



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



April 2006

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

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National Director Carole Lewis

Leadership Training
Director Nancy Taylor

Newsletter . . . Sheila Robbins

Dear Friends,



The subject for our April E-Newsletter is prayer. I am amazed that my own prayer life for many years was so weak and “wishy washy;” still God blessed me. The difference today is dramatic, because I have learned some valuable secrets about prayer that I simply didn’t know before 1990, when I started taking the power of prayer seriously. You see, I attended every prayer seminar that came my way; I knew there were some secrets I must be missing. Most of the time, I left feeling even worse, because the presenter always said how wonderful their prayer life was and that just wasn’t my reality. This month let me share a few of the lessons I have learned about prayer.



Carole Lewis
National Director
Carole@firstplace.org

You Must Show Up Every Day

Jesus wants to have an up close and personal relationship with each of us. It is impossible for me to say that someone is a very good friend of mine if I never talk with them. The same is true with our Lord. We will never know about the kind of relationship God has planned for us until we decide this is so important we will make time to do it every day. A friend told me this week that she shoots up prayers all through the day, but doesn’t have the time for a one-on-one with God every day. This is exactly what I did for years. The only problem with this kind of praying is that it is totally one-sided. When I show up for my personal time with God each morning, we both have a chance to talk. He speaks to me through His Word as I read and study it. The Holy Spirit gives me guidance as I think about the day ahead. Of course, I do shoot up prayers during the day, but this simply cannot be the extent of my prayer life.

Writing My Prayers Keeps Me Focused

Prayer for many of us is unrewarding, because we have a hard time staying focused. For years, this kept me from having a consistent time with God each day. Before I knew it, I was thinking about breakfast and the day ahead and feeling dejected that I couldn’t stay focused for even five minutes. In 1990, I finally tried one of the things I had heard about in all

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Carole Lewis

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those prayer seminars (I am just a little stubborn). I got out a journal and tried writing my prayers. An amazing thing happened that morning; an hour later I looked up and had written four pages in my prayer journal. I wrote my prayers for years and have many journals filled with all that God has done and how He has been faithful to me as I have prayed.

Praying Out Loud Is Great Too

Another way to stay focused is to pray out loud. When we moved to the Bay eight years ago, it became harder and harder to write my prayers each morning. I have a 45 mile drive each way and I always feel rushed to get on the road. Jeannie Blocher, the president of Body & Soul Aerobics, and I were in Ventura several years ago and went out for a walk. As we walked, Jeannie said, why don't we pray about our meetings today as we walk? She began to pray out loud and when she would stop, I prayed. When I stopped, Jeannie prayed again and before we knew it, we had walked an hour! I was astounded that I had not discovered this secret of prayer; when we pray out loud, our mind can't wander. The same thing happens as when we write; speaking keeps us focused.

Pray Any Time-Any Where

I am learning that when I say I will pray for someone else, I need to do it. If you are like me, you have great intentions when you make the promise to pray, but you forget to do it. Why not begin praying when the person asks for prayer. If you receive an e-mail asking for prayer, send a return e-mail with the prayer on it. If a friend asks for prayer when you are talking on the phone, stop and pray for them right then.

Practice Makes Perfect

Finally, the only way any of us will ever get better at praying is to pray. The more we do it the more successful we become. As we see the relationship between us and Jesus deepening and becoming

more real than life itself, we will hunger for our favorite chair each morning or evening.

Just Do It! You'll Love It!!

Blessings,

Carole Lewis

Carole@firstplace.org

P.S. One of our First Place Leaders, Tammy Price, has a new book just released called (Alphabet Prayers, The Power Of Praying Scripture Into The Hearts You Love.) Tammy goes through the alphabet with prayers for our spouses, children and pastor. I highly recommend this great new book. Congratulations, Tammy! You can purchase the book at www.heartsofprayer.com or www.amazon.com. and 100% of the proceeds go back into the ministry, with the majority going to Samaritan's Purse, Prison Fellowship's Angel Tree Children and International Bible Society for printing children's Bibles in other languages.

