



January News



Need a Jump Start to Kick off the New Year?

These simple steps will kick start your weight loss. Do all eight for 14 days and start 2017 off with a healthy bang. We can do anything for 14 days! If you are just beginning your journey with First Place 4 Health, this is an easy way to begin as you familiarize yourself with all aspects of the program.

1. Pray before you eat anything.

Ask God to help you make healthy choices. You can't do it alone and you don't have to.

2. Weigh yourself.

Weigh now—and again at the same time each week. Only weigh once per week. Weighing more often can lead to discouragement when you don't see a change quickly.

3. Write down everything you eat.

Don't worry about counting it on your FP4H Tracker. Just get it on paper.

4. Don't eat any fried foods.

None. Zero. No excuses.

5. Eat only low-fat dairy and meat products.

Reduced-fat cheeses are easy to find and taste great. Trim visible fat and skin from meats and choose "choice" cuts of meat.

6. Don't drink any soft drinks, sweetened coffees or juices.

Calorie-heavy soft drinks, coffee drinks and fruit juices pack on pounds if you're not careful. It's easy to lose track of how many liquid calories you are consuming. Abstain from all of these for the two-week jump start.

7. Eat as many vegetables as you want to eat.

None of us gained weight eating vegetables. Eat as many as you want, except potatoes.

8. Drink 8 ounces of water before every meal and snack.

It will help you feel full faster. Many times we interpret dehydration as hunger.

9. Sleep at least 8 hours per night.

Studies have shown that sleep deprivation promotes weight gain.

10. Exercise at least 30 minutes a day, 5 times each week.

If you can only walk a mile, then only walk a mile. Get serious.

You can find easy recipes to go with these quick-start tips in the *My Food Plan* book in the online store at www.fp4h.com.



My New Year's Question ~ Vicki Heath

Hey friends, here is my New Year's Question: Why are you doing the same thing you did last year that didn't work? Year after year people make the same commitments to "really lose the weight this time" and nothing changes. I'm not judging. I know about that. Why not let God help, and stop this thing once and for all.

This is how it can happen.

The conference was over and I was boxing up my table. The crowd was rushing by on their way to lunch. She hung on to my table like a life preserver. "Do you think this program would work for me?" As I looked into her face, I saw a beautiful obese woman who had lost all hope of ever losing weight. Not knowing a thing about her other than what I could see in her eyes, I quickly answered "yes". There was not much time to get her contact information so I said, "Give me your phone," and I punched in my cell number. She said that when she was ready to make changes, she would call me. I went home and forgot about her.

Wouldn't you know it? She called me the next Monday. I shared with her all the hope I have in Jesus and how He helped me get healthy. She was scared to death, but willing to stop trying to lose weight on her own and turn the whole thing over to God. That was eight weeks ago. She lost over ten pounds over the holidays. Yes, over the holidays!

So what is the difference? How does this God part work? It's really not a secret. Jesus shared it openly in Mark 12:30-31. "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these." I explained all of this at our orientation for the class she joined. She had some honest doubts and questions. One being "How do I find this help God has for me?" The Bible says in Deuteronomy 4:29, "But if from there you seek the LORD your God, you will find him if you seek him with all your heart and with all your soul."

What does the phrase "seek the Lord" imply? It means you have to go after it—with your whole heart. It means we seek Him with devotion of heart and determination of will. Putting Christ first in my life is some of the hardest and best work I have ever done. It will cost you plenty, but when God shows up He brings His blessing and power. The sacrifices you make to get healthy will be abundantly returned as blessings from the Lord.

