



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



July 2004

Matthew 6:33:
But seek first his kingdom
and his righteousness, and
all these things will be given
to you as well.

FIRST PLACE

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National Director
..... Carole Lewis

Associate Director
..... Kay Smith

Leadership Training
Director ... Nancy Taylor

Newsletter Sheila Robbins

Dear Friends,

When my husband, Johnny, was diagnosed with stage 4 prostate cancer in October 1997, we were devastated, to put it mildly. In the years since, we have both learned what it means to celebrate. Webster defines the word celebrate, "to observe a notable occasion with festivities." We celebrate a good PSA reading, and we celebrate something as insignificant as Johnny still being able to mow the grass every week. We don't think twice about spending several hours together reading and relaxing on the pier after I get home from work. With great joy and thanksgiving to God, Johnny and I celebrated our 45th wedding anniversary on June 26th.

Why do we celebrate so much? The reason is really quite simple; however, we had been married 37 years before Johnny's diagnosis and we didn't have a clue what it really meant to celebrate everything all the time. We took for granted that we would always have each other and always have good health. I suppose we thought that one day, when very, very old, we would just die peacefully together as we slept!

You see, we have learned that most of us don't celebrate what we take for granted! We take for granted our marriage, children, health, job, paycheck, home, air conditioning, car, food, freedom, clean water, clean air, paved roads, and the list goes on and on.

Today, I was talking on the phone to Bev Henson. Bev said that her Mom loved to celebrate. When Bev was growing up, her family celebrated turning off the pilot light, because summer was coming. In the fall, they lit candles and celebrated the lighting of the pilot light, because winter was coming. Bev's mom was a wise woman. By teaching her children to celebrate everyday things, she was teaching them not to take anything that seems insignificant for granted.

Another lesson we have learned is to celebrate now instead of later. Many of us in First Place don't celebrate the 10 pounds we've lost, because we still need to lose 100 more. We don't celebrate being able to walk around the block, because we know someone else who walks five miles a day. By celebrating our little accomplishments, we are learning to picture ourselves accomplishing more. Celebrate every time you lose five pounds. Celebrate when you walk your first mile. Celebrate when you don't order the "super size" and you wanted it.

Johnny told me one day that at the time he received his cancer diagnosis, he would have eagerly signed a contract to live five more years! Now that he has



Carole Lewis
National Director
Carole@firstplace.org

(Continued on Page 2)





Carole Lewis *(Continued from Page 1)*

lived almost seven years, signing a contract for five more years of life would have been quite foolish.

Of course, Johnny was kidding, because God in his grace doesn't let any of us know how long we will live. If we had known the day our daughter Shari was born that she would only live 39 years, we would never have enjoyed one day of her life. The Bible gives words of wisdom regarding treasuring and celebrating each and every moment of life.

I've been camped in the book of James since Shari's death and will share with you in closing the words from James 4:13-15, *Now, listen, you who*

say, "today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money." Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead, you ought to say, "If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that."

Cherish today, for it is a gift from God. Celebrate today for our God inhabits the praises of His children.

Blessings to you, Carole Lewis

Carole@firstplace.org

Coming Events

First Place Area Leaders Meetings

July 10, 2004

10:00 AM - 12:00 Noon
"A Leader's Gathering"
First Baptist Church | Leavenworth, KS
Contact: Joe Ann Winkler | Email: mjaw15@everstkc.net
Phone: (913)262-6173

September 18, 2004

10:00 AM - 2:00 PM (Bring your own lunch)
Oakdale Emory United Methodist Church | Olney, MD
Contact: Kathy Geehreg | Email: kegeehreg@aol.com
For directions to church, go to www.oeumc.org

First Place Workshops

Fitness Rally August 21, 2004

9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Blackwater River State Forest
Dining Hall - Bear Lake Recreation Area
Munson, FL (Approximately 45 miles Northeast of Pensacola, FL)
Special Guest: Beverly Henson and the Northcrest Baptist Fitness Team
Contact: LuAnne Williams or Susan Crawford
Phone: 850-689-0890 or 850-652-4249
Email: Luanne24@cox.net or susan@tateoil.com