For any of you in the vicinity of Charleston, SC, I will be the keynote speaker at the Low Country Women's Conference on April 28-29. Vicki Heath, one of our networking leaders, is hosting a luncheon in her home on Friday, April 28th, for any First Place Leaders who will be attending the conference, so we can get a chance to be together before the conference begins. Contact Vicki at heathvicki@hotmail.com for more information.

Carole Lewis





Nancy Taylor Pursues Her Passion

When Nancy Taylor, our First Place Leadership Training Director, came to me the first of March to tell me she was going to resign her position with First Place, I experienced a myriad of emotions. Nancy is a dear friend and a valuable employee of First Place. She has worked with us for nine years, and her energy and creativity have been huge assets to our program. Nancy's last day as a full-time employee was March 31st, but she will continue to be involved with the program here at First Baptist.



Nancy Taylor

Nancy is not leaving to take another job; she is going home to write her Scripture memory book, pursue her passion for Scripture memory through her own ministry, Proving the Word, and spend more time with her husband, William. William is Minister of Missions here at First Baptist Houston and Nancy wants to be available to minister more with him. She will be traveling to Kenya with William in June and to Denver in July with our mission team.

Nancy will continue writing for our E-Newsletter each month for the rest of this year and will still be

working with the 100 men and women who committed to memorize 52 Scripture verses this year.

I got tickled this week when a lady called to ask if First Place was okay. She said that with Kay Smith and Nancy Taylor both leaving, plus the bulletin boards being down, she just needed to know if we were still going to be around! I can assure you that God has not taken His hand off the First Place program. He is still blessing this ministry in a mighty way and we here at First Place are praying

and asking for His will to be done regarding any future employees.

We are feeling His presence more than ever before, but we still will miss Kay and Nancy more than words can adequately convey. Pray with us as we seek God's perfect will.

P.S. Gospel Light is upgrading their server so that our website can be better than ever. This is why the bulletin boards have been down. Progress is almost always painful but without some pain, there is rarely ever progress!

We love you all,

Carole Lewis

Calling all First Place Leaders!

Come one, come all to the 2006 First Place Leadership Summit! The deadline for registration is July 7, 2006. Come join the First Place staff and leaders from all across the continent for a few days of inspiration, refreshment, instruction and fellowship! The Summit will be held at Houston's First Baptist Church in Houston, Texas, July 28 - 29, 2006. We have planned for you, two days, filled with:

- ✓ small group brainstorming sessions
- ✓ afternoon workshops geared to leader's needs
- ✓ delicious First Place meals
- ✓ lively worship

- ✓ inspirational speakers
- ✓ shopping time at our First Place bookstore (hint: 20% discount on First Place materials!)

The Leadership Summit is for you, whether you are an experienced First Place Leader, or you are one who desires to start a First Place group in your church in the near future. For more information visit <http://www.firstplace.org/leadershipsummit.html> or contact Lisa Lewis at llewis@firstplace.org.

See you at the Summit!
The First Place Staff





Leadership Training

First Place Prayer Warrior



Nancy Taylor

nstaylor@houston.rr.com

7he Prayer Commitment is truly the power commitment. It is through prayer that our members strengthen their relationship with Christ and the fellowship with other believers. Prayer also changes lives! As I was training for the half marathon, I would run around the indoor track of our church's Christian Life Center early each morning before going to work. As I was running one day, I realized that I was running past the room where our First Place class met each Sunday. I had been reviewing one of our session verses for each lap I would run, and then I began to pair each memory verse with a specific class member as I ran past our classroom. As my training runs got longer, I decided to pray for one member using a Scripture memory verse for each lap. This made my workout time go very fast, but it also drew my heart closer to those I led. I also was more aware than ever how God was truly working in their lives. I saw myself as a prayer warrior going into battle each morning as I interceded for the needs of my members.

