



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



August 2004

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

FIRST PLACE

Phone:

(800) 727-5223
(713) 688-6788

Fax:

(713) 688-7282

To Place Orders:

(800) 446-7735
Fax: (800) 860-3109

www.firstplace.org

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

National Director
..... Carole Lewis

Associate Director
..... Kay Smith

Leadership Training
Director . . . Nancy Taylor

Newsletter Sheila Robbins

Dear Friends,

I've heard the term "gearing up" most of my life, but I checked the dictionary to see what this phrase really means. The definition I like best is, "**to make ready for effective operation.**"

Participating in the First Place program helps make us ready for effective operation. Since First Place is a four-sided program, we must gear up in all four areas if we are to operate effectively.



Carole Lewis
National Director
Carole@firstplace.org

PHYSICAL

Bev Henson, First Place Networking Leader in Mississippi, has a passion for teaching others how to "gear up" physically.

Bev has lost 160 pounds in First Place, and because she has kept the weight off since 1999, people are interested in following her leadership.

In January 2004, Bev started leading an Aerobics class on Tuesday and Thursday evenings in the gym at her church. The class is free and children are welcome. One evening there were 112 people in attendance! In April, Bev held a Fitness Rally at Bonita Lakes in Meridian, MS and 128 people showed up for the day. Everything was free, even the food and door prizes were donated.

Bev's latest offering, Boot Camp, meets at Bonita Lakes at 5:00 a.m. Monday through Thursday for 12 weeks. The first day 38 people showed up and 53 came on day two. I asked Bev what they do at Boot Camp and she said they do 15 minutes of strength training, side straddle hops, push ups, sit-ups, toe touches, etc. They also do 45 minutes of pushing cardio. She is teaching them to power walk, the goal being to walk an 11 to 15 minute mile by the time Boot Camp is over.

Obviously, there are some people in Meridian, MS, who are seriously gearing up to lose weight and get physically fit.

SPIRITUAL

Spiritual boot camp isn't much different than physical boot camp. If we will carve out one hour each day to spend in Prayer, Journaling, and Bible study; in 12 weeks, we will be spiritually "ready for effective operation."

(Continued on next page)





Carole Lewis

(Continued from previous page)

Jesus chose to get up very early to pray. (Mark 1:35) Most of us don't have a problem getting up early if we need to catch a plane or get to work before everyone else arrives. We can get up early if our priority is to spend time with God. One thing I've learned, spending time with God will never be a priority for me unless I do it long enough to see the value in it.

As we think about gearing up for the start of school and the beginning of our fall First Place classes, the consistency of time alone with God will bring success and help for whatever concerns us. Whether our concern is marriage, children, weight, time management, finances or health, God wants to help us succeed. He tells us in Matthew 6:33, "...seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to us as well." God is not going to intervene where He is not wanted. He is a perfect gentleman and He will come in if we open the door when He knocks.

MENTAL

I "gear up" mentally by reading. In the last three weeks I have read three books about people who have suffered greatly. I believe that God is teaching me some important lessons on thankfulness, and I have been reading to see if what I believe in my heart is actually true in the lives of others who have experienced great tragedy. After dinner, Johnny and I go down on the pier with our reading material and read for at least an hour before the sun goes down. Reading for one hour each day instead of watching television will make us mentally "ready for effective operation." All of us have time for what is important to us, but like the other two areas, we won't learn how important reading can become unless we carve out the time to do it.

EMOTIONAL

Emotional "gearing up" doesn't happen by giving one hour each day. If we are to be "ready for effective emotional operation," it takes giving

constant attention to our attitudes, words, and actions, all day every day. As I said, God has been teaching me about thankfulness and as in most areas of life, I have to live it out to learn it!

This summer we have 350 summer interns here at our church working at different mission sites every day. They shower at all times of the day in the Christian Life Center where I work out, and being young people, they leave their personal items everywhere. I noticed that the CLC hasn't been clean, and have sent e-mails and work requests asking that the trash be picked up, soap dispensers filled and carpets cleaned. I found that when I started the day off worrying about the clutter, my attitude was bad for most of the morning.

