

Follow a Formula to Keep the Enemy Away?

I'm all about the formula. I want to know what steps to take to get the results I want. From the book I'm reading to ensure a high level of productivity in my job all the way down to the recipe I'm using tonight to cook dinner.

(Who's laughing? I cook ... occasionally.)

The recipe is a formula promising that if I follow the directions carefully, I too can create a culinary masterpiece. Thus the results I want.

There are formulas taught by others growing up that I've learned don't always work. Here are a few:

My grandparents taught me that if I get a good job and work hard until retirement, then social security and pension will take care of me through the "golden years."

(Job + hard work = financial security)

My parents taught me that if I go to a good college, choose a degree plan and land a job in that field, then I'll have the career I want and be happy

(Good college + the right degree = your dream career)

Many of us know how much these formulas do not work. Yet, we buy into them because they are a great measuring stick. Something to look at and see just how well you're measuring up.

Although we know these formulas are not reality, there are a few of them that parents continue to buy into that simply aren't true. Try this one on for size: ***Right neighborhood + right school + right sports = well-rounded child or church on***

Sunday mornings + church on Wednesday nights + baptism + attendance at other church functions = Christ follower that may make minor mistakes but none that are particularly earth shattering such as teen pregnancy, DUI or addiction to porn.

Let me break it to you gently. These formulas don't work either. So forget them.

Here's what I'm learning today:

Love the Lord my God with all my heart, soul, mind and strength.

Love my neighbor as myself.

Teach my kids to do the same.

Leave the rest to God.

Gina McClain is a speaker, writer and children's ministry director at Faith Promise Church in Knoxville, Tennessee. Her marriage to Kyle keeps her marginally sane, while their three kids (Keegan, Josie and Connor) keep her from taking herself too seriously. Visit her blog at [for more information about her ministry.](#)