Leadership Summit 2004

July 29-31, 2004

Houston, Texas
Keynote Speaker: Waylon Moore |
Worship Leader: Eulalia King

Choose to Lead On! Nancy Taylor

ntaylor@firstplace.org

Plus Bible Conference w/Beth Moore
Cost: \$75
Contact: Nancy Taylor at 800-727-5223, Ext. 403
Email: ntaylor@firstplace.org
To download a registration form, go to:
http://www.firstplace.org/image/Leadership_Summit.pdf

First Place Conference

September 17-18, 2004

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

REGISTRATION FEE:

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

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO:

First Place-FOCUS

SEND CHECK AND REGISTRATION FORM TO:

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

F.O.C.U.S Week 2004

Focusing On Christ's Unlimited Strength

October 7-14, 2004

Round Top, Texas
\$625.00 (includes \$100 non-refundable deposit with registration)
\$675.00 w/airport shuttle
(includes \$100 non-refundable deposit with registration)





Talkin' With Kay

Dear First Place Friends,

Kay Smith
Associate Director
kays@bigcountry.net

July is the month to celebrate the freedoms we enjoy as Americans. The death of Ronald Reagan and the media coverage of his life reminded me of just how important our freedom is and what a great price others have paid for freedom.

I was particularly moved by an interview with a lady, who grew up in Russia, talking about her past. She recalled many years ago standing in long lines to get in the grocery store, only to find the shelves empty. We were then shown the contrast of shopping in Russia today, which looks much like America. Empty shelves are hard for us to even imagine. I read that we have 200 new products hit grocery shelves each month. You can expect to see "orange" cauliflower in your produce department very soon, if you haven't already. In America, we can certainly celebrate abundance in food choices.

I celebrate the freedom that is offered to me by the First Place Live-It Plan. Making healthy food choices and following the nutritional information in the Member's Guide offers freedom from indigestion, obesity, and even some very major health diseases. Good health is a reason to celebrate, and your food choices may directly relate to how much you celebrate. Following the Live-It Food Plan also frees you from needing to check out each new "diet" that becomes popular. The sound information offered in the Live-It does not make for sensational headlines, but it will always be correct. You have probably heard that we may see some changes in the USDA Pyramid in the next few years. We will not need to change the Live-It Plan, because health officials agree that information needing to be added to the Pyramid has been included in First Place for many years. They want to educate the public about the different types of fats and the difference between a simple and complex carbohydrates. First Place already does this. They are really just taking steps closer to what First Place has been teaching for years.

We can also celebrate some new products in First Place. The "New First Place Favorites" recipe book is not only beautiful, it is full of fantastic recipes from First Place Leaders and Members all across this country! I submitted some of my own favorite recipes to this new recipe book.

The First Place Group Starter Kit now comes in a wonderful exercise bag. The kit includes: Leader's Guide, Member's Guide, First Place Book, Giving Christ First Place Bible Study, Introduction to First Place and the Nine Commitment DVD, Orientation and Food Exchange Plan DVD, Leadership Training DVD, myfirstplace.org three-month trial subscription, and one package of 25 First Place Brochures. The videos were not re-filmed, just changed from VHS to DVD.

The Member's Kit now comes in a nifty messenger bag. The Kit includes: Member's Guide, Choosing to Change, Motivational CD's, Food Exchange Pocket Guide, Commitment Records, Health 4 Life, and Scripture Memory Verses.

My group just completed the Bible Study "Living in Grace," and it was fabulous! We are looking forward to the new study, "A New Creation," to be released in December. If your group has completed all the studies, please remember that it is not a problem to repeat them. I have repeated all of our studies and have never come to a question and thought, "Oh, I know the answer to that." Our situations change and I find that God always has a fresh and relevant word for us pertaining to our present situation.

Please check out all the new products on the web site. Celebrate with Gospel Light and the First Place staff some great new additions.

May God bless you as You Celebrate!
Kay Smith

kays@bigcountry.net





Leadership Training Choose To Celebrate!