Last Sunday morning when I saw all 350 of these precious college students standing all over our sanctuary, God impressed my heart that my attitude has been all wrong. Instead of grouching about my own personal comfort, I should be thanking God. Proverbs 14: 4 says, "Where there are no oxen, the manger is empty," in other words, no mess, no ministry.

Monday morning I tried something different. As I walked into the dressing room, I started picking up shampoo, hair ribbons, towels, etc. and putting them on the shelf. I thanked God for these wonderful kids and thanked Him for giving me the ability to bend down and pick up these items. All this work took me less than a minute, but it changed my attitude!

My favorite "gear up" verse is 1 Peter 5:8, "Be self controlled and alert. Your enemy, the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour."

As you begin your fall First Place session, why not decide to "gear up" in all four areas. At the end of the session you will be "ready for effective operation."

**Blessings to you,
Carole Lewis**

Carole@firstplace.org





Talkin' With Kay

Dear First Place Friends,

Kay Smith
Associate Director
kays@bigcountry.net

August is the month that many of us in First Place will be gearing up for our new sessions beginning in August and September. Summer is winding down even faster in our area, with school beginning the 13th of August.

Gearing up is a term, I believe, that gives the impression of providing more power. We can gear up for our new session with more power if we have the answer to just a couple of the most often asked questions. As we advertise our Orientations, we may be asked by potential members, "Why should I join First Place?" First Place may not be the most popular weight loss program, but we can feel great pride in knowing that health officials will always advocate healthy food choices and exercise as the healthiest way to lose weight.

We may need to gear up our knowledge about food labeling, especially concerning the information on packages containing the words "low-carb" and "net carbs."

"Low-carb" and "net-carb" diets are in vogue. But what do the terms "low-carb" and "net-carb" really mean? Information provided by the Texas A&M University System Health Science Center says the term "low-carb" is actually illegal. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) prohibits any nutrient claim that it has not defined. The term "low-carb" has not been defined; therefore, no guidelines have been put in place to make the claim.

"Net-carb" means calculating carbohydrates by subtracting sugar alcohols (mannitol and sorbitol, for example), fiber and other carbohydrates that supposedly have a minimal impact on blood sugar." The problem with this is that the calories are still there, so minimal impact on your blood sugar may lead to major negative impact on your

weight loss. You may even want to stay completely away from products that make "low-carb" claims. Certainly, it will be wise to look at total carbohydrates and total calories. Your weight loss is still going to be determined by calories in and energy spent. The truth still remains that consuming too many calories, whether they are carbohydrates, protein, or fat, leads to a weight gain.

I would like to mention that I do not share this information for you to use with your friends who are currently choosing "low-carb" diets. It is very natural for Americans to want a quick fix, and for many it will give a quick weight loss, but it will probably be temporary. I think all First Place members should "take the high road" when discussing weight loss plans. Always be ready to share the advantages of First Place, without being negative about other plans. I was once told that the way bank officials detect counterfeit bills is that they become so familiar with the "real thing" that it is obvious when something is not. That is the way I feel about First Place. We just need to stick with the positive aspects of the First Place plan.

Healthy food choices and exercise is not a "quick fix," but you can assure those potential members that with this sensible plan, they will reap the benefits of building healthy cells as they lose weight. Building healthy cells is doing our part to ward off health diseases such as Diabetes, Heart Disease, Hypertension, and Cancer, just to list a few.

May God bless Each of You!
Kay Smith

kays@bigcountry.net





Leadership Training



Gearing Up for Leadership

Nancy Taylor

Leadership Training Director

ntaylor@firstplace.org



When I married my husband, he drove a Volkswagen Rabbit with no air conditioner and no automatic

transmission. As you can tell, I didn't marry him for his car! That first winter together we made plans to go snow skiing in New Mexico. On the day we were to leave, he became very ill with a stomach virus and we were unable to leave with our travel group. As my husband recovered, we decided we would like to try to go to New Mexico in the Volkswagen Rabbit. He said, "We can go, but you are going to have to drive, since I am still very weak." That was fine, but I had one problem: I did not know how to drive a 5-speed! He said, "No problem. I will teach you how." He gave me a one-hour lesson, and then I drove all the way from Fort Worth, TX to New Mexico. I remember how awkward it was to change from one gear to another. Sometimes the car would die and other times it would literally jump like a real rabbit, when I didn't get the clutch in quite right. I looked forward to the long stretches of highway where I would not have to change gears.