First Place members are asked to pray daily for themselves and for others. Therefore, if the leader expects their members to pray, then they too should be praying. In fact, the leader should be the prayer warrior for the members they lead. Reading through the letters Paul wrote to those he led we can learn how to be effective prayer warriors on behalf of our members.

For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God.

Colossians 1:9-10

Persistent

This is a prayer that Paul prayed for the believers in Colosse. God had appointed him as a servant leader to these people for whom he prayed on a

regular basis. Paul began praying for the Colossians when he first heard about them. As soon as you have the list of names who will be attending your First Place class, begin to pray for them daily. When someone begins the journey to place Christ first in every area of their life, you can expect some opposition! A leader must take the weapon of the Word and pray it for each member as they battle in prayer for them.

Relevant

Paul prayed asking God to give the Colossians wisdom to know the will of God. Reading the list of names on the class roster, asking God to "bless" each one and ending with an "amen" is not necessarily relevant and most definitely not specific. How do you really know if God answered your prayer unless you ask specifics? Asking your members questions that will reveal their needs and heart desires will provide you specifics to pray for your members. Also, Paul asked that God would reveal His will to the Colossians through all "spiritual wisdom." Leaders should not be the "Answer Lady" or "Answer Man" in their member's lives. The leader should be the person who prays to the One who has the answers.

Acceptable

As the members are striving to honor God with their bodies (1 Corinthians 6:19-10), they need the prayers of their leader. Just as Paul prayed for the Colossians to live lives worthy of the Lord, so too, the First Place Leader/prayer warrior will want to pray that their members will have teachable hearts that are not only willing to learn how to please God, but also desire to please Him in every way. Dwight D. Eisenhower is quoted as saying, "You do not lead by hitting people over the head; that's assault, not leadership." As a leader, there have been times when I wanted to beat a member over the head with

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Nancy Taylor

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their blasted CR! There is a fellow leader here at our church who often jokes that she would like to tell those members who do not take the Attendance Commitment seriously to just quit! She says, "Why do they even bother to sign up if they are not going to at least show up every week!" I understand her frustration; however, we cannot give in to the frustration. Instead, we must get on our knees and cry out to God on behalf of our members, asking Him to develop a passion within our members' hearts to please Him in every way.

Yielding

Wouldn't you love a First Place class full of members who were bearing fruit in every good work and growing in the knowledge of God? Pray it and believe it!

Claim Matthew 21:22 as you pray for each member. "If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer." Pray that they will see results as they are diligent to follow the Live-it and exercise. Ask God to use His Word in their lives as they memorize the weekly scriptures. John 15:7, "If you abide in Me and My Words abide in you, ask whatever you wish and it shall be done for you." There is nothing more rewarding than to see your members yielding fruit after weeks of prayer on your part and work on theirs!

May each First Place Leader become the prayer warrior who persistently prays for their members (and for themselves) in specific, relevant ways, to be acceptable in their behavior, yielding lives full of good fruit.

Pray On!
Nancy Taylor

LEADERSHIP TIP

A Yearlong Scripture Memory Journey

When talking with people about memorizing scripture, most people say that they can remember the verses they have memorized, but the reference doesn't seem to "stick" in their mind for very long. I have found that knowing the reference adds power to the Scriptures that I share with others. For example, if I talk with a person all day about this awesome fishing spot that I have found, but never tell them where to find the fishing spot then they will never be able to experience for themselves what I have been talking about! They will only be able to tell others what I experienced; it would not be a personal experience, only a second-hand story. The same is true about the Scripture and the reference. Telling someone about a powerful verse that has changed my life or brought me incredible peace without sharing with them where it is found, prohibits them from personally experiencing the truth for themselves.

