



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



**November 2005**

**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,*

I have more than a little nostalgia this morning as I write these words. Having just returned home from our annual F.O.C.U.S. Week at Round Top, Texas, I am already missing each and every participant and longing for the time when we will be together again.



Lifelong friendships are made in First Place groups all around the world. As I think about some of those friendships, I am filled with nostalgia for times past. Cindy Dollens, one of the ladies at F.O.C.U.S. Week, has been out of First Place for ten years, and it was as though not a day had passed since we had last been together.

This morning I received a telephone call from a former First Place Leader at my church. We haven't seen or talked to each other in years and it was as if we had never been apart. The bond of Christ is a strong bond and it knits our hearts together in remarkable ways.

First Place will begin celebrating our 25th year of ministry in January 2006, and it would fill us with great joy to renew friendships with so many of you who were with us in our early years. We also look forward to fellowship with our current First Place family and friends at any or all of the planned events.

- ◆ Our first event is January 14, 2006, for a First Place Workshop and Pasta Rally. This event will be held here at Houston's First Baptist Church from 1:00 to 7:00 p.m. First Place Marathon T-shirts will be provided for all Marathon participants and will be given at the Pasta Rally. Register for this event at [www.firstplace.org](http://www.firstplace.org). under EVENTS.
- ◆ Sunday, January 15, First Place men and women from all over the U.S. will gather to participate in the Houston Marathon. You can register for the 5K, Half Marathon or Marathon at [www.houstonmarathon.com](http://www.houstonmarathon.com).
- ◆ March 20-30, 2006 (our actual First Place anniversary month), will include a fabulous trip to Israel for anyone in First Place and their family members. We are keeping the trip small so that we can celebrate together for the entire 11 days. A brochure can be found on our website at [www.firstplace.org](http://www.firstplace.org).
- ◆ The 4th Annual First Place Leadership Summit will be July 28-29, 2006, here at our own HFBC, and will include two days of intensive training for First Place Leaders and prospective leaders. The Summit



Carole Lewis  
National Director  
[Carole@firstplace.org](mailto:Carole@firstplace.org)

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## Carole Lewis

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culminates Saturday with a trip to our home on Galveston Bay.

◆ A First Place National Conference will be held in Loveland, Ohio for the third consecutive year September 15-16, 2006. Janet Kirkhart is our Ohio First Place Networking Leader and you may contact her at [Janetfirstplace@fuse.net](mailto:Janetfirstplace@fuse.net) for more information.

◆ Our last event of the year will be our annual F.O.C.U.S. Week, October 12-19, 2006 at Round Top Retreat, Round Top, Texas. This event is limited to 60 participants and all of our First Place staff will be in attendance. Go to [www.firstplace.org](http://www.firstplace.org) for details and photos.

Mark your calendars now and plan to join your First Place family for one or more events in 2006, our 25th year in ministry.

## Blessings to you, Carole Lewis

[Carole@firstplace.org](mailto:Carole@firstplace.org)



### Dear precious friend,

Gospel Light is publishing another 365-day First Place devotional book. This book is based on the 80 Scripture memory verses found in our most recent eight Bible studies; Making Wise Choices, Begin Again, Living in Grace, A New Creation, Healthy Boundaries, Choosing Thankfulness, Celebration, and Stop It. This book will be used as a daily supplement to reinforce the memory verses and provide daily encouragement year-round. Two of these studies, Celebration and Stop-it, will be released in 2006 and we want to have this book ready to accompany these studies.

Our "First Place family" will author it again! We need First Place members to write a personal story of how they have been blessed by a particular First Place memory verse or verses. (We are eagerly anticipating a large number of responses, hence, there is a possibility that not all testimonies will be published.) If your testimony is published, you will receive recognition for your contribution and a free copy of the book, with the option of purchasing additional copies at a discounted price.

This is a huge undertaking, and we are working with a short deadline from our publisher. Therefore, if you feel led



## Watch for Carole's New Book, "A Thankful Heart"

**T**his personal testimony on thankfulness arose from tragedy when Carole Lewis and her husband faced the death of their daughter, Shari, who was killed by a drunk driver on Thanksgiving Day 2001. Carole shares her personal experience of adopting a heart of thanksgiving and how this act became a powerful tool of healing in her life. Citing other real-life examples of giving thanks, Carole shows how life is made up of moments, each one an opportunity to make the choice to give thanks.

to contribute, please ask God to place a special verse or verses on your heart and then contact Lisa Lewis ASAP. Lisa will oversee this project and needs to know the verse(s) you select. She can be reached at the following:

**Monday-Thursday, 8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.**

**[llewis@firstplace.org](mailto:llewis@firstplace.org)**

**800-727-5223 Ext. 407**

Also, if you know of others who have an encouraging testimony based on these scriptures, please give them a copy of this letter or ask them to contact Lisa immediately. (Please remember, we only want the testimonies that God has placed on your heart.)

