



GOOD NEWS—INFORMATION YOU CAN USE

THAT'S MY KIND OF JOY!

I hung up the phone laughing; I could not contain myself. I just spent 40 minutes listening to a dear friend share with me her new found Joy in the Lord. She just completed the Bible study, “Forever Changed”, and she is. And she could not stop laughing at what God has done in her life! Every other phrase was interrupted with spontaneous uncontrollable joyful laughter! All I could do was listen and smile. Joy is contagious. Mother Theresa said, “Joy is the net by which we catch souls”, and she caught mine.

Rejoice – *re Joy, re joying all the time, Joy over and over.*

We are commanded to rejoice in the Lord at all times. That may seem difficult and almost impossible. It bids me ask: can Joy and sadness exist in a woman’s heart at the same time? I think so. I have great Joy that my son and daughter in law are serving Him in a hard place in the Middle East. But at the same time, I miss them both. Their obedience outweighs my sadness. I focus on their obedience and not my loss of their company.

But what about fear? Can fear and Joy coexist in a human heart? I think so. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary visit the tomb on Sunday morning. Not only do they find it empty, but they also find a fiery looking angel hanging out on the stone! The angel is terrifying, but Mary and Mary are still able to understand his message, “He is not here, He is risen!” What happens next is my point. “So the woman hurried away, afraid, yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples.” **Matt. 28:4 (NIV).** Joy overrides fear.



They did not hesitate, even in their fear. They immediately obeyed, not stopping to over think the situation. Overthinking will stop you dead in your tracks.

Joy compels us to move forward. Perhaps you’ve had a lapse in your eating, or you walked away from

a commitment, or perhaps circumstances became difficult at no fault of your own? What do we do now? We move forward in Joy! We remember His great and precious promises: the promise of heaven. One day we will be loosed from these mortal bodies and be with Him, and be like Him! And the promise of His indwelling. He abides with us and in us. I don’t have to go anywhere to pray. He is always listening to my thoughts. And the promise of His company. There is no place where God is not.

My friend and author Grace Fox says, “Joy is both a promise and a command: We experience Joy because God reigns, and because He reigns, we rejoice. “

Joy compels, let’s move forward.

Vicki Heath

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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JOY BUSTERS

“If you only knew my circumstances.” How many times do we defend a poor choice because of a pothole we encounter on our journey? The enemy works hard busting our joy with challenges to our life’s order. He intends to convince us that we should abandon our healthy habits when life gets tough.

The world’s faulty thinking teaches us to approach our problems on our own with self-reliance. We are told to pull up our own bootstraps. Then when we falter, he works overtime with feelings of shame and inadequacy. We isolate ourselves as we try to “deal with it” on our own.

Jesus understood this when he said, “...the cares of this world... choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful” (Mark 4:19). Jesus understands what it feels like to be overwhelmed. He challenges us not to be caught up in our cares and no longer focused on the Lord.

Even Paul has a perspective. He said in Phil. 1:12 “Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel.” Paul’s circumstances did not cause him to be discouraged but caused him to do more for Christ.

Like Paul, I want to focus on Christ through my hardships. He looked at his hardships as an opportunity to love and serve Christ. Paul said in Rom. 8:28 - And we know that all things work together for good to them that Love God who are the called according to the purpose.

Some of us regret how circumstances define our wellness journey. Don’t let them rob you of your joy. Instead, focus on three JOY producers:

- Jesus is our true source of joy (Hebrews 12:2). He chose joy. Stop looking at the problem.
- Obedience produces joy. Jesus says, ‘obey Me so that My joy may be in you and that your joy may be full.’ (John 15:11) This is not obedience of law and fear. It is the obedience formed from our relationship with Jesus. Lord, I desire the fullness of joy. Help me embrace obedience to your plan. Give me wisdom to sense and obey. Thank Jesus for filling me with joy. Amen.
- Yearn to know God’s word. Jeremiah tells us that God’s words are to be our joy and our heart’s delight. (Jeremiah 15:16) Today I invite you to read God’s word with the heart of a lover. Learn to delight in your beloved because he delights in you and invites you to enjoy him forever. Lord, I desire to love you with all my heart. Thank you for delighting in me. Thank you for your everlasting love and joy. Amen

Are you ready for a joy-filled wellness journey? Embrace the joy God has for your life. Say “Yes” to all God has planned.