Let's look at some creative examples of how to glue the reference to the verse of scripture:

Association

When learning Romans 15:13, which begins, "May the God of hope . . .," my children were 15 and 13 years old, respectively. As I meditated on the verse (See February Leadership Tip), I noticed that the numbers in the reference corresponded with the ages of my teenagers. As my thoughts continued, I was also reminded that teenagers like to "roam" around from place to place. Therefore, a mother of roaming teenagers, ages 15 and 13, desperately needs the God of hope! Immediately I

had an association that I would never forget! Now, when reviewing this verse, I automatically say, "Romans 15:13, May the God of hope..." The reference and the first few words are forever glued together in my mind!

Rhyme

Many times the reference will rhyme with one of the first few words. For example, "Romans 6:4, We were therefore..." the last number in the reference rhymes with the third word of the verse."

Number Sense

I like math and I tend to notice number patterns, and multiples. For example, one of the first verses that I hid in my heart was Psalm 27:13-14, which says, "I would have despaired unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the LORD In the land of the living. Wait for the LORD; Be strong, and let your heart take courage; Yes, wait for the LORD. (NAS) When observing this reference, I noticed that 27 = 13+14. Just as sure as God will see us through, 13 +14 will always add up to be 27!

If you have any creative ways that have helped you to remember the references, please send them my way and I will share them with the other Scripture Memory Challengers!

Feasting on the Word!
Nancy Taylor





Bev's Footnotes

Prayer & Exercise: The Powerful Combination



Beverly Henson
Certified Personal Trainer
Bevh1952@bellsouth.net



Have you noticed how much better you feel after a good workout or after taking the time to pray? Those with faith in our Father know the benefits of prayer for themselves. When you are dealing with stress, exercise is one known way to minimize the impact of stress on your health. I'd like to encourage you to add prayer to your exercise routine. When you are taking a walk or doing your workout, it's a great time to pray. Clearly, exercise is one of the most effective forms of stress relief available; even more important than exercise is living a lifestyle of faith in God. Lasting peace and joy come only from a relationship with God and by knowing His Word. The Scripture promises: "You will show me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy, at Your right hand there are pleasures forevermore" (Psalm 16:11, The Amplified Bible). So as you spend time in prayer and in God's Word, you can expect to be refreshed and experience joy and peace through your relationship with Him.

I have a friend who walks daily. She is a single mom with an extremely busy schedule, but exercise is part of her routine. She said, "I walk first thing in the morning and while I'm walking, I pray in the Spirit and build myself up in faith (Jude 20). By the end of my walk, I'm prepared spiritually, physically and emotionally for the day ahead. I don't have time not to exercise!" Depending on the kind of exercise you choose, you too can build yourself up spiritually, while working out, by listening to teaching tapes, praying or confessing the Word.

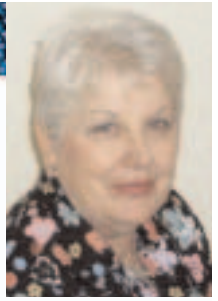
Prayer can help clear your mind and give you the peace that allows you to focus on the most important things and people in your life. It empowers you to live joyfully in the midst of the storm. You might begin with a simple prayer of thanks before you begin your workout:

Father I thank you that Your Word says in Acts 17:28 "In Him we live and move and have our being." I thank you, God, for the strength to exercise. Thank you for the legs that enable me to walk wherever I want to go. Thank you for the breath that gives me life. Thank you for the eyes that enable me to see Your beautiful creation. Thank you for one more day of life!

So often, people exercise begrudgingly; however, if you approach exercise as a time to connect spiritually and give thanks for the body you have been blessed with – one that gives you the freedom to do the many things you do daily, then exercise will become a joyous part of your day!

Press ON!
Bev Henson





Winning Words for First Place Losers

Ask and it shall be given to you; seek and you shall find; knock and the door will be opened to you.

