



# FIRSTplace

FOR HEALTH



## GOOD NEWS—INFORMATION YOU CAN USE

### IT'S TIME FOR A REAL CHANGE

By Vicki Heath

“Life is too long to keep doing the things we need to stop and too short to miss the things we need to begin.” Patsy Clairmont [1]

It's time. It's time to make the changes necessary for you to live as God intended. It's time to get serious and do the hard work.

That's what I love about our new My First Place for Health materials. These are the tools that, if you allow Him, God will use to bring you to permanent life change. Our new Bible studies are not for the faint of heart. They are deep and life-changing. The new food plan is doable and practical. After watching Mary Ward in My Place for Fitness video, who wouldn't want her to be your exercise buddy? No judgment in that girl! Exercise is happening for many of you for the very first time, and you are not quitting. It's time to move.

Some of the most significant life change is being accomplished through the resource My Place for Discovery. Here is the place we can discover the answers to “Why do I eat when I am not hungry?”,



why do I continue to turn to food when I know God is there for me?” It's time we found the answers. It's time we did away with the excuses. I love hearing what God is doing in your lives with these new resources. In the area of forgiveness, God is speaking to long-buried hurts and wounds, and digging them out by the roots! Some have come to the realization they have never embraced the forgiveness of God for long past self-inflicted pain and bad decisions. God is setting His people free. It's time to discover.

In the area of weight loss, one member shared, “this is the last time I'm doing this. I've been overweight my whole life, and I realize I don't want to stay this way forever.” Patsy Clairmont is right. Life is too short not to be doing what you have always dreamed of. It's time to stop doing the same things that do not work.

God is using First Place for Health to make your wellness dreams come true. God is doing His part, and you are doing your part! And it's not a daydream, it's a reality, and it's worth it! It's time.

[1] Courage for the Unknow Season; Navigating What's Next with Confidence and Hope, Copyright 2017 by Jan Silvius, p. 79

*Vicki is the First Place 4 Health National Director, an American Council on Exercise, Certified Fitness Instructor, Certified Life Coach and the Wellness Coordinator for her church in Edisto Beach, SC. Vicki is the author of Don't Quit Get Fit and Wellness Journey of a Lifetime. She has led a successful First Place 4 Health ministry in her church for twenty years.*

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## WHAT'S NEXT

By Helen Baratta

Lately, the Lord has been showing me it is time for me to stop talking and listen for understanding. I'm repeatedly asked, "What Bible study should we do next?" Our next new study isn't due out until late spring, early summer. If you've transitioned to our My Place Member Kit, you might be wondering what to do next.

We recommend selecting something from our classic Bible studies or a book from one of our wonderful authors.

- Consider getting back to basics, with Seek God First.
- We have the largest supply of Balanced Living, Growing in the Fruit of the Spirit, and Moving Forward Together
- We have a smaller supply (order soon) of Be Free, Training for Success, Living for Christ, Start Losing-Start Living, Celebrate Success, and A New Beginning
- Our virtual groups will spend six weeks reading through Gari Meacham's Truly Fed A Leader's Resource is available with a schedule, outline and videos.
- Other options are my book Restored! Embracing Weight Loss God's Way or Joyce Ainsworth's book Food, Freedom and Finish Lines. Both have small group questions for each chapter.
- Don't forget Carol Lewis's books Live Life Right Here Right Now or Give God a Year both inspire and maintain the momentum in your group.

There are so many choices. How will you decide? I suggest seeking the Lord and asking the Holy Spirit, the person in charge of your group, what resource you should use next. First, read the descriptions for the Bible studies and the books we offer. Then spend time in prayer asking the Lord which resource will best serve your group.



Consider a Bible study you've already done in the past. When I've repeated a study, I find my group members, as well as myself, are in a different season. Our life on this wellness journey has progressed, and we look at the same Bible study questions with a different perspective. I buy a new study, with a fresh set of pages to write on. Sometimes, I go back and compare the past answers with the new ones. It is helpful to see how much I have changed. And when I haven't changed...well, there is a lesson in that as well.