Helen Baratta

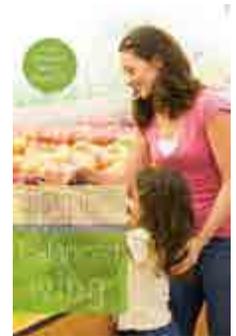
Helen Baratta Director of Development for First Place for Health. She is the author of My Place for Leadership included in the My Place Leader’s Kit and Restored! Embracing Weight Loss God’s way available at our online bookstore.



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[Bible Study with CD Balanced Living](#)



[FP4H Water Bottle](#)



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FOR HEALTH



TAKE OUT THE TRASH

A man's wisdom gives him patience; it is to his glory to overlook an offense.

PROVERBS 19:11

What an experience to be a landlord! We just evicted renters for the first time. They left the house in a huge mess! Trash was piled in each room, including the garage. Unwanted furniture littered the rooms, and the carpets were incredibly dirty. The filth on the floors, cabinets, and counters took many cleanings. The tenants even removed and ruined the garage door to get their belongings out. The job seemed to be more than my husband, and I could manage on our own. A sense of hopelessness overwhelmed us.



But as I started to work, I began to feel hopeful, knowing that the hard work would be rewarded with a clean, livable house once again. It would not happen on this day, or even after two or three days of hard work, but it would happen eventually if we worked steadily and consistently.

As I was hauling out what felt like the hundredth bag of trash, the Lord quietly reminded me that this is what hope deferred feels like. We allow a deceiver to take up residence in our lives and begin to trash the temple of the Holy Spirit. Whether through overeating, eating unhealthy foods, laziness in spiritual and physical disciplines or mental laziness, we begin to pile up garbage everywhere. We then feel hopeless and despondent, just like I felt when I first looked at the trashed house. It is here that we have a choice. We can continue to live in trashed homes, with piles of garbage, making us feel hopeless and discouraged. Or we can begin the process of fulfilling that longing within for a right relationship with our Lord that is characterized by balance in all four areas of personhood. We can choose to evict that deceitful tenant who has encouraged us to believe the lies and live the bad habits. This will not be an easy task or happen quickly. But if we are consistent, we can reclaim our house, clean up the garbage left by that tenant and live a life that pleases our Father. With God's wisdom, we can make that choice that not only glorifies Him but brings joy into our lives.

Action Item: What bags of garbage do you need to eliminate from your life to restore the hope the Father wants you to experience? Pray over this, give it considerable thought, then do not delay! Get the trash out!

Kathlee Coleman

Santa Clarita, California

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[FP4H Exercise Belt](#)

SOCIAL MEDIA





THE JOYFUL JOURNEY TO HEALTH AND HAPPINESS

How do you picture joy? After turning in my manuscript for my newest book, [Discovering Joy in Philipppians: A Creative Bible Study Experience](#), I thought I would create some lovely photos with inspiring verses on them. I opened my graphics AP and typed in “JOY.” What

I anticipated seeing were images of giggling children, cozy families, faces of smiling friends, maybe some inspiring nature shots, breathtaking sunsets or perhaps a strong, fit person reaching the pinnacle of a mountain top. NOPE. What I saw were pictures of sugary desserts: cookies, cupcakes, seven-layer chocolate cakes, ices cream, cheesecake—more and more sugar!

Righteous indignation rose up within me. “Satan, you are such a LIAR! That is not JOY. These foods lead to bondage and brokenness. God wants to give us JOY!” Phil 4:4 says, “Rejoice in the Lord always; again, I will say, rejoice. (Phil 4:4 ESV) To rejoice is a verb, an action, we take to be favorably disposed to joy and gladness. But how does one choose joy, especially when feeling depressed or, discouraged? How can we “choose joy” in our wellness journey?”