Nancy Taylor

Leadership Training Director
ntaylor@firstplace.org

To be honest, I really do not feel like celebrating or writing an article about celebrations. I have been under a cloud and can't seem to come out from under it. This is not like me at all. My personality would be described as sanguine. I am usually the eternal optimist. I can be down in the dumps one minute or upset about what someone did to me, but hours later I have totally forgotten what made me upset. Yet, for some reason, I have allowed the negative, poor me thoughts to take over my thinking. They have crowded out all evidence of joy. I cried out to the Lord this morning and asked Him to speak to me and to break through these feelings of hopelessness.

He did it! He broke through the darkness. Psalm 18:28 – 29 says, *“For Thou dost light my lamp; The LORD my God illumines my darkness. For by Thee I can run upon a troop; And by my God I can leap over a wall.”* I opened my last new email that I had received overnight and there it was, “Those Negative Voices,” a devotional from my dear friend, Elizabeth Crews. It spoke right to my heart and I pray it will speak to yours as well. Are you preparing for a victory celebration and feel like there is really nothing to celebrate? Do you feel like you should step down from First Place leadership because you just don't feel like you will ever influence your members for good? Well, the answer is found in God's Word. Choose this day to believe the truth of His Word and choose to celebrate the blessings that God will bring out of any seemingly defeated situation. Thank you, Elizabeth, for sharing the light with us.

Those Negative Voices

We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. 2 Corinthians 10:5

Three summers ago, my daughter Sheri, my twin grandsons and I went to Disneyland for a three-day vacation. Sheri had just completed a rigorous Master's Degree program, a dream we had pulled

together to make reality. It was time to celebrate the victory! However, the morning before we were scheduled to leave, I woke up in pain. My arthritic right knee was inflamed and swollen. Walking without the aid of a cane was impossible. The negative voices in my head immediately began their litany: *although I had been part of the work, I would not be part of the celebration.* The hostile voices assured me that circumstances had once again intervened to keep me from reaping the fruits of my labors. However, the voice of my Scottish mother also spoke up. We had already paid for the tickets—and there was a “no cancellation, no refund” policy included in our reservations. Reluctantly, I went on the trip, cane in hand, resigned to park myself on a bench and watch the others having fun, while I nursed my wounds on the sideline. As I walked through the turnstile, the attendant at the gate saw my obvious impairment. She told me to go to the Fire Station on Main Street where I could get a priority seating badge that would allow us to get onto the park rides without waiting in lines. As I limped down Main Street and walked through the Fire Station, I had hope. Perhaps those negative voices were wrong. Maybe I was not resigned to the sidelines after all. For the next three days, the entire family enjoyed the benefits of Nana's priority seating badge. What could have been a limitation turned out to be a tremendous benefit for the entire family; all four of us were allowed to go to the front of the long lines, and sit in special places reserved for folks with limited mobility. My grandsons thought Nana's “bum knee” was a blessing. So did I; I was reminded that God gives priority seating to those who are willing to limp along and join in the celebration, regardless of the circumstances that threaten to steal their joy.

Recalling that story also brought to mind a 12-step program saying: “When I'm in my head, I'm

(Continued on Page 5)



Nancy Taylor *(Continued from Page 4)*

behind enemy lines”—and the words of the Apostle Paul about demolishing arguments that are against the knowledge of God and bringing every thought captive to Christ. It is so much easier for me to recognize false doctrine in others than to see it in myself! What I have come to realize is that the litany of negative voices that repeats itself over and over in my head is much more damaging than outside circumstances that threaten my faith. Had I stopped to challenge those voices before they convinced me I was once again destined to sit on the sidelines while the others enjoyed a victory celebration, I would have known this was not God's will, or God's way. One of God's universal laws is the law of sowing and reaping. The negative tapes in my head would like for me to believe that I had worked hard, but there would be no reward. God's Word tells me otherwise. He promises a reward for our labors, a bountiful harvest when we sow and diligently tend the field. My responsibility is to destroy the negative thoughts and begin looking for God's blessings. Blessings that often manifest themselves in ways that do not conform to my preconceived expectations of what a blessing "should" look like!

