

Recipe for life

Why is it so important when you're baking to begin with a recipe? I guess if you have baked something today, you will have followed a recipe. A recipe gives us the list of ingredients, how much of it to use, the method and some idea of what the end product may look like.

Although I have seen some of the series of the Great British Bake Off, it is the programme which takes a look back at the week's episode-'An Extra Slice' which I enjoy more! It includes a critical and light hearted summary of what the bakers got up to and also contributions from the audience at home and in the studio. These range from the spectacular to the disastrous! I guess I could say that my baking lies somewhere in between! The all-important test comes with the appearance and the taste of these bakes. There have been some very bizarre end products - a cake that was meant to look like a bee but in reality looked like a tiger! and the use of strange ingredients-Viennese Whirls made from sweet potato and coconut!

Cookery books, recipes in magazines, hand me down family favourites, and in recent years, Google are usually the inspiration for our bakes. I speak here as a reluctant baker- just ask me about the 1000 and one ways that a victoria sandwich or lemon meringue or rice pudding can turn out! I may follow the same recipe, same quantities and same method but the end result is often different. A far cry from Mary Berry's book called 'Foolproof cooking' which states will never let you down with its tried and tested recipes!

Recipe for life happens to be the title of Mary Berry's autobiography-the professional and personal story behind her success. If you have read this book you will know that it is an honest account of her life with its ups and downs leading to her recent success on the Great British Bake off.

Each of us have a story to tell but like my victoria sandwich or lemon meringue there are lots of variants and the end products all very different!!!! Although our lives may have similar ingredients - women, family, work, homes, health, education, finances etc they

may vary greatly. I have been fortunate to have had a loving family, gain a qualification, able to work and never been in need materially. But I have experienced loss of unborn children, debilitating sickness, upheaval of relocation, struggle with anxieties and concerns and the stress of the workplace. I fail, have bad attitudes, act and think wrongly. These mix up the ingredients, vary the method and therefore the end product. So I am not presuming to share my Recipe for life.....I know that mine is not foolproof made up of tried and tested ingredients to give a perfect result!! Far from it.....

Some of you may have been compiling your own list of ingredients for a recipe for life- good looks, good health, happiness, money ,family, a good job, peace etc. We may have the perfect ingredients but we all know that a perfect result is not guaranteed.

So what about a foolproof recipe for life???? I have to look to the author of life-the writer of the recipe to find answers in God's recipe book for life -the Bible. God is the author of my life-the one who wrote the recipe. He determines my steps and gave Jesus to show me the method for the best recipe for my life.

There are recipes and methods in God's word which help. 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart soul mind and strength and your neighbour as yourself'

Or the sermon on the mount, or the full armour of God- Fruits of the Spirit in Galatians or one of my favourite lists....Micah 6v 8-'What does God require of you-to act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with your God'

There are key ingredients in the recipe-love, hope, trust,faith,God ,Jesus, others, forgiveness,prayer.....these all point to God's perfect plan for our lives in sending Jesus to bring us back into relationship with Him and to give meaning and purpose to our lives. His plan of salvation . If you are a Christian the method that God uses in your life to make you more like Jesus will differ but that is the ultimate goal -the perfect bake in Heaven.

One shortcoming that I have had over many years is the cutting out and collecting of many recipes from magazines etc and a number of cookery books-I don't really know why I still keep them tucked away when I know for sure that

I will never use them. It's a bit like us if we have a Bible or know what God is saying but we don't do anything about it-ignore or just fail to get those ingredients out of the cupboard -the end bake will never materialise.

Get that recipe book open, let God work his method of changing you into that woman of God he intended.

And if you like me have had a number of disastrous or disappointing final bakes, take heart we are not alone-even the winners of the Great British Bake Off didn't always get it right. God's heart is one of grace and forgiveness and he isn't looking for that perfect bake but one which responds to His instruction and acknowledges that He is the Master Baker!.....

And I guess that is the key-is God your Master Baker??...Do you acknowledge him as your Creator and sustainer of life-the One who invites you to partake in the Recipe of Life with Him at the centre.