

WE FILIPINOS, IN GENERAL, ARE NOT KIND!

The 2019 SEA Games have become a source of disappointment for many, including to many Christians. Sadly, the situation showed that we, as Filipinos, are not kind! We were quick to confront the mistakes of the organizers, believing that this is our obligation as citizens of this country. One Facebook post even said, "If we did not complain, they would not have replaced the kikiam meals with sumptuous buffet!" Really? It was later revealed that the kikiam story was not true.

But this post is not about the SEA Games, but who we are as Filipinos. Most of us are quick to confront the mistakes of others believing that we are following to Matthew 18:15, which teaches, "If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother." While we are good at doing what the first part of the verse is saying, we fail to complete what the Lord is telling us to do as we disregard the second part of the verse. It says that when we show our brothers his fault, we should do this so that we can win him over! What does this mean? And, win him over from what?

To answer this question, we should consider what Paul said in Galatians 6:1, "Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness..." To restore means to complete again, and to win over means to set the person free from what enslaves him.

I must confess that I grew up believing that it is my responsibility to confront the mistakes of the people around me. I would force them to admit their sins and tell them to correct their mistakes or else... But most of them would fight back, to show me that they have done nothing wrong. So these confrontations often ended as painful exercises.

When I understood Matthew 18:15 and Galatians 6:1 better, I changed my ways. I realized that the reason why we should approach our brothers in a spirit of gentleness is that our purpose should be to restore, and not just to show him his faults.

Pero you may say, "If I do that, aabuso siya." Paul did not say that we should exempt him from the consequences of his action, but in kindness, help him get out of the difficult situation he may be in. We should do this to also help those who may be affected by his mistake. I discovered that when we do this, the person in sin will be more cooperative, even if he needs to be penalized for his blunder.

Sana, we can all be kinder to each other by assuming that everybody wants to do a good job, and that nobody wants to fail. Since we all commit mistakes, we should always be willing to help each other. This is the attitude that Paul was telling us to develop in Philippians 2:3-4: "Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others."