Recalling that incident also made me wonder how many blessings I have missed because I chose to listen to the negative litany instead of bringing my negative thoughts captive to Christ—the living Word of God. Today, it is my prayer that all of us will have the courage to challenge those voices that tell us God's plans for us are not good and that He does not reward those who seek Him. Then, having captured the culprits, that we finish our work by quickly demolishing them, lest we miss the blessing God has in store for those who love Him.

Taken From Crews Missals

By Elizabeth Crews

crewsmissals@cox.net

Choose to Lead On! Nancy Taylor

ntaylor@firstplace.org

Leadership Tip

Leaders often ask for new ideas for their victory celebrations. I have written tips on victory celebration themes, and ideas for the celebration itself. One question that I have not addressed is, "What types of awards do you present at your victory celebration?" I have developed a list of things to celebrate to help you award individuals for their success beyond weight loss. If possible I would give every person an award for something, and in fact, I have done that very thing! At the victory celebration it is important that everyone find something to celebrate. I pray this list will help!

THINGS TO CELEBRATE:

- **Perfect Attendance**
- **Lower Blood Pressure**
- **Lower Cholesterol level**
- **Most Inches Lost**
- **Scripture Memory**
(able to say all 10 verses at the end of the session)
- **Sugar Free for 12 Weeks!**
- **110% Award**
(for those who went over and above in effort)
- **Sunshine Award**
(for the one with the best attitude)
- **Session Goal Award**
(reached their goal for weight loss that session)
- **Encourager Award**
(the member who stood out as the encourager to all the members on a consistent basis)
- **Exercise Award**
(the member who had the greatest improvement in their activity level)
- **Servant Award**
(the member who volunteered to help out the most often)





Immeasurably More in 2004

July 29-July 31, 2004

Houston, Texas

Immeasurably More in 2004 is a conference created specifically for First Place Leaders to come together with other leaders and the First Place staff to share what is happening in their area or class, envision what could be, and pray for God to continue to raise up new leaders. It is the next level of training for First Place leadership.

An incredible three days of celebrating, networking, brainstorming, idea sharing, praying, training and worship are planned for those that are ready to experience more in 2004. All First Place networking leaders, workshop leaders, active and former leaders are invited to attend. Cost is \$75 per person and includes materials, seminars, 2 lunches, 1 dinner, and a weekend conference with Beth Moore, well-known Bible teacher.

Leadership Summit Workshops:

- Back on Track
- Motivating Muscle
- Workshop Leader Training
- Leadership Stress
- Leading the Live-it and more!

[Download the Registration form here.](#)

New hotel added for the Summit:

Hampton Inn. To make your reservation, go to www.hampton-inn.com/hi/houston-galleria. To receive our special Summit rate of \$59, you must enter the code HFB in the Group/Convention Code box. You can also register by phone at 1-800-HAMPTON. Please refer to First Place/Houston's First Baptist Church when making your reservation by phone. The deadline for this rate is July 14, 2004.

First Place Leadership Summit 2004 Registration Form

Please register me for the First Place Leadership Summit 2004. I have filled out the information below and included the payment. **DEADLINE: JULY 1, 2004**

Mr./Miss/Mrs./Ms. _____

Phones (h) _ (_____) _____ (w) _ (_____) _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Fax # (_____) _____ Email _____ @ _____

Birthday (mm/dd) _____

Church membership _____ City _____

- I will _____ or will not _____ have a car while I am there.
- I understand that you will not make my reservations for me but I would like to come and room with others at a hotel. Please see if you can hook me up with one _____ or two _____ or three _____ others.
- I understand that I will not be registered until I send a check, or credit card information, so I have enclosed one! Here's what I have enclosed (Check **what you are paying for and method of payment.**):

___ I would like to register for the Leadership Summit for \$75.00.

___ I would like to purchase a Leadership Summit T-shirt for \$10.00.
Please **circle** size: M L XL XXL XXXL

- Total Payment Enclosed: _____

___ Check Check # _____

___ Credit Card: Visa MasterCard American Express Discover

CC # _____ Exp. Date _____

Name on Card _____

Please return form and payment to:
First Place, Attn: Lisa Lewis,
7401 Katy Freeway, Suite 337, Houston, TX 77024
Fax: 713.688.7282



Bev's Footnotes

Discovering Personal Celebrations

In the beginning days of doing the First Place Program correctly, I realized that not only was my life out of order, but my thinking had become stale. I had nothing to look forward to except my next meal. Once I began walking around in my "Promised Land," it was evident that my stale mind was being renewed. Even though I was still about 275 pounds, once I began a consistent walking program, I began to think differently. I began to feel fit and see myself in a different light. The odd thing was that I began to look forward to walking each day, even though it hurt.

