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#anythingelse?

Act 29: Anything Else

by Alex Elsaesser

Today we're looking at going that extra mile to change someone's life. What can you do to lavish generosity on those who ask you for something? Matthew 5:40–42 tells us that if we're asked for our shirt, we need to hand over our coat as well, and if we're asked to go one mile, we should go two. Today's challenge could change your life as well as someone else's.

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."

(Romans 15:13 NIV)

Last year, I signed up for 40acts. I was looking forward to finding out how I could become more generous. The first few challenges were fun. I was really enjoying myself. Then one morning, I read the reflection about following the leading of the Holy Spirit. Several days later, as I was getting ready for work, I heard God's voice telling me, 'Give away one of your kidneys.' This was certainly one step beyond what I was expecting.

It's not the kind of thing one usually hears, so, shaken, and not knowing if this was even a possibility, I googled 'kidney donation'. I found there was a special category of donation: 'Altruistic Living Kidney Donation', a way of giving a kidney to a stranger anonymously.

I duly followed the leading of the Holy Spirit, as encouraged by 40acts. I contacted the Renal Live Donor Co-ordinators at Morriston Hospital near Swansea. After a multitude of blood tests, I had a two-hour interview with a clinical psychologist. She wanted to know if I was in the right mental state to proceed. You may be asking the same question!

I passed all the tests, but I was feeling a bit wobbly. I then found out that someone we knew had donated a kidney to his mother. You'd never guess that this six-foot, healthy sportsman in his early 50s has only one kidney. He's a great ambassador for the experience.

My story took an unexpected twist in early February. My transplant surgeon told me that he and his team felt because of a previous operation for appendicitis, the risk of the surgery was too high. I should not proceed. I confess I was disappointed and am still trying to process the news.

However, the fact remains, God asked me to give a kidney and I was obedient to him. This experience has taught me that it's more important to obey God than to understand why he asks us to do something for him. I'm in awe of our Creator God who has a perfect plan. Whatever the future holds, I'll continue to follow where he leads me and to trust in him.



Alex Elsaesser recently retired from working in a children's charity for disabled children. He and Renie have nine children, the youngest having Down Syndrome. He enjoys cycling and helping out with disabled skiing.

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