

GIVING

by Javier Rodriguez

To give is a simple concept but the act of giving is not. The act of giving is nothing more than to let go, and in order for us to let go, we have to change the mentality that we are the rightful owner of something. We all know that there are rules and boundaries in the world to maintain order and peace. But when basic human rights and needs are in jeopardy, as followers of Christ, not only do we have to open those boundaries, but also our hearts and our arms . . . wide open. Psalm 24:1 reads, “The earth is the Lord’s, and all it contains, the world, and those who dwell in it.”



Letting go is a complex process and holding on to something is a very common human behavior. To receive is the very nature of humanity. When we are born, our first instinct is to receive. We crawl and cry in search for food and comfort. How do we grow from the need to receive to the consciousness of giving? Some of us never do, but those who do; it is because they have experienced the power of giving. When we give, we create. When we give we become the striking hand of God that changes lives forever.

I am a living example and the beneficiary of the act of giving.



Six years ago I was terminally ill. It felt that my time on earth was expiring. But that wasn't God's plan.

I received a living kidney donation that changed my life and the lives of those around me. Thanks to that act of giving, today my old man can still have a cup of coffee with me; my mom can still embrace her youngest son; my children are able to receive the advice of a father; my friends and I can still laugh together.



Thanks to that act of giving, I was able to walk my daughter to prom and one day, God willing, I will walk her down the aisle.

But most important, I can still give back to others. It is a great life, a great opportunity that would not have been possible without the courage of Humbelina. Throughout the whole process she was calm and determined. With great humbleness she mentally and physically detached of her kidney by trusting God.



To give is to trust.

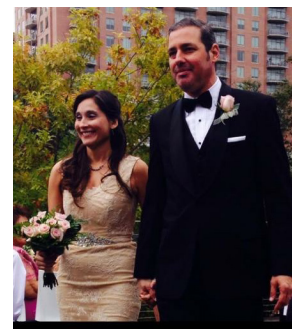
That gift took me out of the darkness and into the light.

It removed the uncertainty and sadness from my life.

It got rid of fear and brought peace.

That gift took me out of a rocky path to a happy and joyous path.

And the best part, I can still make love to my wife.



Today she is not expecting a reward or recognition, even though she deserves it.

Jesus taught us in Matthew 6:4 “Your giving should be done in secret. Your Father can see what is done in secret, and he will reward you”. But to recognize someone’s great gesture is also an act of giving. However, no recognition brings more fulfillment to her soul than the joy of seeing how her gift made a difference and transformed my life - and the life of so many others - for the better. When you give with trust and with the right motives, the act of giving becomes reciprocal; the giver becomes the recipient and the recipient learns how to give back to others.

I am not encouraging all of you to donate an organ, (but if you can, go for it!). I encourage you to give; to find a way to give.

Imagine how your contribution to this church can change people’s lives. Imagine how future generations can benefit from this church as we are benefiting today thanks to the contributions of fellow Christians who attended this church in the past. When you give, you plant a seed. A seed that grows strong while your faith grows stronger because it is what God call us to do. The reality is that your time of service and your monetary contribution is necessary to continue.

May God guide you through this process.

Javier

A note from Pastor Bob. In the years that Javi and Humbelina have attended Second Union, it is clear they have not let their struggles define them. As a kidney recipient, Javier undergoes constant testing and there is an ever-present possibility of rejection. Yet he and Humbelina have an admiral approach to life - they live every moment to the fullest. Since his kidney transplant, Javier has run the Miami Marathon, together they have climbed Juana Pichu in Machu Pichu, they’ve hiked the Camino de Santiago, they kayaked in Whistler, Canada. And they’ve made it a priority to serve the Lord by delivering supplies and furniture after Hurricane María and they are both presently serving on 2UC Council.

