

Gambling – What Do You Really Stand To Lose?

by Don McClain

1 Timothy 6:9-18

INTRODUCTION

A. GAMBLING DEFINED

Merriam-Webster, - to play a game for money or property

American Heritage® Dictionary - To bet on an uncertain outcome, as of a contest. - To play a game of chance for stakes. - To take a risk in the hope of gaining an advantage or a benefit.

World Book Encyclopedia: "Gamblers usually bet money or something else of value as a stake on the outcome they predict. When the outcome is settled, the winner collects the loser's stakes."

B. THERE ARE THREE ELEMENTS OF GAMBLING

1. The Uncertain Event. It is arbitrarily determined.

2. The Stake. Wager or bet that is deliberately chanced.

3. A Winner And Loser. In gambling – in order for another to win another MUST lose!

C. THINGS THAT HAVE THESE THREE ELEMENTS

1. Casino gambling: slot machines, roulette wheels, dice and card games, numbers games, etc., played for stakes.

2. Betting on horses, dogs.

3. Lotteries.

4. Charity and "church-sponsored" bingo, raffles, etc.

5. Bazaar and fair booths where you pay to try to win a prize, etc.

6. Amateur gambling including poker games for money, Betting on the outcome of athletic events . . . office pools, matching quarters for cokes or coffee, playing marbles for keeps.

a. Even if small amounts of money are involved, such activities still violate Bible principles. Further, they establish a precedent that makes it impossible for one to consistently object to other people's gambling. Where do you draw the line and say, "This much money risked is all right, but any more is immoral?"

D. WHAT WE ARE NOT TALKING ABOUT

The casting of lots was not gambling, but a means of making a decision. - Acts 1:26.

Taking a risk – To cross a street - The farmer is not seeking to gain at the loss of another.

Buying and selling stock is an investment, not gambling.

Buying insurance - A honest business transaction.

Prizes are gifts, not gambling. When one registers to win a prize at a store's grand opening or receives a prize that is given away for advertisement, he is not gambling.

Competition for a prize – Not a wagered possession, but won by skill and fair competition.

E. NOT A NEW PROBLEM

The Greeks in Homer's time had knucklebones from sheep and goats to serve as dice.

A gambling board was discovered in Crete that dates back to 1800-1900 B.C.

Tertullian said, "If you say that you are a Christian when you are a dice player, you say what you are not, because you are a partner with the world."

F. A GROWING NATIONAL PROBLEM

1. Every state but Utah and Hawaii sanction some form of gambling.

a. This includes lotteries, casinos, riverboat casinos, Indian casinos, video lottery machines, and pari-mutuel betting (horse racing, dog racing).

b. In 1998, Americans spent more money on legalized gambling (approximately 50 billion) than on recorded music, theme parks, video games, spectator sports, and movie tickets

combined (39.9 billion). Gambling Impact Study Commission, Final Report. Last Update: Jan. 28, 2001

c. Pathological gambling is one of the fastest-growing mental health problems in the western world. (New England Journal of Medicine, 10/5/00)

Discussion: Nine Reasons Why Gambling Is Sinful:

I. CAUSED BY GREED & COVETOUSNESS

"Greed" is an eager desire for base gain.

"Covetousness" is translated from two Greek words. One means a "greedy desire to have more."

The second literally means "loving money."

A. GREED & COVETOUSNESS ARE SINS THAT WILL KEEP ONE OUT OF HEAVEN - 1 COR 6:9,10

1. Just for FUN??? - If Winnings were removed would Casino's still prosper?
2. Gambling is - Driven by the "love of money" - 1 Timothy 6:9

II. VIOLATES THE PRINCIPLE OF STEWARDSHIP

A. Christians are to be responsible before God in how they invest the resources entrusted to them, - (Mat 25:14-30; Luke 12:42,43; 1 Peter 4:10,11; 1 Cor 4:1,2)

III. IT VIOLATES THE GOLDEN RULE

A. GAMBLING IS PREDICATED ON THE LOSSES, PAIN, AND SUFFERING OF OTHERS.

1. For one to win at gambling, others must lose. - (Phili 2:4)
2. Gambling preys on the desperation of the poor. - Proverbs 14:31; 22:16; Zechariah 7:10a

A Mississippi State University study found that the poorest citizens in casino areas spend a far greater percentage of their income and frequent the casinos more often than other income groups.

Those with incomes less than \$10,000 spend about 10% of their income on gambling. Between \$10,000-\$20,000 spend nearly 4% - More than \$40,000 spend only 1%.

Gamblers in casino counties who earn less than \$20,000 per year visit casinos far more frequently than those who earn more than \$40,000 annually

IV. GAMBLING VIOLATES HONEST GAIN

A. GAMBLING IS THE ATTEMPT TO OBTAIN THE RESOURCES OF OTHERS WITHOUT PROVIDING EQUAL VALUE IN RETURN.

1. The Scriptures give us four means of gaining -
 - a. By honest work – Proverbs 13:11; Ephesians 4:28
 - b. By fair exchange – Ephesians 4:28; Acts 5:3,4
 - c. By investment – Mat 25:14-30
 - d. By gift – Acts 20:35

Some have rightly described gambling as consensual theft.

Many other sins are consensual, adultery, fornication, prostitution, homosexuality.

