

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: **1Timothy 5:8, 18.**
But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith, and is worse than an unbeliever. **18** For the Scripture says, "YOU SHALL NOT MUZZLE THE OX WHILE HE IS THRESHING," and "The laborer is worthy of his wages."
- B. It seems to be that:
1. In the 1960s it was the age of the anti-establishment, hippies and yuppies.
 2. In the 1970s it was the age of drugs and the explosion of rock and roll music.
 3. In the 1980s it was the "me generation."
 4. In the 1990s it is being politically correct, homosexuality, and ...**the sin of gambling.**
- C. Gambling is almost as old as civilization itself. Gambling devices have been found in ancient Babylon, Greece and the American Indian. Loaded dice have also been discovered in the ruins of Pompeii. Dr. Eric Plaut says, "Gambling has been a part of every known society. What has changed in the past decade is that it is now publicly endorsed."
- D. Dr. Howard Shaffer figures that gambling has increased in American adults from 60% to 80% in the last two decades. Some estimates are as high as 88%. The spirit which makes gambling "fun" is the possibility of getting what belongs to someone else without giving anything in return.
- E. Contrary to what the public is often led to believe, state lotteries provide only 2 cents on the dollar, 3 at the most. Though most Floridians believe the lottery provides a healthy chunk of the education budget, the state's education commission estimated that in 1989-90 the lottery provided only 3% of the budget.
- F. Gambling is often called a voluntary tax, and it is well known that the poor and uneducated are taxed proportionately more. A study of the Connecticut and Massachusetts lotteries revealed that they were the equivalent of a 60-90% tax on lower-income groups.
- G. God's word says, "Thou shall not covet" both in the OT law (Ex. 20:17) and in the NT of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (Rom. 13:9). Thus, God's word does not condemn gambling because it is risk taking or chance, but because of the strong covetous desire to take another's property without giving him a fair exchange for that property.

I. GAMBLING DEFINED.

- A. Gambling is defined in *Webster's New World Dictionary* as: "To play games of chance for advantage; to bet, wager; an act or undertaking involving risk or loss."
- B. Yet, few realize how much the odds are against them. A person is more likely;
- to die in a car crash (6,000 to 1)
 - to die in an airline crash (500,000 to 1).
 - to be eaten by shark (1 million to 1).
 - to be struck by lightening (2 million to 1)..... than to win the typical state lottery.
- C. The odds of winning the average state lottery is 5 million to 1 against you; the FL lottery is 14 million to 1 against you.

II. WHY GAMBLING IS WRONG.

- A. Admittedly there is not a single passage of Scripture that states, "Thou shalt not gamble." And, at times, some will seek to justify their actions by pointing this out. Gambling violates many NT principles.
- B. Six reasons why gambling is wrong according to the teaching of God's divine Word:
1. Gambling is motivated by the characteristics of selfishness, covetousness, and greed.
Xians are to guard their influence (1Th. 5:22; Rom. 12:9).

(1Th 5:22) ...abstain from every form of evil.

(Rom 12:9) Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good.

2. Gambling violates the “golden rule” (Mt. 7:12).

“Therefore, however you want people to treat you, so treat them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.”

It also violates the command to love our neighbor (Mt. 22:39).

“The second is like it, ‘YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.’”

Gambling creates an unnecessary risk causing one person to gain at the risk of another.

3. Gambling also violates the NT principle of stewardship.

a. God will hold us responsible for the use we make of those things He has provided us. No man has the right to misuse or abuse the gracious hand of God. We do not have the right to gamble away that which, in reality, belongs to God.

b. Xians by definition are people who regulate their behavior by the Scriptures. The Scriptures identify three authorized means of transferring valuables:

1. Working for pay (Mt. 10:10; Lk. 10:7; Eph. 4:28; 1Tim. 5:18).

(Mt 10:10) ...or a bag for your journey, or even two tunics, or sandals, or a staff; for the worker is worthy of his support.

(Eph 4:28) Let him who steals steal no longer; but rather let him labor, performing with his own hands what is good, in order that he may have something to share with him who has need.