As I shared with my friend, "I have sought the Lord's help with my weight over many years and He wants me to trust Him and do what He says." [Psalm 119:10](#) says, "I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands." As He reveals His will for me in how much I should eat or not eat, He expects me to trust Him and

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not stray from what He is telling me. An area of trust for me was worrying that I would be emotionally unhappy without extra food. Not so. Seeking Him with my whole heart means—not a divided heart. I have learned that I can trust His Word. Many times we only seek part of what God wants for us. We pick and choose the things we want to obey. We love the Word of God until the Word gets in the way of our appetite. God wants us totally surrendered to Him. Many weight-loss programs will tell you “You can do this!” Not so in FP4h. We know we cannot do it or we would have already. Only God can help us figure out why we seek food instead of Him. Anyone can lose weight, but is that really the answer—and to gain it back? No! I want God to be my *go to*. I want Him to be my source of peace, power and purpose.

Isn't it time to be done with this weight issue? Join or start a class today. Honor thy health by giving Christ first place in every area, even your weight.

Still seeking Him,

Vicki Heath.....vicki.heath@fp4h.com



Have you considered volunteering as a First Place 4 Health Networking Leaders? Our goal is to have two networking leaders in every state. The population in some states warrants more than two.

A networking leader does not work alone. They stay connected and encouraged through:

- ✓ Monthly networking leader conference calls (one hour)
- ✓ Networking Leader Day the Thursday before Summit
- ✓ Bi-annual Networking Leader Retreat on Edisto Island, SC
- ✓ Private Networking Leader Facebook Page
- ✓ Comprehensive Networking Leader Manual
- ✓ Support from FP4H staff, regional leaders, and networking leaders around the US

We ask networking leaders to put in as little as five hours a month. Click on the following link for a detailed description: http://www.firstplace4health.com/leaders/networking_signup.html. Check out the open positions around the country on our [Networking Leader Map](#).

We would love to join you in prayer as you consider joining our team. Email HelenBaratta@fp4h.com and set a time to talk and pray together. Is this your next right thing?



Success Story ~ Jenn Krogh



If someone had told me that in my 30's I would fall in love with Jesus, I would have looked at them like they had lost their minds! Add living in a live, small town and leading weight management and exercise groups at my church? I would have said "Never"! His ways are not our ways and His ways are always perfect.

After a childhood of being the chubby kid—obese by my teens—I didn't believe being at a healthy weight could be in my future. I've recently given this unusual outcome significant thought. Many people have no weight issues growing up and experience weight gain after having children and in mid-life. My story is completely opposite. I was heavy until after children, discovering my gifts and passions closer to age 40! Not a citizen of this world, my life has been opposite the world in many ways. The glory is all His. None of this was thought up by myself or done in my strength.

I began a Christian weight management program in 1993, and had intended to keep it a secret. After multiple failures in losing weight, only to regain it, I didn't want anyone to know, even though it was different this time. God was a part of this journey and I did have hope, but not enough to have an audience!

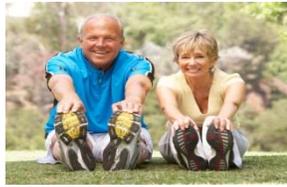
The Lord put me in the hot seat of leadership right off the bat. He knew I needed the accountability, and that I wouldn't quit when the going got tough. It did get tough in the second year—with a loss of 7 lbs. The first year I lost 80 lbs. and it almost seemed easy. The weight came off week after week; the numbers on the scale dropped and so did my clothing size. The second year was discouraging, but the commitment to my group brought me back each Monday night.

Judy joined our group after moving to our area. She and her family had lived in Singapore for 5 years, and during that time she had joined First Place and succeeded at losing weight for the first time in her life. She wanted Christ-centered accountability and our group was the only one she had found. It wasn't until a year or two later that First Place changed publishers and I discovered the book *First Place: Lose Weight & Keep it Off Forever* by Carole Lewis. That little book changed everything. We officially began FP4H in January 2002.

It has been an "out of this world" adventure as a FP4H leader! I have not only reached a goal weight I never imagined, but have grown spiritually through the Bible studies and disciplines of FP4H. I have met people from all over the country, and have support and encouragement like I've not experienced anywhere else. The framework in FP4H has provided the structure, encouragement and guidance (I needed) to become the woman God created me to be. I have been stretched, challenged, prayed for and given a "kick in the pants" when I needed one! I have an accountability partner and she has my back. She loves me enough to tell me what I need to hear, even if I may not want to hear it!