Finally, due to the number of testimonies needed and the short turnaround time we have to compile them, WE MUST HAVE ALL TESTIMONIES EMAILED TO LISA BEFORE DECEMBER 1, 2005.

Let's devote this project to the Lord and see where He takes us! Please help us make it happen.

### Carole Lewis

National Director of First Place





# First Place Devotional Book Information

## SHORT STORY DEVOTIONAL SAMPLE

### DAY 1

**Proverbs 16:3** *Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and your plans will succeed.*

As a longtime Christian, I read my Bible, went to church, prayed and in general, lived "THE" Christian life. I discovered, however, that these disciplines were fragmented, compartmentalized, and performed in a shallow, sporadic style. I was unable to balance it all to give my spiritual life meaning until First Place.

I've coined a new name for God and his work in my life-God, my Baker. Let me explain. All the right ingredients were somewhere on a shelf in my life-reading the Bible, prayer, knowledge of healthy foods and exercise benefits, responsibilities in home, church and work. Through First Place I've learned to allow God to select, omit, mix and stir necessary ingredients of my spiritual, emotional, mental and physical self in their proper order and amounts. During these five years in First Place, God has baked me in His oven with care and His perfect timing. So many blessings and positive changes have occurred in all four areas. I have become constant in prayer, consistent in Bible reading and study, lost 70 pounds, improved relationships, and now I lead two groups. He can be pleased with the sweet aroma He's creating as long as I am doing my part of keeping the nine commitments to bring balance to my new life. I'll be done only when He's finished and I go to His house for His bountiful banquet He's preparing for me. See you there; the table's set.

**PRAYER:** *Lord, today I commit all I am and all I do for you. My desire is for Your plans to become my plans so that You will be glorified. May the scent of Your presence be in my actions today.*

**IDEAS FOR JOURNAL ENTRY:** What have you planned for today that you need to speak to God about? Have you made any plans today that you forgot to commit to God? Do you make plans and then talk to God; or do you talk to Him first about the plans you should make?

**Judy Marshall, First Place Leader  
Gilmer, Texas**

#### Requirements:

1. Call or email Lisa Lewis IMMEDIATELY to let her know the verse(s) you select. (800)727-5223, x407, or [llewis@firstplace.org](mailto:llewis@firstplace.org)
2. Follow the above sample format and these guidelines: Devotional body should be 250 words (approximately). Include your name, address, telephone number, position of service (i.e. First Place Leader, Member, Volunteer, Staff member), AND city and state.
3. Short story devotional must be based on the verses in the eight First Place Bible studies on the attached list. Choices of writing are:
  - A testimony about one verse
  - Four to five testimonies on one verse to be used on consecutive days
4. Must be emailed to Lisa Lewis (as an attachment in WORD format) before December 1, 2005 to be considered for publishing. Please send all devotionals to: [llewis@firstplace.org](mailto:llewis@firstplace.org). If you have any questions, please call Lisa at (800) 727-5223, x407 [Monday-Thursday, 8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.].

#### DEVOTIONALS TO BE WRITTEN BASED ON THESE 80 VERSES:

To have a devotional for each day of the year, we need approximately four to five testimonies for each of the following verses; therefore, choose to write on as many as God places in your heart.

##### Making Wise Choices

Deuteronomy 30:19  
 Luke 2:52  
 Joshua 1:7  
 1 Peter 1:13  
 1 Kings 3:9  
 1 Corinthians 6:12  
 Psalm 127:1a  
 James 3:13  
 Psalm 20:7  
 John 3:16

##### Begin Again

2 Corinthians 5:17  
 Romans 8:28  
 Micah 6:8  
 2 Corinthians 12:9  
 Philippians 1:6  
 Colossians 3:23  
 John 1:16  
 Phillipians 2:10-11  
 Joshua 1:5  
 Isaiah 40:31

##### Living in Grace

2 Corinthians 3:17  
 Psalm 139:13-14  
 Galatians 2:21  
 Hebrews 3:12-13  
 Romans 3:22-24  
 John 15:5  
 Proverbs 18:10

Colossians 2:6-7  
 Colossians 3:17  
 Mathews 28:19a-20

##### A New Creation

Romans 6:4  
 Psalm 37:4  
 Colossians 3:1-2  
 Isaiah 41:13  
 Deuteronomy 20:4  
 Hebrews 4:16  
 Ephesians 2:10  
 Zephaniah 3:17  
 2 Corinthians 10:5  
 2 Corinthians 3:18