The Father revealed to me that food and meal time was all that I had been looking forward to for many years. He showed me the importance of placing other things ahead of food to look forward to in my life. It is very important that we have enjoyable moments down our path to work toward, to give us hope, and to occupy a space in our thoughts for comfort. Give yourself something other than food to look forward to each day, each week, and months down the road.

The first thing I put before food in my life came early in March 1998. I was doing First Place and walking regularly for exactly one month. I had lost 18 pounds and was beginning to feel fit. I decided that I was going to begin doing activities I had only dreamed of while I was overweight and sedentary. I always wanted to Roller Blade or Inline Skate. I purchased my first Inline Skates, brought them home and put them on my feet, only to discover that my legs were still so large I could not fasten the straps.

Rather than be disappointed, I decided to turn the disappointment into a moment of opportunity, and a celebration to look forward to down the road. Each Monday I would put my skates on to see if the straps would fasten. My personal celebration came a few months later on a Monday in May when

Beverly Henson
Certified Personal Trainer
Bevh1952@bellsouth.net

the straps fastened on my skates. What a feeling of accomplishment! At that moment, my mind started searching for my next personal celebration. My next moment to look forward to was a bicycle....then a kayak....then running, and so on.

Jesus said in John 10:10, *I am come that you might have life and that you might have it more abundantly.* Don't let that abundant life Jesus came to give you become stale. Give yourself events or things to look forward to accomplishing. Do you remember as a child how much you looked forward to your birthday or Christmas? Do you remember how excited you were when the day finally arrived? It was truly a celebration.

May I tell you that you don't have to wait until you are thin to celebrate? Place things ahead in your life. Work toward them and look forward to the coming celebration. In our society celebrations are commonly built around food. Build your celebration around a fun physical activity. Tell yourself, "From this day forward, I am renewing my stale mind; no more stale thoughts, only thoughts of things to look forward to, working toward personal celebrations."

Give yourself a present! Give yourself hope! As you give yourself something to look forward to, it will be a personal celebration.

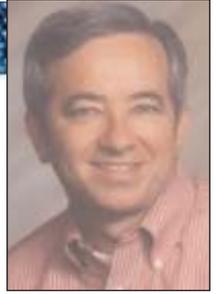
Press On! **Bev Henson**

Bevh1952@bellsouth.net

Acts 17:28

"In Him we live and move and have our being."

Beverly Henson is a conference and rally speaker for the First Place ministry. She is also a Bible teacher and certified personal trainer. Beverly joined First Place in July 1997 and has lost 160 pounds. First Place has given Beverly a powerful testimony. She is the First Place Director and the Director of Wellness Ministries at Northcrest Baptist Church in Meridian, MS.. She is also an area Networking Leader for First Place in Mississippi. Beverly has a genuine love of proclaiming the word of God to His people.



Something Worth Celebrating

*"O sing to the Lord a new song, for He has done wonderful things...
Shout joyfully to the Lord, all the earth; Break forth and sing for joy and
sing praises."* Psalms 98:1a,4

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

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

There are many occasions for Christians to celebrate. Perhaps we feel hesitant to demonstrate feelings of joy when we know how much work God still has to do on us...but it is a normal thing for God's children to celebrate. The Old Testament gives instructions for many "holy days" that often call for the remembering of what God has done in the past. It is a gathering of thanksgiving.

This summer will be filled with many opportunities for spontaneous, as well as well-choreographed outbreaks of gratitude:

Weddings - a time of blessing on the new couple, but also a call for married couples to be reminded of their vows and dreams, and the Christian community to remember the need to support families.