Luke 11:9

A young monk had questions about his order's motto, "Pray and Work." In his mind the two words were contradictory. If he truly trusted in prayer, why did he need to continue to work? If he was going to work, why should he bother to pray? The Abbey was located near the shore of a large lake and one day the Abbot invited the confused novice to row across the lake with him. After the two men were seated in the small boat, the Abbot began to row, but with only one oar in the water. As a result, the boat went in circles and they made no progress. Frustrated with the futility of the Abbot's activity, the young monk could no longer remain silent. "Abbot," exclaimed the impatient novice, "unless you row with both oars, we won't get anywhere." The Abbot replied, "You're so right, son! The right oar is prayer; the left is work. Unless you use them together, you just go in circles."

So often we find ourselves "just going in circles" rather than progressing in our Christian faith walk, because we do not understand the rhythm of prayer and work. Rather than finding balance, we tend to fall into one of two extremes. We either think of prayer as an opportunity to recite our laundry list of "gimmes and wants" to God, expecting Him to do all the work, or on the other end of the continuum, we are so busy working we don't take the time to pray at all. When we find ourselves at either end of the spectrum, we have forgotten the sage advice of the spiritual masters: "Work like there's no prayer; pray like there's no work." This adage is especially important to the work we do in First Place. God calls us to be active participants in the transforming work He is doing through this wonderful program. He is always with us to bless us when we are obedient to His commands and follow the nine commitments of First Place with dedication and integrity. However, He will never force us to do what He knows is best for us, nor will He do for us what we are not willing to do for ourselves. God calls us to pray and to work, for this is the rhythm of grace.

Elizabeth Crews
Addictions Counselor & Educator
firstplaceloseers@cox.net

As we contemplate the Prayer Commitment this month, I would like to offer the following acrostic that can help bring balance and vitality to your First Place prayer time:

P Praise the Sovereign, Supreme, All-Sufficient Lord of Heaven and Earth for His majestic being and marvelous works.
"O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!" Psalm 8:1

R Remember all the good things the Lord has done for you and thank Him for His faithful love.
"Give thanks to the Lord for He is good, His love endures forever." Psalm 136:1

A Admit your failings, those sins that separate you from unbroken communion with your Lord and Master.
"I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the Lord' and you forgave the guilt of my sin." Psalm 32:5

Y Yield your will to God's will in humble submission.
"Be still and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth." Psalm 46:10

E Entreat God to be your provider, protector, defender and shield.
"Cast your cares on the Lord and He will sustain you; He will never let the righteous fall." Psalm 55:22

R Realize the power of prayer by taking the action that shows you anticipate God's blessing as you do the work He has assigned to you.
"May the favor of the Lord our God rest upon us; establish the work of our hands for us—yes, establish the work of our hands." Psalm 90:17

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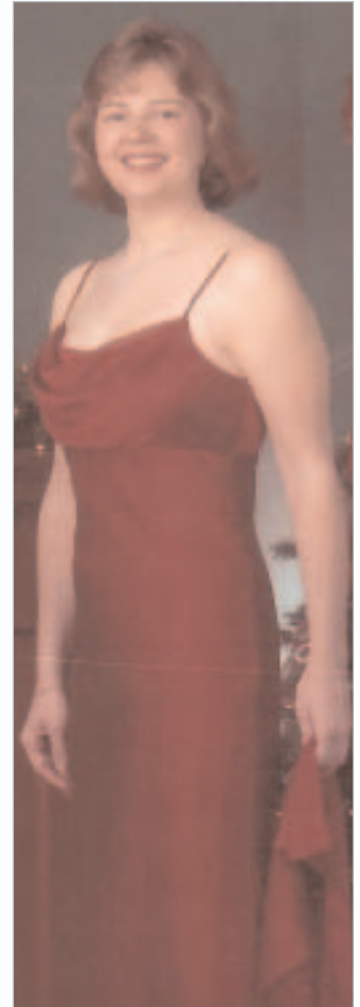




First Place Success Story

I am a single, young social worker who found that pouring all my emotional and physical strength into assisting others left me drained. I found myself at 32 turning inward and feeling anxious and depressed. A health issue in 2002 caused me to seek a return to Christ, and in 2003, a friend invited me to attend First Place meetings. My life was changed dramatically as I not only lost 50 pounds in a year, but also gained a true relationship with Jesus. My new emphasis on studying the Word and taking time for a healthy lifestyle gave me the confidence to become the vibrant woman that God created me to be. I am now excited about introducing others to the first Place program.