God promises to show us the path to joy: You will show me the way of life, granting me the joy of your presence and the pleasures of living with you forever. (Psalm 16:11)

Look UP: Go on a joy hunt. Nehemiah 8:10 says, “The joy of the Lord is your strength,” When I began my wellness journey, my life was in crisis because of a forced job change accompanied with both my husband and I getting bad news from our doctors as a result of too many years burning the candle at both ends. I gathered up an extensive list of verses on joy. I printed them, studied them, memorized them, prayed them, posted them on sticky notes on my mirror, on my computer, and I hung them as art around my home. I needed to soak in joy in order to hang on to joy. I discovered that this inner decision to have a heaven-hearted focus invigorated me. Joy motivated me to be

more active—I found myself dancing, running, and most recently, my husband snapped a photo of me jumping for joy!

Look BACK: Retrace God’s faithfulness in your life. I keep a JOY JOURNAL, a scrapbook of sorts that records prayers and praises. Using colorful pens, write verses of peace, hope, love, and joy around each photo or request. You might want to download a Prayer and Praise Page or the Radiating Joy bullet journal page to record moments of joy. As you look back at God’s faithfulness, it motivates you to make wise food and health choices for your future. For me, banking on God’s faithful character, through First Place, I have lost more than 50 pounds, and I am happier, healthier than I was 20 years ago.

Look OUT: Don’t go through tough times alone. Take a prayer walk with friends several times a week. PRAY the verses and PRAISE God for His faithful character—rejoice and revel in the promise that whatever you need to live free and well, the great “I am” is the answer. Plus, exercise accompanied with the hope found in scripture releases happy endorphins, so you gain hope and joy! Prayer-walking is a three-fold blessing, you get closer to God, to your friend—and thinner!

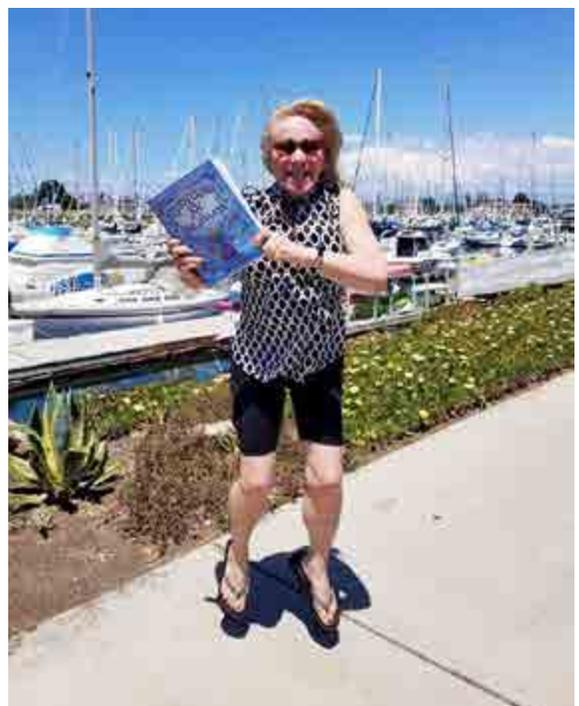
Look AHEAD: On her 70th birthday, I asked a cheery mentor who had overcome many trials and created a path of hope after the death of her spouse, “How do you hold on to joy?”

She replied, “Always plan something to look forward to.” First Place encourages us to have a sustaining motivation: the ability to keep up with your kids, teens or grandkids; being at graduations and weddings; Enjoying those big marriage moments like our upcoming 40th wedding anniversary.

Pay attention to what brings you moments of personal joy, reprioritize to place more time for these healthy choices in your life, and when they happen, pause and praise God, then jump for joy!

Pam Farrel

Pam Farrel is an international speaker, author of 48 books, including her newest bestseller, [Discovering Joy in Philipppians](#). She and her husband, Bill, run Love-Wise ministry, and Pam is a leader of a Virtual First Place class. When she isn’t working at coaching, writing and speaking, you will find her with her family, including 5 grandkids; walking the beach, or kayaking near her live-aboard boat docked in Southern California. [Click here](#) to access the items mentioned in this blog and other free resources to cultivate joy.





FINDING JOY IN EATING WELL

God's beauty, glory, power, creativity, and care for us is displayed all around us in the beauty of nature. We can find such peace in spending time in that beauty when we take a walk on a beautiful day, play with our kids in the grass, or work in the garden. It's displayed in the array of colorful fruits and vegetables that nourish our bodies. That leads us to the first of three steps to finding joy in eating well.