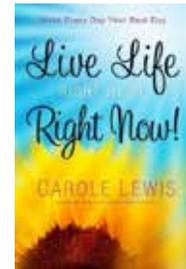
When I lived in Pittsburgh, our church had as many as six groups with multiple leaders. We worked as a team to review

and make the decision. A few times we had two choices stand-out, so we did one this session and the other the next.

Remember, the Lord already knows what you will do. A hearty thanks to the founders of First Place, the men, and women of Houston's First Baptist Church. Our foundation remains the same placing Christ first in all things. We have great resources, and I am ever so thankful. Embrace change, say "Yes!!" to ALL God has planned.

*Helen Baratta Director of Development for First Place for Health. She is the author of My Place for Leadership included in the My Place Leader's Kit and Restored! Embracing Weight Loss God's way available at our online bookstore.*

## SHOP ONLINE!



[Live Life Right Here Right Now!](#)



[Growing in the Fruit of the Spirit](#)



[Bible Study with CD Balanced Living](#)



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## WHEN GOD IS PLEASED

And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us. 1 JOHN 3:23

The verse just before this one tells us that we will receive whatever we ask from God if we obey His commands and do what pleases Him (see 1 John 3:22). And then the Bible tells us what pleases God. It pleases Him for you and me to love one another as He commanded us.



It is easy for me to love lovable people. There are many people like this in my life. The problem is to love unlovable people. I believe that God places unlovable people in our lives to teach us more about His character— God is love. I learned many years ago that it is impossible for me to love unlovable people in my strength. The secret is to ask God to love that person through me. As a First Place 4 Health leader, I have met a few women who have come to our class as less than lovable. I can see it in the first meeting; they have put up high walls around their hearts, and they are full of anger and despair. I call this kind of person EGR (Extra Grace Required). I look at a woman like this and know that God has trusted me with her precious body (at this point, she is only interested in the physical aspect of her life) and that He wants to work a miracle in her. How does He work a miracle? He uses love—unconditional love—that keeps on giving even when love is not returned.

Little by little, the walls start coming down, and I find that there is a very special child of God inside that hard outer shell. Love is the medicine we all need. Sometimes when we reach out and hug someone, it is the only human touch she or he has received for a long time. A kind word, gesture or touch is a gift that keeps on giving.

Action Item: Today, ask God to transform any unlovable people in your life by loving them through you. Look for ways to show them God's love, and watch Him work a miracle in their lives.

Carole Lewis

First Place 4 Health National Director Emeritus

Houston, Texas

## SHOP ONLINE!



Truly Fed  
[SHOP NOW>>](#)

## SOCIAL MEDIA





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## SUCCESS STORY

By Monique Johnson

*I was a new Christian (two years old) when I received a catalog in the mail with an article about First Place 4 Health. I thought it was simply a weight-loss program, but if it was from God, then it couldn't be bad. This time I had God helping me to lose weight. There were no groups in my area at that time, so I thought that if I wanted First Place 4 Health in my church, I would have to start a group. I looked online to get more information and really liked the program. As more time went by, I felt eager to get started and was looking forward to helping others, plus finally losing weight myself.*

*I started First Place 4 Health in January 2008. At that time, I weighed in at 183, my highest weight, which consisted of pounds gained after being on so many different diets. I knew how to lose weight—I was really good at it. I lost the weight over and over again, only to gain it back and then some. With First*



*Place 4 Health came the tools I needed to succeed. In Matthew 6:33, Jesus says, "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." Food was my idol—it was an addiction! The only person who could help me break the addiction was God. He had to guide me on that journey. I learned in some of our Bible studies to insert my name whenever there was a verse referring to love or caring, anything that referred to my relationship with Jesus. For example Jesus loves "Monique," or "Never will I leave you, Monique!" It added a personal touch to His promises. They were directed at me. It also helped me form a relationship with God and get closer to Him. In my journey to a balanced, healthy lifestyle, I found the Bible studies to be my hope; the Word of God encouraged me to keep going when the going got tough. I found time in my day to memorize the weekly Scripture verses. It was then easier to eat healthy because I had a verse in my mind that I could use to overcome the temptations. After losing about 20 pounds, I was at a standstill.*