##### Healthy Boundaries

John 8:32  
 Isaiah 59:1  
 Proverbs 25:28  
 Psalm 3:3  
 1 Peter 5:6  
 Colossians 4:2  
 Galatians 5:7  
 Romans 12:11  
 Proverbs 4:23  
 Mark 9:7

##### Choosing Thankfulness

Psalm 136:1  
 Luke 1:49  
 Psalm 18:19

John 14:26  
 Deuteronomy 4:7  
 Psalm 18:28  
 Psalm 119:14  
 Romans 8:32  
 Hebrews 12:28  
 Ephesians 5:20

##### Celebration

Psalm 115:1  
 1 Corinthians 10:31  
 1 Peter 3:8  
 Psalm 133:1  
 Numbers 35:33  
 Psalm 95:6  
 Ephesians 5:19  
 1 Corinthians 15:57  
 Psalm 126:3  
 1 Peter 4:7

##### Stop It

Revelation 1:3  
 Revelation 3:20  
 James 1:22  
 Hebrews 3:15  
 Psalm 32:9  
 Ephesians 6:17  
 Proverbs 6:27-28  
 Proverbs 23:20  
 Hebrews 13:7  
 Matthew 26:41





## Talkin' With Kay

Dear First Place Friends,

The beginning of the holiday season is once more upon us. Many of us may be experiencing nostalgia, yearning to go back to some past period that is full of good memories. God has blessed me with a mind that seems to retain good memories and I have a hard time bringing up bad memories.

A place that I become very nostalgic about is Round Top, Texas. We just returned from First Place F.O.C.U.S. Week at Round Top Retreat. I have such fabulous memories of making new friendships. Reunions of friendships become strong bonds after spending a week together year after year. I lost four pounds this year and came home completely rejuvenated to start my new First Place session. The best blessing of the entire week is a renewed spirit. This is a place that God always speaks to me in a mighty way. Round Top retreat is a beautiful place, where we take time to draw away for a time alone with God and His Word. If you have never attended F.O.C.U.S. Week, please start a retreat fund today, maybe even asking family members to contribute at special occasions, such as Christmas and your birthday. Your entire family will benefit from attending the First Place F.O.C.U.S. Week.

Speaking of being nostalgic, I would love to go back to a time when I did not have to focus on healthy eating and exercise to maintain a proper weight. But those days are only memories. At times, fighting hunger pangs is a huge hurdle to maintain proper food choices and amounts. Vicki Heath, a beloved First Place Leader, plus a Body and Soul Aerobics Leader, led the exercise program at F.O.C.U.S. Week and also gave a great seminar on fitness.

Vicki mentioned that many of us may have an increased appetite from the food choices that we make. Your food choices affect your appetite. If digestion takes a longer time and involves the lower parts of your intestine, your body will stimulate natural appetite suppressants.



Kay Smith  
Associate Director  
kays@bigcountry.net

Nutritionists have fine-tuned the message about weight loss relative to what food choices benefit satiety.

- ✘ Eating more fruits and vegetables is more important than simply eating "low-fat."
- ✘ The type of fat is more critical than the amount. For instance, many First Place members avoid nuts because we get a small serving, but the fat in nuts is a very good type of fat and eating nuts can help with appetite control.
- ✘ The type of carbohydrates we eat is also important.

If you have trouble staying within the food limits of the Live-It, you may want to check the glycemic index measure of your food choices. This measurement is simply how quick the carbohydrate hits your bloodstream. The glycemic index has been proven to help with appetite control, Diabetes and coronary health. There is evidence that food choices with a low GI increased the weight loss, as compared to just a low-fat food plan. I have hesitated to research the GI because I heard that carrots are high on the chart. I know that carrots are a good choice so I considered the entire index as unreliable. When I did some personal research, I discovered that even though carrots are high on the index, they are low in carbohydrates, so the actual glycemic load is low and considered a good food choice. You can find information on the Internet at [www.glycemicindex.com](http://www.glycemicindex.com) or if you want to do more research, there are a variety of books available on the subject. You will still be choosing food choices from the Live-It, but you might find low glycemic index choices will help you with the hunger battle. You can begin to

(Continued on Page 5)





## Kay Smith

*(Continued from page 4)*

make good choices without any research just by following these guidelines for choosing low glycemic foods:

- ❖ Eat seven or more fruits and veggies every day.
- ❖ Eat low GI breads and cereals. (whole grain and high fiber)
- ❖ Eat more legumes, including soybeans, chickpeas, and lentils.
- ❖ Eat more nuts regularly.
- ❖ Eat more fish and seafood.
- ❖ Eat lean red meats, poultry and eggs.
- ❖ Eat low-fat dairy products.