Leading a First Place class is similar to driving a 5-speed. You must change gears from neutral to first, from first to second, from second to third, and the result will be leading smoothly in fourth gear. Let's take a look at the different gears of leadership:

Neutral gear in leadership is a positive attitude.

The first thing I learned, as I drove my Rabbit, was to always start in neutral. Neutral is when you take the stick shift and wiggle it from side to side, making sure it is not in any gear. So, neutral is really not a gear, but it is the position you must start in before going to first gear. A leader must possess a positive position before going forward to lead. A positive leader breeds positive members. There is a marketing concept called positioning, and a book on my shelf titled, *Positioning: The Battle for Your Mind*, by Al Ries and Jack Trout. The subtitle reads: "How to be seen and

heard in the overcrowded marketplace." A First Place leader is not trying to sell anything, but a leader's goal is to be a positive influence in the lives of their members. When I first started driving the Rabbit, I often got lost in what gear I was suppose to be in and would often stop and go back to neutral. As a leader, I have found myself overly stressed and questioning my calling. That is when I have learned to wiggle my way to neutral and readjust my attitude. It is amazing how a positive attitude allows me to go smoothly into the next gear.

First Gear in leadership is prayer.

Never attempt to lead without spending quality time in prayer. Proverbs 16:3 tells us to "Commit to the Lord whatever you do and your plans will succeed." When I would move the Rabbit into first gear, I could hear the power of the engine ignite. Prayer ignites the power of God in the leader's life. Ephesians 6:18 encourages us to "Pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests." As I begin a new session, I pray that God would bring the specific individuals to my class that He desires. I ask the Lord to send potential leaders my way, and to provide insight into the needs of those I will lead. I ask God to give me a passion for His Word and for First Place. I pray about everything! I urge you to do the same and stand back and see God do His thing!

Second Gear provides a leader the time to probe the needs of those she/he will lead.

The very first session in the Leader Guide provides lesson plans for each week. The second session is when the leader begins to take ownership of their First Place class. This is accomplished by personalizing the lesson plans to suit the needs and interests of your members.

(Continued on next page)



Nancy Taylor

(Continued from previous page)

Take a survey of member’s interests, goals, and needs. Probe the members through a list of questions:

- ◆ What is your greatest need physically?
- ◆ What are your goals for this session, emotionally, spiritually, mentally and physically?
- ◆ Do you work outside the home?
- ◆ Are you single or are you married with children?
- ◆ How often do you eat out in one week?

The answers to these questions will give you insight into the needs of your members. You will still cover the most important concepts and Wellness Worksheets, but now you will pick and choose from the Wellness Worksheets in the Member Guide and from the Bible study book. I was teaching a class on a Sunday afternoon and ever time I tried to cover recipe conversion, I got a “deer in the headlights” look. I finally asked, “How many of you cook most of the time?” Virtually no one raised their hand. I had not probed my members beforehand, and so I was teaching something that was of little use to them. I then switched gears! We began to discuss ways to make wise choices while eating out, rather than how to lighten recipes. Don’t skip the probing gear and risk losing the interest of your members.

Third Gear is the all important planning gear.

The Group Starter Kit provides many tools to help leaders plan their session. The Leader Guide provides a blank Session Overview (page 82) that may be photocopied. After you have probed the members concerning their needs, you can then use this form to plan the entire session’s weekly topics and assignments. This is the general plan. There is also the Weekly Lesson Plan Form (page 81) for planning the specifics of each week’s lesson. You will find that members like to know what to expect from week to week, so giving a copy of your Session Overview to the members will help to meet

that need. It also provides structure for those who need it. Gather information from First Place materials, newsletters, website and other reputable health and fitness books and websites. I have often heard it said that if you plan for nothing, that is what you get – nothing! Planning provides a framework from which to lead. One caution: don’t get so tied to your plan that you forget to allow the Holy Spirit to lead. There have been times when I have planned a special presentation only to be greeted by a grieving member. I changed gears and we had a prayer time rather than the planned wellness spotlight. Plan, but be prepared to be flexible.