V. RESULTS IN INTEMPERANCE

A. THE CHRISTIAN MUST POSSESS SELF CONTROL - 1 COR 6:12

1. ADDICTION: The existence of Gamblers Anonymous implies that gambling can be addictive! -

Current estimates list approximately 2.5 million people as pathological gamblers, another 3 million as problem gamblers, and another 15 million people as at risk to become problem or pathological gamblers. Gambling Impact Study Commission, Final Report. Last Update: Jan. 28, 2001

VI. IT SETS A BAD EXAMPLE

- A. Destroys One's reputation: Proverbs 22:1
- B. Could lead others into sin! Mat 18:6
- C. Manifestation of one's lack of love: 1 Cor 8:13
- D. Destroys one's influence Mat 5:13,14

VII. IT BREEDS OTHER SINS

A WORK OF THE FLESH OR THE SPIRIT?

- A. How should gambling be classified? Galatians 5:19-21
- B. Casino Crime in Mississippi

The number of felony and misdemeanor cases in Tunica County Justice Court rose from 689 in 1992, the year the casinos opened, to more than 11,000 in 1996.

Crimes in the Gulfport/Biloxi area increased across the board in the first year after casinos opened, with murder, rape, robbery and car theft at least doubling.

Several individuals have been killed in casino-related incidents.

Arrests for prostitution increased 55% the first year after casinos opened on the Gulf Coast.

Reputed organized crime figures from New Orleans and Los Angeles were convicted along with casino employees in a blackjack cheating scheme at the President Casino in Gulfport.

VIII. IT DESTROYS THE HOME

A. The home is a God ordained institution and by His design - the foundation upon which society is based! (Gen 2:18-25) Anything that brings harm to this institution is evil!

1. In addition to material deprivations, family members frequently experience the trauma of divorce, child abuse and neglect, and domestic violence. Ronald A. Reno Gambling's Impact on Families <http://www.family.org/cforum/research/papers/A0013772.html>

Calls to the Gulf Coast Women's Center crisis line doubled within the first three years of the casinos, to an average of 800 a month.

In Biloxi, the number of domestic violence incidents reported to authorities rose from 167 in 1992 to 715 in 1996, a 328% increase.

Six hundred fifty additional divorces were granted in Harrison County the year after casinos arrived. Longtime Gulf Coast chancery court Judge William L. Stewart said gambling is now a factor in at least a third of the divorce cases he oversees.

The National Gambling Impact Study Commission reported: "Children of compulsive gamblers are often prone to suffer abuse, as well as neglect, as a result of parental problem or pathological gambling."

In Indiana, - 72 children were found abandoned on casino premises during a 14-month period.

In Louisiana and South Carolina, children died after being locked in hot cars for hours while their caretakers gambled.

An Illinois mother was sentenced to prison for suffocating her infant daughter in order to collect insurance money to continue gambling.

IX. ASSOCIATION WITH EVIL COMPANIONS

A. GAMBLING ESTABLISHMENTS ARE HOST TO OTHER CORRUPTING VICES, INCLUDING PROSTITUTION AND DRUNKENNESS.

1. Christians are to avoid such environments - 1 Thessalonians 5:21,22; 1 Corinthians 15:33,34
2. One partakes with others in sin! Ephesians 5:1-11
3. Propagates an immoral, predatory and exploitative industry. Ephesians 5:6,11

X. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

A. IS THE LOTTERY GAMBLING?

All the elements are there,

1. The Uncertain Event. It is arbitrarily determined.
2. The Stake. Wager or bet that is deliberately chanced.
3. A Winner And Loser – one loses a possession wagered while the winner takes it from

him!

B. BUT LOOK AT THE GOOD WE CAN DO!

1. Should We Do Evil That Good May Come? Rom. 3:8

NGISC Commissioner Richard C. Leone - June 2001:

"In my view, state lotteries have paved the way for great increases in legalized gambling. They have promoted the notion of beating the odds, they have been able to advertise while others have not, and they have propagated the myth that gambling is good for society in general and the government in particular. Lotteries are perhaps the hardest form of gambling to justify in terms of their costs and benefits. The best studies all point in the same direction: Lotteries prey on the poor and the undereducated." Leone, Richard C., (The Century Foundation-www.tcf.org) Statement at CASA Conference, 2001. "High Stakes: Substance Abuse & Gambling". <http://www.ncalg.org/news-leone.htm>

2. A problem we will soon be facing!! Where will we stand?

Arkansas Democrat Gazette - A lottery for education has been the subject of more discussion recently as policy-makers consider how to increase school funds in light of the Lake View school funding lawsuit on appeal to the state Supreme Court. The case could require the state to find an extra several hundred million dollars a year for education. (ADG Wednesday, August 21, 2002)

B. THE RAFFLE TICKET?

ALL THE ELEMENTS ARE THERE,

1. The Uncertain Event.
2. The Stake.
3. A Winner And Loser.

(When does principle become negated by size?)

CONCLUSION

1. Gambling is not harmless entertainment.
 - a. It is not like bowling, baseball or backpacking.
 - b. It is a greed-driven, predatory vice, scientifically designed to squeeze the maximum amounts of money possible from every single patron.
 - c. It is by its very nature an enterprise wholly dependent on victims. James C. Dobson, Ph.D. 1999 Focus on the Family.
2. You Categorize Gambling: Titus 2:12
 - ___ Ungodliness?
 - ___ Worldly Lust?
 - ___ Sober Living?
 - ___ Righteous Living?
 - ___ Godly Living

The spread of legalized gambling is exacting colossal social and economic costs.

Gambling expansion brings with it increased crime, divorce and family disruption, and it creates a multitude of new addicts.

Gambling also exploits the poor and youth.

Legalized gambling is harmful public policy that should be vigorously opposed at all levels.

3. Many think that since gambling is not mentioned in the Bible, there is nothing wrong with it. This simply is not true. Nowhere in the Bible do you read the words rape, suicide, larceny, bootlegging, and child pornography.

GAMBLING IS A SIN, AND IT MUST BE CONDEMNED AS SUCH IN ALL OF ITS FORMS!