*When someone would ask me how much weight I had lost or how long it took me, I would answer, "This is the first time I have been able to keep the weight off and not smoke." Although that was true, it was still an excuse not to go to the next level. Sometimes we're afraid of success because people are going to look at us differently. I was getting compliments and attention that I was not*

*sure how to handle. One thing I had to learn to accept was that every day I have the same choices as that healthy person running/walking down the street. To get to the next level, I chose to be accountable to the women in my class. I started writing my weight on the whiteboard in our room. If I gained, I had to write the weight in red, even if it was two-tenths of a pound. I did not do that to be extra hard on myself. I did it to show how a number so small will make a huge difference over time. There were many times when I knew the number was going to be red, and many times I almost did not go to the meeting. It would have been so easy to call someone to take over the class for me. I figured, If I don't go this week, I will lose the weight next week, and then I can write it in black. We all know what happens when we think that way. The longer you stay away, the harder it is to get back on track. My weight loss is 36 pounds—only 14 more and I will be at goal. However, my bigger goal is to be the person God wants me to be on the inside.*

*My expectation when I started First Place 4 Health was to lose weight and getting closer to God was the bonus. As it turned out, getting closer to God was the prize, and the weight loss was the bonus. God has taken me so far from where I began. The unpleasant places where I have been have become a small part of my life. God has used those instances to shape me into what I am and what I have yet to become. I used to be unable to enjoy the present because I did not have peace in my heart. With God's help, I am able to trust Him to take care of the things I have no control over. I still have a long way to go, and I have to work on balance every day. Because this is a journey, it's not something to do "just for now."*

*There are some areas in my life that I am still working on. I ask God to help me overcome them. God knew we would get confused in the process, so He gave us a book full of instructions, the Bible, and He gave us the grace to start over every day. In my life of changes, there is one constant, and that is God. God will always be there; He promises to never leave us nor forsake us. God knows everything we have ever done. He sent His Son to the cross so we could have freedom. Our salvation is a gift; we cannot earn it, because our debt has already been paid. Paul tells us in Ephesians 2:8, "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God." Every day I pray to keep my focus on God. I pray for Him to reveal to me what I need to do for Him, and I ask Him to help me be responsible for my own actions.*



## HEALTHY RECIPES

### LEMONY CUCUMBER SALAD

- 1 cup thinly sliced radishes
- 1/2 cup finely chopped orange bell pepper
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
- 2 English cucumbers, thinly sliced (about 6 cups)
- 1 teaspoon finely grated lemon rind
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 1/2 teaspoons white wine vinegar
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper



Combine first 4 ingredients in a large bowl. Combine lemon rind and remaining ingredients in a small bowl, stirring with a whisk. Pour over cucumber mixture; toss well to coat. Serve at room temperature or chilled.

Serves 8

Nutritional Information: 33 Calories, 1.8g Fat, .8g Protein, 4.3g Carbohydrate, .9g Fiber, 0.0g Cholesterol, .4mg Iron, 156mg Sodium

### ASPARAGUS RIBBONS WITH LEMON AND GOAT CHEESE

- 1 pound large asparagus spears, trimmed
- 1 1/2 cups cherry tomatoes, halved
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh chives
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 2 teaspoons extravirgin olive oil
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 1/4 teaspoon sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup (2 ounces) crumbled goat cheese



Hold each asparagus spear by the tip end. Shave asparagus into ribbons with a vegetable peeler to measure 3 cups. Reserve asparagus tips for another use. Combine asparagus and tomatoes in a medium bowl.

Combine chives and next 6 ingredients (through 1/4 teaspoon salt), stirring with a whisk. Drizzle over the asparagus mixture, tossing gently to coat. Top with goat cheese.

