

## BRIBERY VERSUS EXTORTION

There are two sensitive issues Christians in business struggle with—bribery and extortion. I wish to share what I have learned, baka lang kasi makatulong.

To bribe is shochad in Hebrew which means to give a gift with a manipulative intent, given to hide a wrong. To extort is ashaq in Hebrew which means to oppress, or to rob a person who wants to do what is right and comply with the requirements of the law, even if the requirements put him in an inconvenient position. It is bribery when we give gifts to avoid these requirements and penalties. But if we have complied and someone oppresses us by imposing an unlawful burden, that is extortion.

When we bribe, the sin is on us and the one who receives it. We sin because our intention is to hide our wrong, but the other person also sins because he will have to twist the law in order to accommodate our gift. Bribery perverts justice. But extortion is different, because the sin is on the extortionists. Ezekiel 18:18 says "As for his father, because he practiced extortion, robbed his brother and did what was not good among his people, behold, he will die for his iniquity."

There are two ways to respond to extortion: we can make a stand or we can give in. I make a stand when my personal faith is on the line and the losses will just be mine to bear. But I give in when the welfare of others are at stake and when they will have to bear the losses with me. Either way, I make sure that I have no wrong to hide and no laws to twist. When I am sure of this, I take comfort in the fact that the extortionist has not sinned against me but against the true Owner of my business—God Himself. God delivered me during the times I made a stand in the past. And I know He will deal with the extortionist, according to Ezekiel 18:18, when I give in in order to protect others. I hope this helps.