Take a Little Time to Enjoy the View

My favorite section of the grocery store is the produce aisle, and I want to make it yours, too. The next time you make your way through that area of the grocery store, take the time to enjoy the view. The colors, the textures, the smell of a peach. Look for something you've never tried and put it on your menu for the week.

You might try the pluot, a plum-apricot hybrid that's sweeter than either plums or apricots alone. If your pluot isn't ripe, put it in a brown paper bag at room temperature (you can do this with other unripe fruits, too). Pack it in a lunch bag, eat it for a snack or add it to salsa

in place of tomatoes for a new twist on a dip. You can even toss it in a salad with baby greens, goat cheese and walnuts drizzled with balsamic vinaigrette.

Enjoy Meal Planning and Prep

To get excited, start with the basics and learn how to put simple ingredients together. Clean up your refrigerator so you know what you have and can find it easily - being organized will help you meal plan. Ask around - your FP4H class, your friends, family -- find out what their go-to meals are when they don't have a lot of time. Knowing the recipe is tried, and true will make you more confident. Make a SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Timely) goal for cooking at home. It might just be one night a week to start. Or it might be three times a week. It should be specific, but doable.



Break Bread and Eat Together with Glad & Sincere Hearts (Acts 2:46)

Eating together can be one of life's greatest pleasures, when we take the joy out of it, it just becomes another chore on our to-do list. It can be an opportunity to connect with family and friends, to turn off from our devices, and relax. It's hard to find happiness at the dinner table when you're focused on other things. If finding joy at mealtimes is difficult, resist the urge to have other distractions around mealtime. Sit down. Savor each bite. Be mindful about what you're eating.

There is nothing better than eating something that you've prepared at home, especially when it's nutritious and delicious. Odds are that if you have healthy options on hand, you are more likely to eat them. You will feel accomplished and energized. So, let's find joy in eating well, enjoying the view, prepping our meals, and breaking bread with a glad and sincere heart.

Lisa Lewis

Lisa Lewis is the author of Healthy Happy Cooking. Her cooking skills have been a part of First Place for Health wellness weeks and other events for many years. She provided recipes for 15 of the First Place for Health Bible studies and is a contributing author in Better Together and Healthy Holiday Living. She partners with community networks, including the Real Food Project, to provide free healthy cooking classes to communities.



HEALTHY RECIPES

ASIAN CHICKEN WRAP

Note: These are great for a picnic lunch. If you have a fire or outdoor grill at your picnic, grill the tortillas for 2 to 3 minutes until grill marks appear all around them. Remember to store these wraps in your cooler until it is time to serve them.

- 4 8-inch flour tortillas (preferably whole wheat)
- 4 oz light cream cheese
- 1/2 cup Asian plum sauce
- 1/2 cup chopped green onions
- 3 tbsp minced peeled fresh ginger
- 1 small (2lb) roasted chicken
- 1 bunch watercress, stemmed



Spread a thin layer of cream cheese on the tortillas and follow with a thin layer of plum sauce. Divide evenly and sprinkle green onions and ginger over tortillas. Cut chicken meat in thin slices and place on top of each tortilla. Lay watercress on top of chicken and roll tortillas into tight rolls. Serves 4.

Nutritional Information: 413 calories (26.4% calories from fat); 12g fat; 21g protein; 54g carbohydrate; 3g dietary fiber; 46mg cholesterol; 670mg sodium.

GRILLED CHICKEN WITH CHIPOTLE BARBECUE SAUCE

- 1 cup fresh or frozen dark sweet cherries, pitted and chopped
- 1/2 cup reduced-sodium chicken broth
- 1/3 cup cherry preserves
- 1/3 cup ketchup
- 2 tbsp cider vinegar
- 1 1/2 tsp minced canned chipotle peppers in adobo sauce
- 1 1/4 tsp dried thyme
- 1/2 tsp ground allspice
- 2 lbs boneless, skinless chicken breasts, trimmed of fat



Stir cherries, broth, cherry preserves, ketchup, vinegar, chipotle peppers, thyme and allspice in a small bowl. Transfer to a shallow dish that is large enough to hold the chicken. Add the chicken and turn to coat thoroughly. Cover and marinate in the refrigerator for at least 2 hours (or overnight). Preheat the grill to high and oil the grill rack. Remove the chicken from the marinade and transfer the marinade to a medium skillet. Reduce the grill heat to medium and grill the chicken until cooked it is through and no longer pink in the middle (about 7 to 9 minutes per side). Bring the marinade to a boil; reduce heat to a simmer and cook until the sauce is reduced by about half (about 12 to 15 minutes). Let the chicken cool slightly and then serve with the sauce. Serve with 1 cup mixed greens with 2 tablespoons fat-free dressing, one serving of Oven-Baked Sweet Potato Fries (see recipe below), and one dinner roll. Serves 8.

