

**JOJO “JOLAS” LASTIMOSA****Faithful and True****Ruby Ann Kagaoan – Calo**

*Isabelo “Jojo” Lastimosa, better known to practically every Filipino, young and not-so-young alike, as “Jolas,” started playing basketball at the age of seven. Currently an Assistant Coach for the Alaska Aces, the PBA team of Alaska Milk Corporation, Jolas is continuing the winning tradition, having won two championships so far as part of the coaching staff.*

“I have been a basketball player most of my adult life. After playing professional basketball for fifteen years and winning ten championships, I retired from playing at the end of the 2002 PBA season at the age of thirty eight,” said Jolas of his sterling career with the Philippine Basketball Association (PBA). “I consider being chosen as one of the twenty five greatest players in PBA history as my greatest achievement. There are thousands who have played and thousands more who have aspired to be in the PBA, and to be chosen as one of the twenty five is quite awesome.”

For sometime since he committed himself to follow Jesus Christ as His personal Lord and Savior in 1986 at the age of twenty two, Jolas wondered what God wanted him to do. “Missions was always there, but nothing really clicked. So I continued to wonder. Then I realized that God called me to be faithful and true to Him in all circumstances.”

Jolas expresses himself as faithful and true through his relationships.

“To be sensitive to the needs of the people around me, be an encouragement to those who are down, be a shoulder to cry on when somebody is in pain, lend an ear to someone who has something to say, be committed to my wife and children, and share my faith to those who want to listen,” Jolas said of his calling in Christ.

From the point-of-view of those who have been watching Jolas' life, the greatest testimony of this living sports legend is his faithfulness as a husband and father.

“When I was single and not yet a follower of Christ, I had girlfriends, but I was not serious with any of them. Still, the thought of having a family in the future was always in

my plans. In fact, when I was in elementary, I already mapped out in my mind that when I finish college at twenty two, I would get married at twenty three."

Even as a young boy, Jolas always saw himself raising his own family. So when he reached his twenties, he was already looking for a lifetime partner.

"It was not until I became a born-again Christian that I seriously thought about settling down," he said. "I realized then that God would have only one person for me. So I prayed to God to give me a woman whom I could share my life with."

The Bible passage that guided Jolas in identifying his lifetime partner was 2 Corinthians 6: 14-16, which states:

Do not be yoked together with unbelievers.

For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common?

Or what fellowship can light have with darkness?

What harmony is there between Christ and Belial?

What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever?

What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols?

For we are the temple of the living God.

As God has said: "I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people."

"The Bible taught me about choosing a partner who believes in God in the same way I do. This might look like a pretty selfish prayer when I thought about it, but in reality, this was actually a pretty serious prayer request because it would have a lifetime effect on me and on the person I am with," Jolas explained.

"When I think about it, the verses make a lot of sense in choosing a partner, because if two people believe in different sets of values, then it is going to be very difficult to get along."

Jolas takes this Bible passage further by applying it to the choice of people he associates with. "These verses do not merely apply as regards my choosing a wife but

generally in all aspects of association, be it with people I hang out with or business contacts. God emphatically prohibits such associations." The imprint of this Bible passage found in 2 Corinthians is clearly observed in Jolas' family life.

"That decision I made twenty years ago to seek God for a life partner has impacted not only myself and my wife but my children as well. We have become more aware of the importance of seeking God first and His righteousness before anything else. As a couple, we are praying that people will see the kind of relationship we have as we put Christ in our midst. We know that marriage is not always going to be easy, but when difficulty arises, we know that God is only a prayer away. Always."

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