## Happy Thanksgiving Kay Smith

### **STOP IT!** Invitation Postcard

Use this postcard invitation to encourage new and current members to join your First Place group and/or attend an informational meeting. The postcards will also promote the January 2006 release of Stop It! by Carole Lewis.



These postcards are a great way for you to promote your group, and they're FREE! Each postcard will allow you to customize your information about your orientation meeting, including your church name, meeting location and time, and contact information.

The postcards are in packs of 25, and can be ordered online with code RA04100 or by calling 1-800-4-GOSPEL.

Code: RA04100  
**FREE**

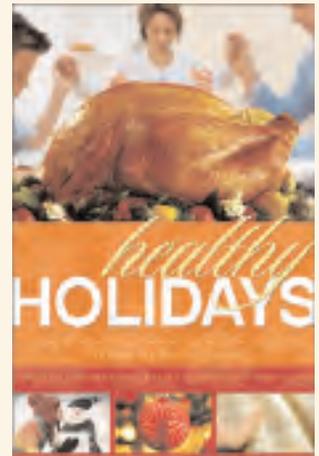
## Leadership Tip

As the holidays are approaching, your members are becoming very nostalgic. They are longing for Aunt Mary's pumpkin pie and Mom's cornbread dressing! To help your members get through the holidays successfully, you will want to consider using the new Healthy Holidays book. In it you will find daily devotionals, prayer journal pages, holiday helps, menus and recipes, and a section for the leader to use in the small group meetings. Plan a six week holiday session and use Healthy Holidays as your Bible study book. The Leader Guide, included in the book, will give you step by step instruction on how to conduct each one-hour meeting with recommended questions and activities. You may purchase this book at your local bookstore, on our website or by calling Gospel light at 1.800.4.GOSPEL.

## Healthy Holidays

A Plan to Help You Maintain Your Healthy Lifestyle Through the Holiday Season

Healthy Holidays will help members stay on track during the tempting holiday season and encourage them to reflect on the true reason for the holidays. During a time when First Place groups generally take a break between studies, the Healthy Holidays will empower members to stick to their commitments. Order yours today!



Code: 08307.33744  
Number of Pages: 150  
**Internet Price: \$12.99**





## Leadership Training

# Empty Nester Nostalgia



**Nancy Taylor**

Leadership Training Director  
ntaylor@firstplace.org

**A**ccording to the Encarta Dictionary, nostalgia means a mixed feeling of happiness, sadness, and longing when recalling a person, place, or event from the past, or the past in general. Boy does that sum up my emotions over the past few months! My daughter, who is my youngest child, left for college in August and my husband and I are now officially “empty nesters.” I am happy that my daughter graduated from her high school with honors and is now attending a wonderful university. However, I am sad to see my last child leave home and along with her, take that wonderful “child-rearing” season of my life. As I pass by her room, it is as if I am being pulled in by some overpowering force. I walk through the room, stopping to look once again at the pictures pinned to her cork board, longing to see her play another basketball game, or tell another one of her funny stories. I open her closet and see the dresses she left behind and recall all the fuss and preparation that went into each prom, homecoming or special event. As the days have grown into weeks and the weeks into months, the nostalgic feeling lessens, but it is always there ready to be pulled to the surface when triggered by a memory of days gone by.

Sometimes, as a First Place leader, I become nostalgic and yearn for days gone by. I recall how enthusiastic and successful the first class was that I ever led. They all seemed to lose weight and memorize their scriptures. Now that I am leading on Sunday evenings, I often long to be with my Tuesday Noon class. I miss them and often recall the bond we all shared. Being nostalgic can be fun for a while, but if we allow ourselves to stay in a nostalgic frame of mind, we will miss out on what God is doing now! Here are some encouraging words for nostalgic leaders from God’s Word:

Habakkuk 1:5 tells us to . . . *“Look at the nations and watch- and be utterly amazed. For I*

*am going to do something in your days that you would not believe, even if you were told.”*

Isaiah 43:18-19 *“Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the desert and streams in the waste land.”*

Philippians 3:13-14 *“Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.”*

It is good to look back occasionally and thank the Lord for what He has done, and learn from all that took place during the different seasons and sessions of your life. However, do not get a crick in your neck that is caused by a continual nostalgic, “look back.” Instead, be like Nehemiah, who prayed, planned and then took action to rebuild the wall of Jerusalem. He could have looked back and longed to be in his comfortable quarters as the cupbearer to the king, but instead he looked at the work yet to be done and encouraged those he led to have a mind to work. (Nehemiah 4:6) Take the scriptures above and share them with your First Place members. Pray these truths into their lives and into your life, as well. May we all have a watchful heart that is aware of God working in new ways and press on toward the goals set before us!

