However, I had negative self-thoughts, telling myself that I couldn't and wouldn't lose weight. I was usually a positive person, so I had to quit dwelling on these negative thoughts. I was finally ready to get to work.

I started First Place in January 2002, weighing 222.6 pounds. I had not weighed that much since my pregnancy with the twins! I made the commitments and kept them daily, one day at a time.

I started walking on my lunch hours and breaks at work. I started walking a mile a day, then two, then later, up to 20 miles a week! I entered a couple of "walks" in our community and have won first place for my age group! (Imagine that!) The more I exercise, the more I want to exercise. I loved walking so much that I decided to start running. I get up at 5:00 a.m., before all of the babies wake up and run for 45 minutes. I have also started cycling. I believe that the exercise is a significant part of successful weight loss and healthy living.

I have made other changes as well. I now drink lots of water. I use to live on root beer. Now I live on water and an occasional diet soda. I crave water and gulp it! I have a daily Bible study and prayer time that puts me in the right mind frame to keep my commitments and stay encouraged. One day, specifically, when I first started, I did not feel "in the mood" to drink any water. So I did my devotional and all of a sudden, I wanted to drink water. Praise the Lord! He is faithful—I should be too!

I am not finished in my weight loss journey, however. I have lost 45 pounds, but wish to lose 20 more before I begin maintenance. I am now active and conscientious about what I eat. I feel GOOD! I never wanted to be a fat mom. I can now turn off the TV, get out of the house and play with my three sons.

I thank God for his faithfulness. I am thankful for my leaders, Carol Moore and Beverly Henson, who are so motivated and energetic. I know I am "catching" their motivation! My group members have also been a blessing to me. They call or send notes that have really been touching and "pick-me-ups" just when I have needed them. I have really made a lot of wonderful, good friends. Please pray for me as I continue to work, play, and do my part in First Place.

**Sheila Newbaker**  
*Meridian, Mississippi*



## COMING EVENTS

### 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)

### INDIANA/OHIO AREA LEADERS MEETING

July 20, 2002  
Revna Park Baptist Church  
3015 S. B Street  
Richmond, Indiana  
Contact: Karen Rhodus, Networking Leader at 765-732-3477 or [Rhodus@fust.net](mailto:Rhodus@fust.net)

### FIRST PLACE RALLY & WORKSHOP

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

### FIRST PLACE WORKSHOP

August 17, 2002  
New Hope Baptist Church  
Loveland, Ohio  
Contact: Janet Kirkhart at 937-444-1199 or [janet1stplace@hotmail.com](mailto:janet1stplace@hotmail.com)

### AREA LEADER'S MEETING & TRAINING

August 22, 2002, 6pm  
Christian Supply  
Portland, Oregon  
Reservations: Kellie McNeff at 503-262-2696  
Information: Carolyn McCulloch at 503-788-8031 or [mcculloch@hsd.k12.or.us](mailto:mcculloch@hsd.k12.or.us)

### FIRST PLACE WORKSHOP

August 24, 2002  
Houston's First Baptist Church  
Houston, Texas  
Contact: Nancy Taylor at (713) 688-6788, ext. 403 or (800)727-5223, ext. 403, [ntaylor@firstplace.org](mailto:ntaylor@firstplace.org)

### FIRST PLACE WORKSHOP

October 5, 2002  
Community Church of Columbus  
Columbus, Indiana  
Contact: Emily Coleman at (812) 376-9478 or [emily@columbuscommunity.org](mailto:emily@columbuscommunity.org)



# 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

