

## IF YOU EVER FEEL LIKE GIVING UP...

BY STEVE BROWN

Faithfulness isn't critical when a crisis erupts, because we usually jump in full of adrenaline. We instinctually do whatever it takes to survive during the initial period of a crisis. However, faithfulness becomes critical when a crisis moment turns into a chronic reality.

Oddly enough, my tutor for learning about faithfulness this year has been an Omega Juicer. When the crisis of my wife Lea's breast cancer diagnoses hit late last winter, we jumped into learning everything we could about assisting Lea's healing. And leveraging the powerful properties of raw vegetable concentrates was one discipline we adopted.

This has meant making fresh juice daily. It was easy at first. The adrenaline from the crisis powered my slicing and dicing. Each glass of fresh juice was delivered with joy and pride. There was a hope and expectation that we would see a tangible difference in Lea's health.

However, as those early days of crisis turned into weeks and months of a chronic reality, my natural energy waned. On average I spend about half an hour every day slicing vegetables, feeding the juicer, unclogging the juicer and cleaning up. Juicing wasn't convenient to my schedule. It didn't add more life to my day. As a result, taking the time to juice each day became harder and harder. It was hard to tell whether the juice was making a real difference. As the days turned to weeks and then months, I began to wonder if I should just give up.

Can you relate? Does any of my journey with juicing resonate with your journey in leadership this year? Maybe you jumped into the crisis of COVID-19 with energy fueled by adrenaline. You pivoted, innovated and did whatever was required.

But as those early days of crisis have turned into a chronic reality—with no end in sight—maybe you are feeling the effects of the grind? Maybe your energy and joy are low? Maybe you are feeling long on burden and short on appreciation? Maybe



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you are wondering if what you are doing is actually making a difference? Maybe you are wondering if you should just give up?

If you can relate to these thoughts and feelings, I can point you to some recent posts on finding support, overcoming discouragement, finding fresh perspective, reflecting and grieving and keeping your head clear. But I also want to point you toward the lesson my Omega Juicer has been teaching me each day—faithfulness.

I've been learning that the benefit of juicing isn't about how much I enjoy it. It's not about how it makes me feel or how much appreciation I receive. It's not even about how much impact I can see or measure. The thirty minutes a day is actually about seeking to consistently express love for my wife. I have been discovering that this daily juicing discipline has a lot to do with learning faithfulness.

Right now, maybe more than I have known in my lifetime, I believe Christian leadership is about faithfulness. This faithfulness is an act of loving God even when leadership isn't fun, easy, applauded by others or even making a noticeable or measurable difference.

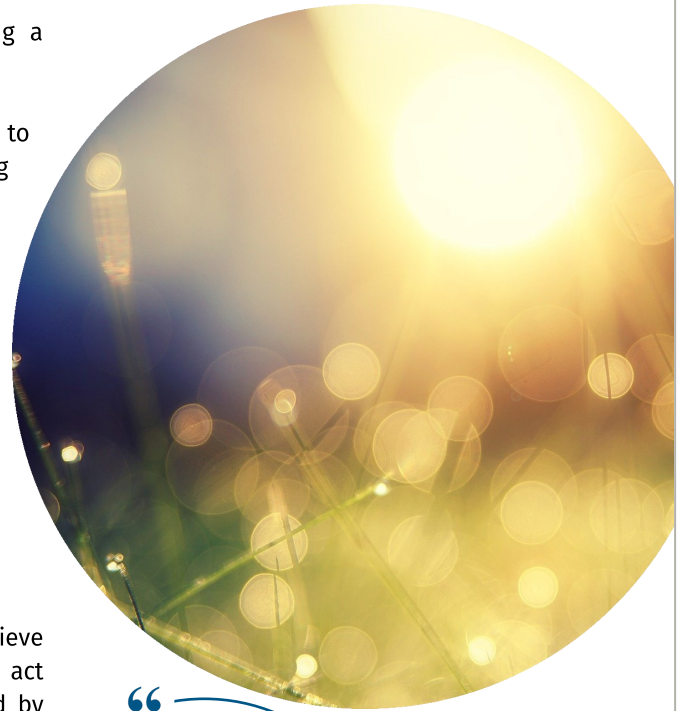
God sees your faithfulness and delights in it. Thankfully, we do not need to try to drum up faithfulness on our own. Though faithfulness is a choice and commitment to persevere, faithfulness is ultimately a fruit of the Spirit. Its source flows from the unquenchable resources of our faithful God.

As you seek to live and lead differently in these difficult days, don't lose heart. Don't give up. Keep your eyes on our faithful Jesus. Abide abundantly in Jesus. Rest in Immanuel—God with you.

'But the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen you and protect you from the evil one. We have confidence in the Lord that you are doing and will continue to do the things we command. May the Lord direct your hearts into God's love and Christ's perseverance.'

2 Thessalonians 1:3-5

Dr. Steve A. Brown  
President, Arrow Leadership



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