**Lead On!**  
**Nancy Taylor**





## Bev's Footnotes

# It's Still About What You Eat and How Much



**Beverly Henson**

Certified Personal Trainer  
Bevh1952@bellsouth.net

I am a huge fan of antique shopping. One of my favorite antique stories was sent to me after I spoke at a First Place Rally in Virginia. It seems that following the death of their 96 year old great aunt Mamie, Bob and Allison found themselves going through a lifetime of interesting antiques and family memorabilia. In the attic they found a box of beautiful wedding china belonging to Aunt Mamie's great great grandmother. After research, the china was found to be late 18th century and very valuable, only if you had all of the place settings. Disappointment came when it was discovered they had 12 place settings with everything except the dinner plates. Further research found that what they thought was a salad plate was actually the dinner plate and they had the complete set. Revelation also came that through the years the size of our dinner plates has grown larger.

Our portion sizes have grown larger and larger because we want to get the most for our money. Those of us who are dieters want a plate full of good food with just a few calories. We can even overeat diet food. Portion control and serving size are a must if we want to become fit and healthy. Watch the plates and food of thin people in restaurants. They eat what I would consider a "dab" of food. Most of the time the color palette of food on their plates is more green than white, and very small serving sizes.

Through the years, I have had many clients who work out with the mentality that if they exercise, they can eat what and how much they want. I often see those on maintenance fall into this mindset, thus they begin to see the pounds creeping back. I need you to really hear this statement I am about to make. No matter how much you exercise, it is still about what you eat and how much you eat. My cousin is of the mentality that she can eat what she wants because she takes aerobics and Pilates five days a week. This worked well for her in her 20's and 30's, but now that she is in her 40's she

is starting to struggle. She can't work out with the intensity she did when she was younger and her metabolism is slowing down. She is finding that she has to watch her serving sizes and what she eats.

We are in the habit of super sizing our food. Super size = super thighs. If you want to be small, you must order small and eat small. You reap what you sow. If you reap small, you won't have to struggle with those stubborn pounds. Exercise is very important for a good healthy body, but there are many who use exercise as if it were a diet pill and as a reason to over indulge at the plate. It is about diet and exercise and balance, not about exercise so we don't have to watch our diets.

Back to the story about Mamie's great, great grandmother's china. What they thought was a salad plate was a dinner plate. Let's go back to the 18th century plan. They didn't have weight problems back then, because they ate smaller portions and worked daily with their hands and bodies to live. Begin using your salad plate as your dinner plate. Move more for the joy of moving. Many of those who exercise so they can eat really don't even enjoy their workout. Rather than being members of the clean plate clubs, lets become members of the smaller plate club. Remember this, you really are what you eat and how much you eat.

### Press On! Bev Henson

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 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.*



## Hints & Pinches

# Nostalgia in Cooking

**N**ostalgia and tradition - these are words that represent the holidays to many of us. They offer comfort and continuity in these troubled times.

We all go into this holiday season with a little extra need to feel that our known ways haven't been lost or forgotten. I was thinking about this as I was cleaning out our garage recently and found some familiar recipes in a box of old cookbooks.

I come from a family of great cooks, my mother, both grandmothers, aunts and cousins. In this box I came across some recipes as familiar as the old hymns from childhood. I set them aside with a smile and continued to look for just the right recipe, but my eyes kept creeping back to the rather stained and faded handwritten recipe on the back of an envelope. I recognized the writing to be that of my grandmother or 'Maw-Maw' as we called her. As I looked further, I found some pages of notes from one of our visits over a decade ago.

We had planned on writing a cookbook together, but due to various circumstances and the general busyness in my life, we never got to it. Now, it seems that these little cards are bits of my personal history. They are like an oral tradition that is slowly being lost. These are dishes I haven't made in years, and yet I can look at the card and know exactly how these dishes taste and remember who sat at the table, along with bits and pieces of conversations. In my heart I know they are very good.

We don't make them because they are - well, old fashioned, and we hesitate because someone at our holiday table might chuckle at such simplicity and lack of sophistication. We don't make them because they require using a canned soup if they are to taste as they should.