Fourth Gear is finally reached when the leader encourages member participation.

The best part of my 5-speed driving lesson was fourth gear. Finally, I could relax and allow the car to travel smoothly at a constant speed. Leadership runs smoothly when you involve others. Get others involved by asking them to assist you with weighing in the members or listening to them recite their memory verse. Ask members if they have an expertise in any area of health or fitness. Encourage them to share their expertise during the wellness spotlight one week. Have members sign up to bring a healthy snack to class each week. My grandmother always said, “Many hands make for light work.” Participation by class members will lighten your leadership load and allow you smooth travel through your session.

I am so glad my red Honda has automatic transmission and I don’t have to worry about changing gears! However, as a leader, I must be aware of what gear I am in and how to get to the next one. If I do have a leader lapse, I just go back to neutral, wiggle my way into a positive position, and get back into gear!

Lead On! Nancy Taylor

ntaylor@firstplace.org





Bev's Footnotes

Stepping Out

Matthew 14:28: "Lord, if it is you," Peter replied, "tell me to come to you on the water."



Beverly Henson
Certified Personal Trainer
Bevh1952@bellsouth.net

When I was in the sixth grade at Highland school, the Principal announced that we were having a school talent show. I wanted to be in the show so badly, but I had no talent. I had not taken piano lessons or dancing lessons like the other children, because my family could not afford them. I really wanted to be in that talent show, so I went over to my great-grandmother's house, where I knew that on a shelf was a real harmonica. She told me I could borrow it, and for hours I blew on that harmonica. Finally, I came up with something that sounded enough like a song, so I could enter the talent show. I put on the talent show sign-up card, "Beverly Henson will play a song on the harmonica that she wrote titled **Falling Leaves.**"

The day of the show all the girls who took dancing were dressed in tutus; all the boys and girls who took piano lessons had their sheet music, and I had my great grandmother's harmonica. Long story short, I won the school talent show! That afternoon kids were stopping at my mother's car saying, "We didn't know Beverly could play the harmonica." My mother said that she didn't know I could play it either.

My point in telling you this story is that the very first place you gear up for a task is in your heart. If you have a heart to do something, it doesn't matter if you have taken lessons, or have the skill, step out and say, "Hey, I want to do that." I have told God so many times, "God, whatever it takes, I want to do that."

In the area of fitness I hear so many of you say, "I have never been very athletic; I can't do the fitness thing." On the flip side of that comment, I hear "out of shape" athletes say, "I used to be good

at it, but I am not any more." If you have the heart to walk, run, skate, or ride a bike, tell God, "Hey, I want to do that," then let Him work with you toward doing it.

Jesus is calling His people to step out of the boat. Some of you folks would love to be up moving and having some fun. If you have a heart for a task, step out and Jesus will teach you how He wants it done. You can never tell, He may need you to step out of the "box" so you can help someone else climb out of the boat to get to Jesus.

If you have the heart to do something, God will gear you up for the rest of the task. Don't worry if you don't have the skills or experience, just be willing to step out of the boat. There are many of God's people sitting idle with big "want to's" in their hearts. Get it in gear. Get moving. Get fit for Jesus. Tell Him, Lord, help me to be fit to fight the fat!" Now! Get ready, get set, and step out of the boat!

Press On!
Bev Henson
Bevh1952@bellsouth.net

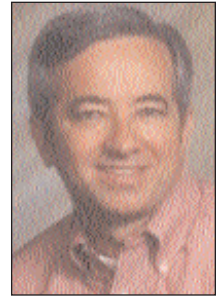
Acts 17:28
"In Him we live and move and have our being."

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.





Time To Shift Gears



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

We recently returned from a trip to the mountains of Breckenridge, Colorado. The route from Central

Texas to the Rocky Mountains was a steep climb, and at times the car took its own initiative to shift to a new gear in order to make the grade. It was something the Texas car was not accustomed to, but did with great efficiency. You never know what can be done until a challenge is encountered and met!