The physical changes have been nothing short of a miracle and I'm grateful. My total weight loss is 165 lbs. from my heaviest, (many years ago) to my current weight that is less than when I was in the 7th grade. God has healed me emotionally, challenged me mentally and continues to grow me spiritually. FP4H is a biblically solid ministry, provides all of the tools, love and support to help anyone overcome any obstacles they may have. Say yes! Trust God to be with you every step of the way, and get ready for the adventure He has for you! Check out Jenn's video testimony at www.fp4h.com under the Media tab or on our YouTube channel, www.youtube.com/firstplace4health.





God-Sized Vision ~ Helen Baratta

Where are your reading glasses? Perched on your head? Tucked in your purse? Stashed at your desk? My mom's dangle from a beaded chain around her neck. Everything changed when I shared my dreaded reliance on readers with my eye doctor. He suggested mono vision, one contact worn in my left eye for reading. My right eye handles long distance vision. My brain mysteriously adjusts seeing differently out of each eye.

The Apostle Paul reflects on the imperfect vision we see in the mirror. In his letter to the Corinthians, he promises we will see with clarity when we are face to face with God.¹ In the last ten years, the vision God has for my life grows clearer each time I ask Him, "What's next?"

In 2006, the next right thing was starting a First Place group even though I'd failed at weight loss countless times before. Four years later, when I reached my goal weight, the next right thing was volunteering as a FP4H Networking Leader. In 2011, I retired from the corporate world and entered ministry full time. In 2013, I resisted the next step. Multiple times I said, "I'm not a writer." God provided mentors, an opportunity to write a chapter in a book and finally, a writing coach. My first full-length book, *Restored: Forever Free from Obesity* is due out in spring 2017.

In 2014, during a spiritual retreat, I journaled about my husband and his dream to live in Hawaii. I sensed God asking, "Why are you arguing about living in Hawaii?" We began a long-term plan for relocation with a move planned for February 2017. Thank goodness, I work virtually from home for First Place 4 Health, even on the Big Island of Hawaii.

My friend R.J. Scherba, author and Christian Life Coach, suggests spending time with God to identify the things you value most. Your values lead to your vision of what God wants you to be and do.² The Bible is full of visions given to ordinary—sometimes hopeless—people who by faith went on to serve God in unique and profound ways. For example:

Noah, when warned about things unseen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family and became the heir of righteousness (Hebrews 11:7).

Abraham, through faith, was promised descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as countless as the sand on the seashore (Genesis 22:17 and Hebrews 11:8).

Moses, through faith, conveyed God's vision to the enslaved Israelites about the Promised Land flowing with milk and honey (Exodus 3:17).

The personal vision I sense from God shows transformed, now healthy people reaching out to people convinced there is no hope. The result—millions freed from obesity through the power of Jesus Christ.

What vision has God placed on your heart? What does He want to accomplish through you? Ask God "What's next?" to find out.

Helen Baratta is Director of Development. [Click here](#) to read more about her First Place 4 Health journey. Contact helen.baratta@fp4h.com if you are interested in joining our Virtual Group Leader or Networking Leader teams.

¹ 1 Corinthians 13:12

² *7 Steps to Finding Your Divine Calling*, <http://www.rjchristiancoaching.com/>

**Do
The
Next
Right
Thing**
www.firstplace4health.com



Devotional

All Things New

*He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God.
Psalm 40:3*

“New.” The word brings images of all kinds of exciting things, doesn’t it? New job, new car, new friend, new clothes, New Year, new beginnings! Back in January 2002, I began a new journey. I became a leader of First Place 4 Health in my church. It was a new program, and no one was familiar with it where I live. In October of that same year, I made the commitment to be the First Place 4 Health Networking Leader for Wisconsin. It was an exciting time, and a bit scary stepping into all that newness. I began new relationships as I met other leaders in various cities. It was a new experience planning meetings and events held in various churches around the state. I belong to a small church, so I gained a new understanding of how larger churches operate as I worked with leaders from those congregations.