These are the recipes that our mothers and their mothers found on the sides of boxes or inside the



**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.

labels of Campbell's soup cans. These are the recipes from the corner of the page in a ladies' magazine from earlier in the 1900's, and they have found their way into our collective consciousness.

In honor of those that we remember at the holiday season, here are a couple of recipes First Place style. Also, be sure to check out the recipe section on the First Place website for additional holiday recipe favorites.

May comfort, joy and small pleasant surprises wrap you in their arms this holiday season as you receive His many blessings!

## Scott Wilson

### Broccoli and Cheese Casserole

Serves 6

- |                                                            |                                                |
|------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| 2 (10-ounce) packages frozen chopped broccoli              | 1/2 cup seasoned breadcrumbs                   |
| 1 (10-3/4 ounce) can Healthy Request® cream of celery soup | 1/4 cup shredded 2% extra-sharp cheddar cheese |
| 1/4 teaspoon salt (optional)                               | 1 tablespoon reduced-calorie margarine, melted |
| 1/8 teaspoon pepper                                        | Vegetable cooking spray                        |
| 1/8 teaspoon thyme                                         |                                                |

Place broccoli in microwave dish and heat on high for eight minutes, rotating halfway through. Drain and combine broccoli with next six ingredients (from soup through thyme) in a bowl. Spoon into a 1-1/2 quart baking dish coated with vegetable spray. Combine breadcrumbs, cheese and margarine. Sprinkle breadcrumb mixture over broccoli mixture. Bake 30 minutes at 350-degrees. Serves 6.

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





# Coming Events

## Area Leader's Meeting

### November 5, 2005

9:30 AM - 11:30 PM

Anne's Church, Rosemeadow, NSW, AUSTRALIA

Bring your own lunch

### November 5, 2005

9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Inland Community Church, Chino, CA

Cost: \$5

Contact: Mark Gutierrez

Email: [mark@firstplaceca.org](mailto:mark@firstplaceca.org)

Please RSVP

### November 12, 2005

10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Canaan Baptist Church, St. Louis, MO

Contact: Pat Ward

Phone: 636-296-8563

Email: [wward@nightowl.net](mailto:wward@nightowl.net)

## Turkey Pot Pie

Serves 8

- 1 (10 3/4 ounce) can Healthy Request® cream of chicken soup
- 1 (10 3/4 ounce) can Healthy Request® cream of celery soup
- 1 can skim milk (fill 1 empty soup can with skim milk)
- 1 teaspoon salt (optional)
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper
- 1 pound cooked, diced turkey meat
- 2 cups frozen peas and carrots, cooked and drained
- 3 small potatoes, peeled and cubed, cooked and drained
- 1 small to medium onion, finely diced
- 2 small packages refrigerated biscuits

Preheat oven to 400 degrees F. In a 13x9-inch casserole-baking dish, combine soups with milk and seasoning. Add diced turkey and stir into soups. Add cooked peas and carrots, potatoes, and the fresh onion. Bake at 400 degrees for 20 minutes. Remove casserole dish from oven and place prepared biscuits on top of the chicken and vegetable mixture, covering the entire dish. Return dish to oven; reduce heat to 350 degrees and bake until the biscuits are golden brown, about 20-25 minutes.

Serves 8.

**Exchanges: 2 meats, 1-1/2 breads, 1/2 fat**

### May 12-14, 2006

Australia Leaders Training Weekend Retreat

Theme - "Knowing who we serve"

Friday 6:00 PM to Sunday 4:00 PM

The Tops Conference Centre

The Retreat House

Stanwell Tops NSW (Illawarra Region)

Limited to the first 15 registrations.

Cost is \$100 per person and includes all First Place Meals and accommodations. Attendees must make their own travel arrangements.

Contact: Barb Lukies

Email: [firstplaceaustralia@yahoo.com.au](mailto:firstplaceaustralia@yahoo.com.au)

## First Place Workshops

### January 14, 2006

1:00 PM - 4:00 PM Workshop (\$15)

4:00 PM - 7:00 PM Pasta Rally (\$15)

Attend both for \$25

Houston's First Baptist Church, Houston, Texas

Contact: Nancy Taylor

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## First Place Conference

### September 15-16, 2006

Celebrate: The Heart of Worship

New Hope Baptist Church, Loveland, OH

More information coming soon!

## 25th Anniversary Events

### Celebrating 25 Years of Ministry in 2006

25th Anniversary Kick-off Event

First Place Workshop and Pasta Rally

**January 14, 2006**

Houston Marathon

**January 15, 2006**

A Complete 11-day Biblical Tour to Israel

**March 20-30, 2006**

Leadership Summit

**July 27-29, 2006**

F.O.C.U.S. Week

**October 12-19, 2006**

First Place National Conference

**September 15-16, 2006**

**Check website for additional information regarding the 25th Anniversary Events!**





## First Place Success Story

**W**ould you think you could lose 12 dress sizes and 140 pounds in a little over a year? If you answered "no," then you probably feel the same way I did when I started First Place in January 2004. At that time, I was wearing a size 28 and weighed 290 pounds.