It is easy to stay in the same comfort zone and glide along. That is not a bad thing to do on occasion, but in order to reach new heights, it takes being pushed. Perhaps one of the greatest challenges to moving to great expectations is just getting started. Getting that first extra “kick” of motivation is what many of us need in order to see dreams become a reality.

Our trip required planning. Things like selecting:

- Location: cool or sunny, beach or mountains, near or far, hotel or cabin.
- Time: early summer or late, a full week or a long weekend
- Route: scenic or direct, visit sights and family along the way, or non-stop

Each person had an opinion, but getting the trip going required some consensus, and then concrete planning. Even deciding what hour of the day to leave was an exercise in diplomatic negotiation. But once we started rolling, the trip “was on” and the vacation became a reality.

Many of us see destinations we want to reach in our personal lives, but we face many challenges. Perhaps one of the greatest

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.”

obstacles is just getting the motivational push to get beyond the “wishing” and into the “doing”!

When Moses was attempting to motivate the people of Israel to move to the Promised Land, it took some prodding from God.

“The Lord our God spoke to us...saying ‘you have stayed long enough at this mountain. Turn and set your journey, and go...”

Deuteronomy 1:6-7a

There are some who offer simple solutions for challenging problems; usually they are people who find their struggles to be in different areas from those they give their glib responses.

“ It isn’t that hard – just stop doing that.”

“ You just need to get over it...just forget about it.”

“ Anybody can do it if they just put their mind to it.”

These and all of the other annoying simple solutions to life’s challenges are easy to say, but seldom help.

How can we get geared up to make positive changes in our lives?

How can we move from this mountain to a new place?

(Continued on next page)





Bill Heston

(Continued from previous page)

LOCATION

We must have a goal. We may not know all that we will see in that new place, but it must be attractive enough for us to be willing to accept the challenge of getting there.

Set a goal for each of the four areas of the balanced life in the First Place Program.

- ✘ Spiritual – what is a growth area for you at this time: Scripture memory, application, personal devotion, service? We could improve in every area, but which one needs the greatest work? Reflect on someone you have known who has lived that faith quality in a way that was most meaningful to you in the past. You do not need to be like them, but can learn from that model of faith.
- ✘ Mental – When is the last time you read something that really challenged you to think? Select a book or take a study course that will stretch your thinking.
- ✘ Emotional – Take an inventory of your emotions. Are you too stressed, too lazy, too intense, too depressed? Focus on the emotional tone of your current condition and seek tapes, books, wise counsel or friends who can help you shift to a new gear in this area.
- ✘ Physical – Many think this is the only area in which First Place is concerned. It is the door through which many enter the program, but they often discover that weight issues are symptoms of other issues. Setting a physical goal and staying in a First Place group will help members reach their goals by living the balanced life.

TIME

The journey begins and ends with small measurements of progress. Just think if you were to set a goal of memorizing just one verse a week; that would be fifty-two new thoughts to draw from in the struggles and joys of everyday life. If you just lost one pound every week for a year, that would be fifty-two pounds that would free you to live a healthier life. Time is a friend when it is part of the journey and not part of the excuse.

ROUTE

Selecting how to get there and staying the course is very important. It is easy to get derailed or distracted, but getting on course is a big part of getting to the destination. The role of the First Place group is not only for motivation, discipline and modeling, but also for inspiration. Don't miss a group meeting when you have gotten off of the route, but seek them out – they know the way!

We sat on a balcony and saw snow capped mountains; sat beside a mist shrouded water fall; stood in the shade of majestic pines; saw a moose, chipmunks, rabbits, groundhogs; explored an abandoned mine...,but the destination began with a dream and the dream became a reality, when we shifted into first gear the day we left the place where we had been for so long.

The view was worth the journey.

Bill Heston

Bill Heston, D.Min. is Chaplain at Howard Payne University in Brownwood, Texas.