All of this brought a new song in my mouth! A new adventure had begun, and it has continued all these years. Every step is new, and God has an amazing way of breathing freshness into each one of those steps. Every 12 weeks is a new session, bringing new faces. But even more than that, God is working in and through my heart each day, bringing into it new life. My eyes see new things and my mind is being made new by the power of His Word. My heart is being renewed daily by the power of His Holy Spirit.

A synonym for “new” describes things that have not existed or have not been known or seen before. God is so exciting! He breathes new life into those seeking Him. I have witnessed the “new” physical bodies of members who have embraced the Live It plan and made it their lifestyle. I have watched God break the chains of emotional bondage in individuals who have learned to trust Him, and then seen a new sparkle in their eyes and a smile to match. I have seen First Place 4 Health members experience renewal in their marriages that were on the verge of collapse and receive a freshness in their relationships that were stagnant without the power of the risen Lord. As we begin this New Year, my personal desire is to begin each day with the same enthusiasm as the New Year celebration. I want to experience our Lord in every choice and decision I make. My mouth has a new song of praise every time I put my trust in Him. My heart has a new song as I witness others “see and fear and put their trust in Him.”

Father, this new year, help me daily die to my petty desires that can never satisfy. I want to be able to truly say, along with the psalmist, “As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God” (Psalm 42:1).

Journal: What is most problematic for you? Negative self-talk, emotional overreaction to stress, unwise food choices, neglect of your relationship with God? Give your struggle to God and ask the Holy Spirit for a new beginning.



Upcoming Events

Leader Webinar ~ It's All About Balance

Pre-recorded and available on our website.

Leader Webinar ~ What's Next?

Pre-recorded and available on our website.

Webinar – Simple Ideas for Healthy Cooking

January 16, 2017
Online

Southeast Wellness Workshop – SC

January 14, 2017
Six Mile, SC

Fun & Fitness 4 Life

January 20-22, 2017
North East, MD

Texas Coastal Area Wellness Workshop

January 21, 2017
Palacios, Texas

Southeast Wellness Workshop – Georgia

February 11, 2017
Gray, GA

Southeast Wellness Workshop – NC

February 18, 2017
Wendell, NC

Nevada/Northern California Wellness Workshop

April 1, 2017
Reno, NV

RESTORE

April 28-30, 2017
Kansas City, KS

Wellness Week @ Round Top

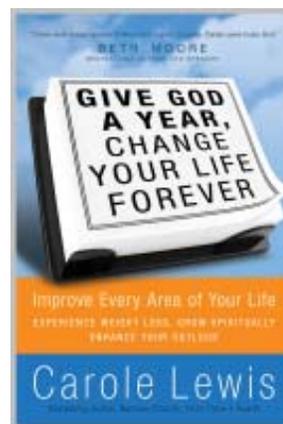
October 12-18, 2017
Round Top, Texas

Summit 2017 ~ Your Best Life!

July 21-22, 2017
Newnan, GA

Give God a Year and Change Your Life Forever

In a culture of “right now,” a year may seem like an eternity. A year in the hands of God, however, means change that will last eternally. Would you give God a year and see what he can do in 2017?



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***THIS MONTH ONLY AND WHILE SUPPLIES LAST**

Or get this great bundle at a great price and have your plan for the whole year!



GIVE GOD A YEAR

And Change Your Life Forever

Four studies and book - \$75



Creamy Mushroom Chicken

Pound your chicken so all pieces are thin and even for quicker and more even cooking.