Funerals - The death of one of God's children is a time for tears over the loss, but also a time of giving thanks for the gift of life; it is a call for all to live life as a treasure.

Holidays - are often set to remind of past successes and sacrifices. It is a time to enjoy family and friends, but take time to recall the "why" of the day.

Births - Every new child is God's affirmation that He is still in the creating business and that he will bless the future. The family of faith has a new reason for joy and a new responsibility to nurture faith.

In personal ways, there are times to celebrate. It encourages gratitude and that produces joy.

- While looking at challenging goals - do not miss the opportunity to remember how far you have come.
- Identify every encouragement that has helped bring success, such as people, programs, studies, etc.
- Build a tradition of celebrating success, i.e. write a letter, journal, make a contribution to a

cherished Christian cause, etc. to mark the event.

- Select a favorite scripture that reflects your heart's joy and memorize it. Look in your Bible concordance under words like: rejoice, thanksgiving, etc.

For Others, mark their successes with memory markers.

- Thoughtfulness is not always expensive or time consuming. Personal notes, voice mail or timely emails all make special people feel special at special times.
- Keep your calendar updated with key events in others' lives - birthdays, anniversaries, and even remembering special people who have gone to be with the Lord.
- Never miss the opportunity to make an event a party. Invite a small group of their closest friends; use your best dishes [they are enjoyed if used more than stored.] Give small memorable gifts like a favorite potted plant or a special recipe, and perhaps include baggies of the ingredients.

There are many struggles that are part of the Christian journey, but a life of faith without celebration is like a time of worship without a song.

Enjoy

Rejoice

Celebrate

For He has done great things!

It will do your soul good; it will cause our hurting, cynical and curious world to wonder what He is up to!

Bill Heston





Hints & Pinches

Dessert Celebrations



Scott Wilson

First Place Food Consultant
firstplacechef@hotmail.com

Many people think they have to give up dessert when they join First Place. This is simply not the case! In First Place there are no "off limit" foods. You do, however, have to limit the foods you do choose, and make the best selections in your choices of food.

While sugar in itself is not bad, we know that it cause tooth decay, and that it has no nutritional value. It does add flavor to baked goods, as well as provide texture and firmness. When replacing the sugar in desserts with older non-nutritive sweeteners (Equal, Sweet 'N Low, and the newest one, SPLENDA), you may find that you get mixed results. Note that there are also some brown sugar replacements available.

Here is some information pulled from their respective sites that may help you with your desserts when you are having that special celebration.

You can substitute **Equal** in most recipes that use sugar as a sweetener, including fruit pies, cobblers, cheesecakes, dressings, sauces, beverages and salads. However, modifications may be necessary when using Equal in cakes and brownies where sugar provides structure and volume, or in jams and jellies where a "no-sugar-needed" pectin is used. One problem with Equal is that it tends to lose its sweetening power with prolonged heat and baking time, simply add Equal after removing from heat.

Sweet'N Low has been around the longest and is the most tested. At one time its main ingredient, saccharin, was linked to cancer in lab animals. Several years ago, it was removed from that list with further testing. Sweet'N Low is ideal for tabletop use and dissolves easily in hot and cold beverages. Sweet'N Low can be used as an ingredient for most of your favorite recipes and is useful in cooking, baking, freezing, and preserving.

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.

Unlike other sugar substitutes, such as those that contain aspartame, Sweet'N Low does not lose its sweetness when it is heated, so there are no special processes required for substituting Sweet'N Low for sugar. When baking items such as cakes, it is recommended that you use a combination of Sweet'N Low and sugar to get the desired texture.

SPLENDA Granular can be used almost anywhere you use sugar in cooking and baking. However, its baking properties are different from sugar. When replacing sugar for sweetness, SPLENDA works best in recipes where sugar is used primarily to sweeten, such as pie fillings, cheesecakes, sweet sauces, marinades, glazes, quick breads, muffins, and cookies. In recipes where the amount of sugar is quite high, sugar often contributes significantly to structure and texture. For best results, only replace about 25% of the sugar required by creating a blend of sugar and SPLENDA Granular instead of a full sugar replacement. If you are using SPLENDA 1-to-1, add 1 teaspoon baking soda and 1/2 cup dry milk for every cup of the sugar substitute to make the cake more tender and to help maintain the volume.