Nutritional Information: 47 Calories, 2.8g Fat, 2.7g Protein, 3.7g Carbohydrate, 1.4g Fiber, 3mg Cholesterol, 1.3mg Iron, 105mg Sodium



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## HEALTHY RECIPES

### LEMON DROP COOKIES

- ½ cup granulated sugar
- 7 tbsp. butter or stick margarine, softened
- 2 tsp. grated lemon rind
- 1/3 cup honey
- ½ tsp. lemon extract
- 1 large egg
- 1¼ cups all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- ½ tsp. salt
- ¼ cup plain fat-free yogurt
- 1 cup powdered sugar
- 2 tbsp. fresh lemon juice
- 2 tsp. grated lemon rind
- nonstick cooking spray



Preheat oven to 350° F. Beat first 3 ingredients with a mixer at medium speed until light and fluffy. Add honey, extract and egg and beat until well blended. Lightly spoon flour into dry measuring cups and level with a knife. Combine flour, baking powder and salt, stirring well with a whisk. Add flour mixture to sugar mixture alternately with yogurt, beginning and ending with the flour mixture. Drop the mixture by level tablespoons 2 inches apart onto baking sheets coated with nonstick cooking spray. Bake at 350° F for 12 minutes or until lightly browned. Combine powdered sugar and juice in a small bowl and stir with a whisk. Brush powdered sugar mixture evenly over the hot cookies and sprinkle evenly with 2 teaspoons rind. Remove the cookies from the pan and cool on wire racks. Serves 32

Nutrition Information: 89 calories; 2.8g fat (29% calories from fat); 1.1g protein; 15.3g carbohydrate; .2g fiber; 14mg cholesterol; 81mg sodium

### FRESH FRUIT SALSA WITH SWEET TORTILLA CHIPS

- 2 pints strawberries (Remove stems and dice)
- 4 kiwis, peeled & diced
- 1 Granny Smith apple, diced
- 3 tablespoon orange all-fruit spread 1 orange rind, grated
- 1 pint fresh blackberries, diced
- 1 pint fresh raspberries, diced
- 1 tablespoon fresh finely chopped mint
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 6 6-inch reduced fat, flour tortillas
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 1/2 cup hot water



Preheat oven to 225-degrees F. In a large bowl, mix strawberries, kiwis, Granny Smith apple, orange fruit spread, orange rind, blackberries, raspberries, and mint. Sprinkle on the sugar and toss lightly to blend. In a small bowl, mix sugar and water. Brush the tortillas with the sugar water. Cut flour tortillas in half and each half into 6 pieces. Place on an un-greased cookie sheet and bake 10-15 minutes. Cool for 5 minutes. (This recipe is ideal to prepare a day or two ahead and refrigerate. Store in a plastic container and place in ice chest for the trip. Store the chips in a closeable plastic storage bag.)

Serving Size: 6 chips, 1/2 cup fruit mixture. Serves 12

Nutrition Information: 126 Calories; 1g Fat (8.8% calories from fat); 1g Protein; 28g Carbohydrate; 7g Dietary Fiber; 0mg Cholesterol; 167mg Sodium



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## UPCOMING EVENTS



### ONLINE GROUPS

Beginning in April  
Virtual

### TEXAS WELLNESS WORKSHOP

April 27, 2019  
Nacogdoches, TX

### ARKANSAS/OKLAHOMA WELLNESS WORKSHOP

May 4, 2019  
Siloam Springs, AR

### RESTORE: EXPERIENCING FREEDOM FROM FOOD STRONGHOLDS

May 5-7, 2019  
North East, MD

### PENNSYLVANIA WELLNESS WORKSHOP

May 8, 2019  
Oakdale, PA

### NORTH EAST WELLNESS WORKSHOP

May 19, 2019  
Wakefield, MA

### SUMMIT 2019

August 16-17, 2019  
Houston, Texas



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PHONE: (800) 727-5223 OR (713) 688-6788

TO PLACE AN ORDER: (800) 727-5223, x1002

ADDRESS: First Place For Health, 622 22nd St., Suite 100, Galveston, Texas 77550