Nutritional Information: 180 calories (8.4% calories from fat); ; 2g fat; 27g protein; 14g carbohydrate; 1g dietary fiber; 66mg cholesterol; 249mg sodium.



HEALTHY RECIPES

SOUTHERN BLACK-EYED PEA SALAD

- 2 tbsp cooking oil
- 4 cups yellow summer squash, quartered lengthwise and sliced thin
- 2 to 4 fresh chopped jalapeño peppers, seeded if desired
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tsp cumin seeds, crushed
- 2 15-oz cans black-eyed peas, rinsed and drained
- 1/4 cup sliced green onions
- 2 tbsp snipped fresh cilantro or parsley
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 2 cups chopped tomatoes



In a large skillet, heat oil over medium heat. Add squash, peppers, garlic, and cumin; cook for 5 to 6 minutes or until squash is crisp-tender, stirring occasionally. Remove from heat and cool. In a large bowl, combine squash mixture, black-eyed peas, green onions, cilantro or parsley, and salt. Cover and chill. When you are ready to serve, toss the pea mixture together with the 2 cups chopped tomatoes. Serve with whole-wheat crackers or pita bread. Serves 8 (3/4-cup servings).

Nutritional Information: 205 calories; (18.2% calories from fat); 4g fat; 12g protein; 32g carbohydrate; 7g dietary fiber; 0mg cholesterol; 147mg sodium.

BERRY DESSERT NACHOS

- 3/4 cup fat-free or light dairy sour cream
- 3/4 cup frozen light whipped dessert topping, thawed
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 1/8 tsp ground cinnamon
- 3 8-inch plain or whole wheat flour tortillas
- 1 tbsp melted butter
- 2 tsp sugar
- 1/8 tsp ground cinnamon
- 3 cups fresh raspberries and/or blackberries
- 2 tbsp sliced almonds, toasted
- 1 tbsp grated semisweet chocolate



Preheat oven to 400° F. In a small bowl, stir together the sour cream, whipped dessert topping, vanilla, and cinnamon. Cover and chill. Lightly brush both sides of each tortilla with melted butter. In a small bowl, stir sugar and cinnamon together and sprinkle over the tortillas. Cut each tortilla into 8 wedges and arrange on two ungreased baking sheets. Bake for 8 to 10 minutes or until crisp. Cool completely. When ready to serve, divide the tortilla wedges among six dessert plates and top with raspberries and/or blackberries and sour cream mixture. Sprinkle with almonds and grated chocolate. Serves 6.

Nutritional Information: 229 calories (33.0% calories from fat); 8g fat; 5g protein; 34g carbohydrate; 6g dietary fiber; 7mg cholesterol; 205mg sodium.



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HEALTHY RECIPES

PEACHY LEMONADE

- 3 cups cold water
- 1 cup lemon juice
- 3/4 cup sugar substitute
- Lemon slices
- 1 16-oz can of peach slices (juice pack), chilled and undrained

Prepare Lemonade as above. Place half of the can of peach slices in a blender with 1 cup of the Lemonade. Cover and blend until smooth and then pour into a large pitcher. Repeat with remaining undrained peaches and 1 cup Lemonade. Stir in remaining Lemonade and serve over ice. If desired, garnish with peach slices. Serves 4.

Nutritional Information: 42 calories; (1.1% calories from fat); trace fat; 1g protein; 12g carbohydrate; 1g dietary fiber; 0mg cholesterol; 4mg sodium.



UPCOMING EVENTS



SUMMIT 2019 WORTH IT!

August 16-17, 2019
Houston, TX

NEVADA WELLNESS WORKSHOP

September 7, 2019
Reno, NV

WELLNESS WEEK

October 10-17, 2019
Round Top, TX

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