The main thing to remember is not to get stressed about what you can and cannot have at your celebration. After all, stressed is desserts spelled backwards!

For more information and recipes visit each of the web sites: www.equal.com, www.sweetnlow.com, www.splenda.com, and www.caloriecontrol.org

Scott Wilson

firstplacechef@hotmail.com





Celebration Desserts

Mini Lime Cheesecakes

Serves 12

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----|--|
| 12 vanilla wafers | 1 | tablespoon grated lime rind |
| 3/4 cup fat-free cottage cheese | 1 | tablespoon fresh lime juice |
| 8 ounces light cream cheese, softened | 1 | teaspoon vanilla extract |
| 1/4 cup Splenda Granular | 1/4 | cup low-fat vanilla yogurt |
| 2 tablespoons sugar | 2 | medium kiwifruit, peeled, sliced, and halved |
| 2 eggs | | |

Line 12 muffin pans with paper baking liners and place one vanilla wafer in the bottom of each liner. Process the cottage cheese in a blender or food processor until smooth. Combine the cottage cheese with the Neufchatel in a medium bowl and beat at medium speed until creamy. Gradually add the Splenda and sugar and mix well. Add the eggs, lime rind, lime juice, and vanilla. Beat until smooth. Spoon the cheese mixture evenly over the vanilla wafers. Bake at 350 degrees for 20 minutes or until the cheesecakes are almost set. (Do not over-bake) Let the cheesecakes cool completely on a wire rack. Remove from the pans and chill thoroughly. Spread the vanilla yogurt evenly over the cheesecakes, and top each one with kiwifruit slices. Serves 12.

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

Baked Spiced Bananas with Frozen Yogurt

Serves 6

- 3 medium, very ripe bananas, peeled
- vegetable cooking spray
- 4 teaspoons granulated brown sugar substitute
- 2 teaspoons grated lemon rind
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/8 teaspoon no-sugar-added, reduced-fat frozen yogurt

Cut bananas in half lengthwise. Place bananas in a 13x9x2-inch baking dish coated with cooking spray. Sprinkle with brown sugar substitute and remaining ingredients. Bake at 350 degrees for 15 to 20 minutes or until thoroughly heated. Serve warm over frozen yogurt. Serves 6. (1/2 banana each with 1/2 cup yogurt)

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

Date Nut Bars

Makes 24 Bars

- 1-1/4 cups water
- 1 cup pitted chopped dates
- 3/4 cup pitted chopped prunes
- 1/2 cup dark raisins
- 6 tablespoons stick butter
- 2 eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 cup Equal® Spoonful
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 cup chopped nuts

Combine water, dates, prunes and raisins in medium saucepan. Bring to boil over medium heat. Reduce heat and simmer uncovered until fruit is tender and water is absorbed, about 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Remove from heat and stir in butter until melted. Cool mixture to room temperature. Beat eggs and vanilla into fruit mixture. Mix in combined flour, Equal®, baking soda, spices and salt. Spread batter in sprayed 8-inch square baking pan. Sprinkle with nuts.

Bake in preheated 350°F oven 30 to 35 minutes or until wooden pick inserted near center comes out clean. Cool completely in pan on wire rack. Cut into bars. Store in airtight containers at room temperature. Makes 24 bars.

Exchanges for 1 bar: 1 bread, 1/2 fat





First Place Success Story

My weight began to increase as my lifestyle changed after the birth of my two children. They were born 16 months apart, so I stayed busy raising babies for about three years. Much of the 1980's was spent concentrating on being a good mom! I forgot about taking care of ME.

As the 1980's ended, I had experienced the death of my dear Mother, Father and Stepfather in a period of less than one year. Stress levels increased as my family moved to a new location, purchased a new home, and purchased a local surveying business. We purchased the home and the business on the same day!