2. Selling goods or property (Mt. 13:46; Ac. 2:45; 4:34; 5:4; Jas. 4:13).

(Mt 13:46) ...and upon finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it.

(Ac 2:45) ...and they began selling their property and possessions, and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need.

(Jas 4:13) Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow, we shall go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit.”

3. Free-will offerings or donations without expecting a return (Lk. 6:30, 34-35; 10:33-35; Ac. 20:35; 2Cor. 8, 9).

(Lk 6:30, 34-35) “Give to everyone who asks of you, and whoever takes away what is yours, do not demand it back.” 34 “And if you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, in order to receive back the same amount. “But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men.”

Gambling will not fit into any of these categories.

4. Gambling promotes laziness within men and ignores the NT work ethic (Gen. 2:15; Eph. 4:28; 2Th. 3:10).

(Gen 2:15) Then the LORD God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it.

(2Th 3:10) For even when we were with you, we used to give you this order: if anyone will not work, neither let him eat.

a. As the gambler seeks to make his money and fortune through slot machines, lotteries and races. He is plagued with the idea of getting something for nothing.

b. Gambling conflicts with the work ethic which is so clearly taught in the Bible (Ac. 20:35; Eph. 4:28; 2Th. 3:8-12; Gen. 3:19).

(Ac 20:35) “In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner you must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’”

(Gen 3:19) By the sweat of your face You shall eat bread, Till you return to the ground, Because from it you were taken; For you are dust, And to dust you shall return.”

5. Gambling is the breeding ground for dishonesty and deceit.

a. Gamblers resort to stealing and lying and other illicit ways to acquire monies to sustain their habit. In a *Time* magazine article, a man told about conning his wife into letting him take out a second mortgage on their home, telling her it was for an investment. He lost the money gambling.

- b. A corrupt tree will only bring forth corrupt fruit (see Mt. 7:17-18).
- 6. Gambling is a menace to any civilized society (Prov. 14:34).
Righteousness exalts a nation, But sin is a disgrace to any people.
 - a. Gambling exploits the poor, something which God and the Bible are not silent (Amos 4:1-2). Hear this word, you cows of Bashan who are on the mountain of Samaria, Who oppress the poor, who crush the needy, Who say to your husbands, "Bring now, that we may drink!" The Lord GOD has sworn by His holiness, "Behold, the days are coming upon you When they will take you away with meat hooks, And the last of you with fish hooks.

IV. CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.

- A. First, the Bible teaches that man is to provide for his physical needs through honest labor (Eph. 4:28; 2Th. 3:10-12).
(Eph 4:28) Let him who steals steal no longer; but rather let him labor, performing with his own hands what is good, in order that he may have something to share with him who has need.
(2Th 3:10-12) For even when we were with you, we used to give you this order: if anyone will not work, neither let him eat. For we hear that some among you are leading an undisciplined life, doing no work at all, but acting like busybodies. Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to work in quiet fashion and eat their own bread.
- B. Long ago the Proverb's writer said, "A faithful man will abound with blessings, But he who hastens to be rich will not go unpunished" (28:20 NKJV). Earlier he stated, "Wealth gained by dishonesty will be diminished, But he who gathers by labor will increase" (Prov. 13:11).
- C. Second, the Golden Rule of treating others as you desire them to treat you (Mt. 7:12) surely forbids the gambler's practice. Why would I want to take money from others when I do not want them to take money from me?
- D. Third, the Bible rebukes the spirit of materialism (i.e., the love of money, greed, etc.) which is at the root of gambling (1Cor. 5:10).
I did not at all mean with the immoral people of this world, or with the covetous and swindlers, or with idolaters; for then you would have to go out of the world.
- E. Plan of salvation for non-Xians, erring Xians..
- F. **References:**
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"You Can't Win" by Paul A. Phillips. *Gospel Advocate*; March 1994, p. 18-19.
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"Gambling, Greed, and Godlessness" by Dr. R. Stafford North. *The World Evangelist*; August, 1984, p. 1, 19.