Hints & Pinches

Gearing Up! Choosing the Right Cutlery For Your Kitchen



Scott Wilson

First Place Food Consultant
firstplacechef@hotmail.com

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



One of the most frequent questions I am asked is, "What type of knife should I buy?" I suggest that when choosing, hold a few knives from various manufacturers, then select one that feels comfortable and balances well in your hand. If the handle is wood, there should be no space between the handle and the blade, as moisture can get trapped and deteriorate the handle. The blade should be composed of high-carbon no-stain steel; the carbon helps the blade maintain a sharp edge, and the no-stain steel prevents the blade from rusting.

A sharpening steel and stone are the traditional tools for keeping knives sharp. If you are not adept at using them, I suggest a mechanical device, such as the Chantry Knife Sharpener, or an electrical appliance, such as the Chef's Choice.

To clean: Always wash and dry your knives by hand and never use the dishwasher, as it will deteriorate the handle and dull the blade faster.

8"- 10" Chef Knife:

Definitely the most used knife in the kitchen. Large enough to chop meats and vegetables, the chef knife should feel comfortable in your hand. Whatever you buy, make sure it's forged, not stamped. Forging makes the blade stronger and allows it to sharpen better. Quality will cost extra, but it will last longer with proper care.

3"- 4" Paring Knife:

Perfect for cutting fruits, vegetables, and things you hold in your hand. Buy a good quality paring knife that feels right in your hand.

Serrated Bread Knife:

An 8" - 10" knife with a "scalloped" blade designed for sawing rather than slicing. Slicing destroys breads, especially when fresh and soft. A quality bread knife is worth its weight in gold. It is also great for slicing even the ripest of tomatoes.

Multi-Purpose Kitchen Shears:

Cut open a box; divide pizza into slices, snip herb stems, and more. I prefer the type that comes apart for easy cleaning. Stainless steel is best; Chef's Choice® makes good kitchen shears.

Dishwasher-Safe Cutting Boards:

The white plastic (polyethylene) boards work great. Make sure to buy one that fits in the dishwasher. If you like, keep a couple extra for those occasional kitchen helpers at parties or holiday times. The newest boards are impregnated with the odorless, colorless, germ-fighting agent Bacteron, approved by the Food and Drug Administration. They are made of high-density, anti-bacterial polyethylene (inhibits the growth of bacteria, such as salmonella and E. coli) and well worth the extra cost!

Next month: Teamwork in the Kitchen, Choosing the right Pots and Pans

Scott Wilson

firstplacechef@hotmail.com





August Recipes

Breakfast On The Go

Serves 1

- 1/2 whole wheat pocket pita
- 1 small apple, diced
- 1/4 cup 2% cottage cheese
- 2 teaspoons dry-roasted sunflower kernels

The night before, combine the diced apple with the cottage cheese and place in a small covered dish. The next morning, place mixture and the sunflower kernels in the pita half and enjoy. Serves 1.

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

Deli-Style Roll-Ups

Serves 1

- 2 6-inch whole wheat flour tortillas (reduced-fat)
- 2 ounces deli-style sliced turkey breast, lean ham, or roast beef
- 2 teaspoons reduced calorie mayonnaise
- 1 teaspoon brown mustard
- 1/2 cup chopped romaine
- 6 grape tomatoes, halved

Lay out tortillas. Spread with mayonnaise and mustard. Layer with meat slice, lettuce and tomatoes onto tortillas. Roll up and wrap. Serves 1.

Exchanges:
2 meats, 2 breads, 1 vegetable, 1 fat

Crock Pot Chicken

Serves 4

Place all ingredients in crock pot. Cover and cook on low heat for 6-7 hours. Serves 4.

- 4 4-oz boneless, skinless chicken breast
- 1 small cabbage, quartered
- 1 pound package mini carrots
- 2 (14.5-oz) cans Mexican Stewed Tomatoes
- 2 cups cooked brown rice

Serving size: 1 breast, 1 1/2 cups vegetables, and 1/2 cup rice.