I had been overweight my whole life, starting at about the age of 10 and gradually increasing to my highest weight of 320 pounds when I got married. I was skeptical from the beginning, but felt that I was running out of options. The way I saw it, I could try First Place, undergo surgery, or get even fatter. I decided to give First Place "a shot." I didn't have high expectations. I just didn't want to gain any more weight.

My whole life I felt like a skinny person trapped in this fat body. I knew this "fat suit" I was lugging around did not fit and was not what God wanted for me. I wasn't sure if First Place was going to be the answer, but I wanted to try it and do exactly what was required. I followed all nine commitments and was surprised every week when I lost weight. I really thought I would be the exception. I even dared the program on. I thought I'll do everything they say and when it doesn't work, I'll say, "See I just can't lose weight!" But I did.

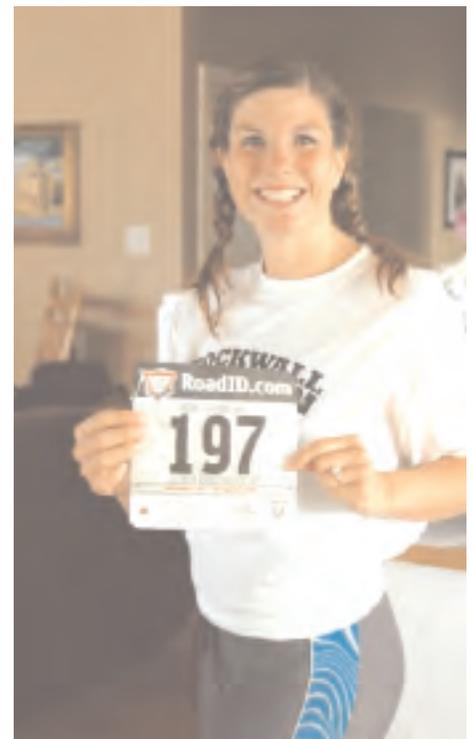
As my heart and mind grew stronger in faith, the "eating thing" didn't seem so tough. I kept it simple and only ate foods I knew I could count. Now I eat a wide variety of healthy foods as I've grown more confident in my choices. With an accountability partner like God, there simply was no cheating. I didn't make special allowances for birthday parties, vacations, or holidays and I didn't think I deserved a break because I did well the previous week. I just followed the program... week after week.

God gave me strength when I had none and assured me it would work if I just stuck with First Place. I'm not quite at my final goal, I have about ten pounds to go, but I know if it is his will, I will get there. My experiences represent the kind of power God can have on your life, the weight loss is just an outward expression of God's position in my life, and he is first.

Weight no longer defines me. In the past, I felt like even if I was a good mother, friend, or sister... I was still the fat mother, fat friend, or fat sister. Now I'm just Tamara. Now I'm just me. As a side note, I used to think that "chivalry" had died, but that's not true. Men just didn't acknowledge me before, but now they get doors and wait at entrances and I'm thinking, "Where were you before?"

I am free now to live my life the way he designed it to be, I am able to reach out to people and share with them my successes through First Place. There are many examples where my testimony of Christ's power has touched others' lives. Best of all, God is no longer a long distance phone call or a relative I see once a year. He is my friend and I get excited to talk to him every day. I've lost 12 dress sizes and 140 pounds in a little over a year. If you were to ask me, "How did you do it?" I would simply reply, "I didn't, He did!"

**Tamara Fisher**  
**Rockwall, TX**





# Rooted in Tradition



Once a year it would be taken from the highest kitchen cabinet. The oversized colander rested in its metal frame. A large cone-shaped wooden tool waited on the counter. A large pot of potatoes boiled on the stove. I remember my father making his annual visit to the kitchen to ‘rice’ the potatoes for Thanksgiving. His strong hands and powerful forearms pressed the soft potato through the pen-sized holes to form thin strings of white. It was a sure sign of Thanksgiving. I am not sure why we only had this dish at this holiday but it was tradition. As the tradition continues, it is still a “man’s job” to do the pressing.