The fast paced 1990's rolled in as my kids stayed busy in school and I stayed home. Before I knew it, my weight had moved upward to 219 pounds. I was miserable and unhappy with my physical appearance. One day I looked in the mirror and decided to make a change. That very night at the football game, I told a dear friend I was going to lose weight! I began to lose weight as I exercised and tried to eat fewer sweets and more green salads. Before long, I had lost 40 pounds! It was not easy, but I felt successful.

That is when First Place came into my life. I knew I had more weight to lose, but had no idea how to achieve it. As I wandered down the produce isle of my favorite grocery store, a friend invited me to a First Place meeting that very night. I met her at the meeting and my life has never been the same!

I lost an additional 40 pounds in one session! Believe it or not, it can be done. I followed the program exactly as it was designed. I remember the struggles, as I often walked on the track, headphones on, listening to a First Place walking tape. I would cry out loud to God, asking him to help me eat better and lose weight! The battle was his and he proved faithful.

I began leading a First Place group in 1996, at the age of 42. I have seen many ladies become success stories as they change their lives, begin to exercise, and learn to eat healthy. As each new session approaches, I ask God if I should once again commit to leading a group. He never fails to get me excited about the new upcoming session, and the possibility of helping to change the life of at least one person. Again, God is always faithful. Lives are changed!

Watching people change their lives and live healthier is so exciting. I made a decision in 2000 to return to college. I wanted to study nutrition and learn more about how to help people achieve good health. I began attending classes at a local community college. After two semesters of general chemistry my first year, I knew that with God nothing was impossible!

I began attending Kansas State University (KSU), by Distance Education, studying dietetics. I graduated from KSU in May 2004, with a Bachelor of Science in Dietetics. Following a twelve month internship, I will sit for the RD exam.

My groups have been composed mostly of women. One lady came to the first session after eating a large snickers bar and 16-ounce Dr. Pepper. She knew it would be her last! That lady was successful and has kept the weight off. Another lady had never before had a weight problem until age 50. She too has been successful and made changes to improve her health and lifestyle. So many lives are touched through the First Place program.

Another lady joined us this session. When she began, she could not walk to her mailbox. Today, she has lost approximately 25 pounds and walks around the block and rides a stationary bicycle.

Yet, another lady did not begin the session until the third meeting. I had decided not to let the lady join; it was just too late in the session. She showed up at the session and said she had prayed about joining and knew she needed to be here. What could I do! I let her join and she has been very successful. Sometimes, we have to throw the rules out the window. God has a plan for each and every meeting and our session.

Bible study and friendship are sometimes the reason people join the session. No matter what the reason, God blesses each one.

Rena Schaeffer
Atlanta, Texas





F.O.C.U.S. Week

... Focusing on Christ's Unlimited Strength

October 7-14, 2004

Round Top Retreat ❖ Round Top, Texas



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



LIMITED TO FIRST 60 REGISTRATIONS!

\$625⁰⁰

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

(Registration Form on next page)

\$675⁰⁰ Includes Airport Shuttle

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

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

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

No refund given after September 10, 2004.

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

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

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

MARK YOUR CALENDARS AND MAKE YOUR RESERVATIONS TODAY!





F.O.C.U.S. WEEK

Limited to First 60 Registrations

October 7-14, 2004

Round Top Retreat ❖ Round Top, Texas

REGISTRATION FORM

Name: _____

Address: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State/Province: _____

Country: _____

Zip/Postal Code: _____

Day Phone Number: _____

Fax Number: _____

Email Address: _____

Church: _____

Number in Your Group _____

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

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Airport Shuttle from Bush Intercontinental Airport:

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

Name of Airline: _____

Flight #: _____

Time of Arrival: _____

TOTAL COST:

\$625⁰⁰

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

\$675⁰⁰

Includes Airport Shuttle

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

TYPE OF CARD:

- Master Card Visa
- Discover American

Express

Card #: _____

Expires: _____

Name as appears on card: _____

Make checks payable to:

First Place

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

FIRST PLACE

7401 Katy Freeway, Suite 337

Houston, Texas 77024-2199

or Fax: 713-688-7282

Registration Deadline: September 10, 2004

Full Payment Due: September 10, 2004

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