Exchanges:
3 meats, 1 1/2 breads, 3 vegetables

Coming Events

First Place Area Leaders Meetings

August 7, 2004

10:00 AM - 12:00 Noon
Canaan Baptist Church | St. Louis, MO
Contact: Patty Ward | Phone: 636-296-8563
Email: ward@nightowl.net

August 21, 2004

9:00 AM - 12:00 Noon
Inland Community Church | Chino, CA
Contact: Mark Gutierrez | Email: mark@gosrock.com
Cost: \$5 to cover incidentals

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 Fitness Rally & Workshop

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

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@aol.com

REGISTRATION FEE:

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

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO:

First Place-FOCUS

SEND CHECK AND

REGISTRATION FORM TO:

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

F.O.C.U.S Week 2004

Focusing On Christ's Unlimited Strength

October 7-14, 2004

Round Top, Texas

\$625.00

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

\$675.00 w/airport shuttle

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

Registration deadline and full payment
is due September 10.

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





First Place Success Story

I would like to share a bit about my experiences during this last year. My prayer is that you will find encouragement and inspiration from my story.

I have been obese for my entire adult life and most of my childhood. In March of 2003, during the process of separating from my husband, I was faced with the reality that at 312 pounds, I was putting myself at risk for some serious health problems. I also realized that I may not be around to take care of my daughter, should something happen to me. There are not many 70-year-old women that weigh as much as I did! Most importantly, I was not being a good steward of the body that God has given me.

1 Corinthians 6:19, 20 says, *“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.”*

As a Christian, I knew that I was sinning and therefore, not able to be all that I could for God. I began to pray for direction. I think that we all know HOW to lose weight, it is just a matter of making up our minds to do it. Eating right and exercising are the keys to success. When we are done looking for the quick fix and the easy way to accomplish our goal, we must either decide to change or continue in the misery of disobedience.

God led me to First Place through a magazine called Spirit-Led Woman. I don't know where I got the magazine, I do know it started me on this very important journey. I began researching the program online and read the book *Health 4 Life*. As a result, I started making small changes like eliminating soda and adding water to my day. After purchasing the member kit, I began the program on my own June 27, 2003. I also joined Curves that same day. I did the program on my own until I was able to join a group in September. I had lost 33 pounds when I met the sweet ladies of Grace Baptist Church in Lancaster, PA. Being part of a group makes a huge difference in motivation and success. It has been an amazing year. I can't explain how wonderful it is to know that the Lord is carrying you. Time has seemed to fly by and I have had consistent success. God is so faithful even when we are not. I have truly been changed from the inside out. Although I have had times that I gave into temptation, I have never had a moment that I wanted to throw in the towel. That is miraculous!

To date, I have lost 94 pounds and 72 inches. I can hardly believe it. I love telling people how I've done it...God gets all the glory. Although I am rejoicing at the difference in my appearance, in my energy level and at my nearness to God, I am eager to get moving toward my goal of 150 pounds. I covet your prayers as I continue on and as I start a First Place group in September. God really does stretch us. As someone who has worked very hard to blend into the background, I am trusting God for the courage and strength to bring First Place to others who face the same daily struggle that I do. My desire is to use

this program and my own experiences to bring glory to our Lord and to help others reach their weight loss goals.

I have claimed Jonah 2:8-9 as my verse for 2004...perhaps it will touch you as it did me...keep pressing on friends, it can be done and it is most certainly worth it!

Eternally Serving Jesus,

Jessica Myers
Lighthouse Assembly of God
New Holland, PA

“Those who cling to worthless idols, forfeit the grace that could be theirs. But I, with a song of thanksgiving, will sacrifice to you. What I have vowed, I will make good. Salvation comes from the Lord.” Jonah 2:8-9

Update: July 13, 2004

Hello, friends!

I am happy to report that my plateau is over, and I am losing again, 102 pounds to date. I started exercising more and went back to measuring my portions. I am also preparing for my group that will be starting in September. This is the first time I have done the “Giving Christ First Place” Bible Study. It is amazing...God is using it and many other things to confirm His direction for my life.

I am living in the joy of obedience and it is wonderful. Thank you in advance for your continued prayers. I trust that we all can continue to overcome and live in victory.

Blessings to you all!

Jessica Myers
Jonah 2:8-9





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

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

No refunds will be given after September 10