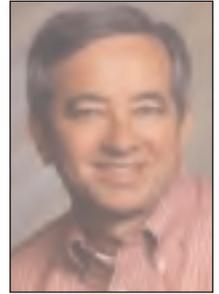
Many times there would be large amounts of riced potatoes left over. Not everyone ate large quantities, but it just was not right for the buffet to not have a heaping bowl. Funny how some traditions are enjoyed more for the memories they invoke than the pleasure they actually bring. Some have suggested the role of tradition is very important in bringing security, connectedness and meaning to our families. It is also evident that in our family of faith that tradition can be important, as well.

Jesus used shared experiences to bring the family of faith together. One of the most meaningful is the symbol of the table.

The Lord Jesus on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, “*This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me. In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, “This is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.”*

I Corinthians 11:23b-25  
[New International Version]

The Lord’s Supper is built on one of the most unifying celebrations in Jewish history – the



**Dr. Bill Heston**  
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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.”

Passover. He takes the long-standing symbol, which gives strength, and adds new meaning that brings power. Symbols that become routine often become stale and meaningless, but when they are awakened with fresh experience, they refresh young and old.

## How to Keep Traditions Alive

### DON’T:

- ✘ Forget the meaning of the observance.
- ✘ Be more committed to rigid observance than to people.
- ✘ Fret the details and miss the party.

### DO:

- ✘ Highlight the favorite parts of past observances.
- ✘ Be open to new ways to do familiar things.
- ✘ Include symbols of past observances [tattered but preserved decorations, favorite seasonal recipes, family stories etc.]

### This holiday season:

- ✘ Bake up familiar traditions but don’t be afraid to use some fresh ingredients!

## Bill Heston





## Winning Words for First Place Losers

*I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.*

*Philippians 3:14*

**W**ebster's New World College Dictionary gives two definitions for the word "nostalgia," and each of these definitions contains a very different truth about the Christian life. The first definition given is: a longing to go back to one's home, or home land; homesickness. This type of nostalgia is good. It reminds us that we are not citizens of this earth and explains the restless longing we all feel as we eagerly anticipate the day when Jesus Christ will come back in glory to take His chosen people home. We are called to live our life here on earth knowing that our true home is in heaven, our life here merely a sojourn in a foreign land, and that we are all traveling back to the Father, in the footsteps of the Son, under the guidance and direction of the Holy Spirit. The second definition listed for "nostalgia" describes it as a longing for something we had long ago, or for a former happy circumstance. And while the first type of nostalgia keeps us focused on our heavenward journey, this type of nostalgia keeps us from making progress. Rather than pressing on toward the prize, we live in the faded glory of past accomplishments that blind us to the need for present day action.

When asked about the secret of his success, an Olympic gold medal runner explained the challenge we face. "The only way to win a race is to forget all the previous victories which would give you false pride and all former failures which would give you false fears. Each race is a new beginning. Pressing on to the finish tape is all that's important!" If we hope to run the race set before us effectively, we must let go of both past failures and past accomplishment; the things that drag us down and the things that puff us up. As Christ-followers we must put all our nostalgic memories in proper perspective. We cannot gloat over the faded glory accomplishments of past performance that flatter us into complacency. Our puffed ego must not be allowed to delude us and keep us from living responsibly in the current moment. Resting on our laurels is just not an option for those called to press on toward their calling in Christ Jesus. We don't have the comfort of living on the record of past victories like a champion who retires after

**Elizabeth Crews**

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winning. No matter how glorious our past, we always have a future--and a reason to press on toward the victor's crown that awaits us at the end of our appointed course.

When we come into the First Place program, many of us have memories of success in other diet programs. Some of these fad-diets yielded quick weight-loss results when compared with our slow, steady progress in First Place. All too soon we forget that these quick-loss schemes also resulted in defeat, as the pounds began to creep back because those diets did not address the real root of our problem: a disordered relationship with God. Others of us live in the faded glory nostalgia of past success in First Place. We remember our zeal and enthusiasm when we first came into the First Place program. We recall exercising, eating healthy meals, learning to spend quality time with God—and how much weight we lost when we were faithful to the program. Yet, as we revel in past victories, we conveniently forget that in the present we are not doing the very things that allowed us to succeed. Faded glory nostalgia only serves to keep us from doing what God calls us to do today--keep the nine commitments of First Place. If we aspire to be First Place Losers, we cannot rest on our laurels and live on our past accomplishments. Each day is a new day in First Place. We are admonished to leave the past behind so we can press on toward the mark. Not a mark on the scale, but the mark of knowing Jesus and being in right relationship with God. Today I pray we will leave our faded glory nostalgia in the past so that we wholeheartedly focus on doing what is pleasing to God today.

Nothing wilts faster than the laurels you rest on.

--Anonymous

**Elizabeth Crews**