- 4 6-oz. skinless, boneless chicken breast halves
- ¼ tsp. salt
- ¼ tsp. black pepper
- cooking spray
- 3 large shallots, peeled (about 1 cup)
- 1 8-oz. package mushrooms, sliced
- 1/3 cup chicken broth
- 1 tsp. dried marjoram, crushed
- Black pepper

Place each chicken breast half between 2 sheets of heavy-duty plastic wrap; pound to 1/3-inch thickness using a meat mallet or small heavy skillet. Sprinkle chicken evenly with salt and ¼ teaspoon pepper; coat with cooking spray. Heat a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Add chicken to pan; cook 5 to 6 minutes on each side or until browned. While chicken cooks, cut shallots vertically into thin slices. Remove chicken from pan. Coat pan with cooking spray. Add mushrooms and shallots to pan; coat vegetables with cooking spray. Cook 1 minute, stirring constantly. Stir in broth and marjoram. Return chicken to pan; cover and cook 3 to 4 minutes or until mushrooms are tender and chicken is done. Transfer chicken to a platter. Pour mushroom mixture over chicken; sprinkle with black pepper, if desired. Garnish with chopped parsley. Serve immediately.

Serves 4

NUTRITION: 230 calories; 2g fat (10.5% calories from fat); 41g protein; 4g carbohydrates; 1g dietary fiber; 99mg cholesterol; 249mg sodium.

LIVE IT TRACKER: 5 oz.-eq. meat, 1 cup vegetable

Creamy Fettucini

This recipe is so quick and easy. You can have dinner on the table in 15 minutes. Add grilled or rotisserie chicken for a meatier dish.

- 1 8-oz. package low-fat cream cheese
- ½ cup milk
- 2 tbsp. butter
- ¼ cup grated parmesan
- 2 tsp. garlic salt
- 1 12-oz. package fettuccini noodles

Cook noodles as directed. While noodles are cooking, put remaining ingredients in small saucepan and heat, stirring frequently, until mixed and melted. Serve over fettuccini noodles. Garnish with shaved parmesan. Serves 4

NUTRITION: 321 calories; 10g fat (29.4% calories from fat); 11g protein; 45g carbohydrates; 2g dietary fiber; 28mg cholesterol; 1245mg sodium.

LIVE IT TRACKER: 3 oz.-eq. grain, ½ oz.-eq. meat

Fresh Fruit with Lemon Cream

4 oz. reduced-fat cream cheese
¾ cup low-fat vanilla yogurt
1 tsp. honey
2 tsp. freshly grated
lemon zest
2 cups fresh blueberries or mixed berries
4 tsp. granola

Using a fork, break up cream cheese in a medium bowl. Drain off any liquid from the yogurt; add yogurt to the bowl along with honey. Using an electric mixer, beat at high speed until light and creamy. Stir in lemon zest. Layer the lemon cream and berries in dessert dishes or wineglasses. Sprinkle with granola. If not serving immediately, cover and refrigerate for up to 8 hours. Serves 4

NUTRITION: 148 calories; 6g fat (34.0% calories from fat); 6g protein; 20g carbohydrates; 2g dietary fiber; 18mg cholesterol; 192mg sodium.

LIVE IT TRACKER: ½ cup milk, ½ cup fruit

Banana Ice Dream

1 large very ripe banana

Peel banana and cut into slices. Freeze. Place frozen banana slices in blender. Blend until the banana starts to look creamy. Make sure you blend it long enough to get to the creamy stage. Serve immediately or transfer to an airtight container to store or freeze harder. Serves 1

NUTRITION: 109 calories; 1g fat (4.2% calories from fat); 1g protein; 28g carbohydrates; 3g dietary fiber; 0mg cholesterol; 1mg sodium.

LIVE IT TRACKER: 1 cup fruit

Mix-in's (each adds 100 calories):

2 tbsp. mini chocolate chips
2 tbsp. of chopped almonds
1 tbsp. peanut butter

All the recipes in this issue taken from the new cookbook, **Healthy Happy Cooking**, available now in our online store.

HEALTHY HAPPY COOKING
Bringing back the family table with healthy,
delicious and simple recipes.

\$19.99