Paula Cronan
Sarasota, FL



Paula Cronan
Right: After
Below: Before



Elizabeth Crews

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Prayer and work comprise the rhythm that allows us to live balanced First Place lives. Today it is my prayer we will all use prayer and work in a balanced harmony. We will quit going in circles when we have learned the secret of the motto, "Pray and Work."

Hem your day with prayer and it will be less apt to unravel at the edges.

--Author Unknown

Elizabeth Crews

Elizabeth Crews is a licensed addictions counselor & educator, a Bible teacher and a First Place Networking leader in San Diego, CA. To subscribe to Winning Words for First Place Losers—a free daily e-mail devotional written by Elizabeth—write to firstplaceloseers@cox.net and ask to be added to the First Place devotional subscriber's list.





Coming Events

Area Leader's Meeting

April 22, 2006

9:00 a.m.
Whitten Memorial Baptist Church
Memphis, TN
Contact: Stephanie Rhodes
Email: Stephanie@net-pages.org
RSVP online: <http://www.net-pages.org/USA/TN/home.htm>

April 29, 2006

8:30 AM-2:00 PM
Swope Art Museum
Terre Haute, Indiana
Contact: Lynn Vollmer
Phone: (812) 238-5152
Email: mailto:dlsnvollmer@ma.rr.com
Cost: \$10 (Includes materials and lunch)
Registration deadline: April 15

May 6, 2006

10:00 AM-2:00 PM
Training Session: 2:30 PM-4:00 PM
Lunch Provided
New Hope Baptist Church
Loveland, Ohio
Contact: Janet Kirkhart, Networking Leader
Phone: (513) 677-5377
Email: janetfirstplace@fuse.net or janet1stplace@hotmail.com

May 6, 2006

9:00 AM-12:00 noon
Calvary Baptist Church
Shreveport, LA
Contact: Lavahn Stillwell
Phone: (318) 687-5199

June 14, 2006

12:00 noon
Koorong, Australia
Contact: Tracy Garton
Phone: 08 83912484

Workshops

April 28-29, 2006

Lowcountry Women's Conference
Friday 6:00 PM - 9:00 PM
Saturday 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM
Charleston, SC
Special Guest: Carole Lewis
Cost: \$40
For more information or to obtain a registration form, go to
<http://www.riverbluff.org>

Rally/Workshop

Australia Leaders Training Weekend Retreat May 12-14, 2006

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

June 16-17, 2006

Rally: Friday, June 16, 2006, 7PM-9PM
Workshop: Saturday, June 17, 2006, 9 AM-3 PM (includes lunch on Saturday)
Cost: \$55.00
Patterson Community Center
Murfreesboro, TN
Contact: Stephanie Rhodes, Networking Leader, Tennessee
Email: Stephanie@net-pages.org
Register at: <http://www.net-pages.org/USA/TN/home.htm>

Leadership Summit

July 28-29, 2006

Houston, TX
An incredible two days of celebrating, networking, brainstorming, idea sharing, praying, training and workshop for active, former and potential leaders of First Place.

F.O.C.U.S. Week

October 12-19, 2006

- * Daily Bible Study and Devotionals
- * Exercise For Every Fitness Level
- * Delicious First Place Meals
- * Rest and relaxation
- * Complete Fitness Testing
- * Praise and Worship
- * Inspirational Speakers

Check website for additional information regarding the 25th Anniversary Events! www.firstplace.org

First Place Conference

September 15-16, 2006

Celebrate: The Heart of Worship
New Hope Baptist Church, Loveland, OH
Check website for additional information regarding the 25th Anniversary Events! www.firstplace.org

