

The Lottery Is Bad

By Joe Bob Mizzell

The lottery is bad because it would take from the poor to educate the wealthy. Every study shows that the poor buy a large percentage of the lottery tickets. The poor are looking for one possible chance of becoming wealthy. It is morally wrong for the state to deceive the poor, take their money, and then use it to educate the wealthy.

The lottery is bad because it takes advantage of the mathematically illiterate. Surely no one would take a chance on winning something when the chances are 1 to 10 or 15 million. The chances of winning the lottery are more remote than being struck by lightning even if one plays the lottery on a regular basis.

The lottery is bad because it offers what it cannot produce. For example, those advocating the lottery propose that the state would gain up to 156 million from the lottery. An Auburn study in 1995 suggested that the state would receive only about 40 million, not nearly enough to fund the scholarship program.

The lottery is bad because it paves the way for all kinds of gambling in Alabama. If we take away the constitution prohibition on lottery, we also take away the prohibition against casino gambling. Casinos bring crime, prostitution, undesirable businesses and other menaces to our society. It is my opinion that once the constitutional prohibition to the lottery is removed, the casino people will move in, monopolize gambling, and eliminate the lottery altogether.

The lottery is bad because it requires the state to promote something that otherwise would be illegal. If an individual cannot organize a lottery, then the state should not organize and run a lottery. A state-sponsored lottery becomes a training ground, teaching people to gamble. The state actually is recruiting people for other types of gambling.

The lottery is bad because it is based on selfishness, not love of one's neighbor. It fails the test of good stewardship. The state should join the church in teaching good stewardship, instead of trying to rob its people.

The lottery is bad because it teaches a "get rich" for nothing ethic. Instead of promoting a strong work ethic for its people, the state promotes getting something for nothing.

The lottery is bad because it diverts dollars from goods and services to lottery tickets. Money that would have gone to buy clothing, food, shelter, and education, would be spent on lottery tickets. Often children go hungry while parents purchase lottery tickets.

The lottery is bad because it tends to corrupt government and politicians. All forms of gambling exploit people and will bring temptation to politicians and others from bribery or pay off.

Yes, **the lottery is bad** for any state. It will be **bad** for Alabama, if our politicians and people are naive enough to vote in a lottery. Say no to lottery and no to any politician who would place this plague on us.

Joe Bob Mizzell is director of the Christian Life and Public Affairs Department of the Alabama Baptist State Convention