

How Do You Invest Your Time for Eternal Value?

Lately the topic of longevity has been on my mind. Mostly because I'm coming up on my third-year anniversary at Faith Promise Church.

Three years doesn't seem like a lot of time. It's really not.

But when I'm thinking ahead, I tend to think in five-year increments. Maybe it's the remnants of my Stephen Covey 7 *Habits* days, when I'd ask myself the classic question:

Where do I want to be in five years?

The question itself is tied to the prospect of personal development and professional progress. But in light of the prospect of longevity, the question takes a different twist for me. Right now I'm asking myself:

Where do I want to invest myself over the next five years?

Several weeks ago, Carey Nieuwhof posted some great thoughts on what you lose when you keep switching jobs. That post has me processing a lot about investment and the value of leadership growth when you decide to stay and stick things out.

Although the consideration of leaving Faith Promise Church has never entered my mind, Carey's post helped me see the prospect of what lies before me. At this point, I have three years invested in fpKids. And the first three years have been full of growth for me as a leader.

Yet I'm looking at the next 24 months of ministry, and I anticipate a season that holds promise for greater growth and reward than the first 36 months.

Why? Because at this point, any challenges I face within my ministry are a result of my leadership, no one else's. Any systematic problems, safety concerns or culture issues are the fruit of my leadership over the past three years. No one else's.

That means that if I want to see great growth in fpKids in the coming months, the greatest growth must take place in me.

That's a sobering yet exciting prospect.

It forces me to ask myself difficult questions, like:

- Where am I resisting change?
- Where is God leading me ... really?
- What is God asking me to do that I'm not willing or am afraid to do?

Scripture says there is a season for everything. And I'm anticipating a season of digging, plowing, weeding and planting in the next few years of my life. A season of un-learning and re-learning. A season of great refinement.

But if I stick it out, the benefits far outweigh the cost.

I have this crazy idea that if I can retain a willing, teachable, moldable heart, then God will faithfully use it to lead through me in a way that is greater than I could ask, think or imagine (Eph 3:20).

Gina McClain is a speaker, writer and children's ministry director at Faith Promise Church in Knoxville, Tenn. 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.](#)