

Gambling Fever

Introduction:

- A. Running high in Alabama now.
- B. Not merely a political issue – a moral and spiritual one.
- C. Purpose to present some facts that may cool the fever among those to are concerned with moral and spiritual values.

Discussion:

I. What is gambling?

- A. “To play or game for money or other stakes; to hazard; wager, betting on the result of a game” (Webster).
- B. Built into gambling is a “loss” principle. Winners win only when losers lose.
 - 1. 5 people put up \$100 each on a bet.
 - a. The “house” gets \$100 off the top for their take.
 - b. 1 man wins \$400
 - c. 4 men lose all - winners win only when losers lose.
 - 2. Farming is not a corollary to gambling.
 - a. God ordained that men eat by “sweat of face” (Gen 3:19).
 - b. There is no built in “loss principle” in farming.
 - c. Rather, the “harvest principle” – seed produces more than planted.
 - 3. Stock market is not a corollary to gambling.
 - a. A source of funds to finance a business enterprise.
 - b. It does not operate on the “loss principle”, but “work principle.”
 - c. Enterprise uses money to increase business and repay a profit to investor.
 - d. Illustrate:
 - (1) 5 people put up \$100 each by purchasing stock.
 - (2) A corporation uses it as capital to expand, enlarge, etc.
 - (3) On services rendered (work performed) the corporation makes a profit.
 - (4) A dividend (profit earned) is paid the investor.
 - (5) The investor may buy or sell his stocks (his share in the business) for a profit or loss just as a small business man may buy or sell a business.
 - 4. Ordinary risks of life not a corollary to gambling.
 - a. “You are gambling with your health and life when you get on the highway.”
 - b. Russian Roulette would be a better parallel to gambling.
- C. When we speak of gambling we speak of all gambling whether it is run by the state, civic club, church or an individual in a back alley.

II. What is wrong with Gambling?

- A. It wrong Economically.
 - 1. “The people who govern this state will try to separate you from your money in a game of chance that affords you virtually no chance...You invest \$1 in a lottery ticket, in hopes of winning \$1 million Your odds of winning are one in a million, right? Wrong. Try one in 125 million ... For a realistic return on risk, the lottery is a farce. You are 250 times more likely to be hit by lightning.” – St. Petersburg Times.
 - 2. Most tickets sold in lower income areas where they can afford it least.
 - 3. Even for winners, the economics on downside – small winning usually go back into more chances. Large winners often run through theirs out of greed.

B. It is wrong Socially.

1. Adversely alters the behavior of people in their dealing with one another – seen in its fruit.
2. John Dryden, English Poet: “Bets, at the first were fool-traps, where the wise, like spiders, lay in wait for the flies.”
3. Estes Kefauver, after investigating national crimes said:
“Pages could be filled with examples heard by the senate committee of the old familiar story of how fine citizens and family men became paupers, embezzlers, and worse of the enticements of the gambling tables.” (Crime in America, p. 125)
4. Testimony before the senate committee revealed that “65 percent of the lottery machines in Delaware are located near ‘the lowest socioeconomic group ... and lest they forget what they are supposed to do with those machines, we found a doubling of advertising by the State lottery on the day welfare checks arrive”

C. It is wrong Morally.

1. Moves it from waste and folly to that of truth and right.
2. To Christians, God’s word is the measure of morality – but many in world see it as immoral.
3. George Washington: “Gambling is the child of avarice, the brother of iniquity, and the father of mischief.
4. National Council of Churches in 1951 reaffirmed its “vigorous opposition to gambling as an insidious menace both to personal character and social morality”
5. One moral evil is its enslaving nature – run risk of addiction.
 - a. “Gamblers gamble as lovers love, as drunkards drink, inevitably, blindly, under the dictates of an irresistible force” (Horace Levinson, *The science of chance*, p. 26).
 - b. “The fascination of gambling to many people is so strong, in my opinion, it would be complete folly to make the facilities more available than they are.” – Senator Kefauver.
 - c. “Cursed is the wretch enslaved to such a vice, who ventures life and soul upon the dice.” – Horace in Rome, 2000 years ago.
 - d. What assurance does gambler have that his “sport” will lead to his child’s addiction?
 - e. What assurance does he have that he will not encourage the weak to get caught? (**Rom 14:21**).
 - f. A Christian who gambles puts church on bad light before the world who knows what gambling is.
 - g. He also weakens the churches voice against worldliness of all kinds (**Rom. 2:21-24**) – it is weak enough already.

D. It is wrong spiritually.

1. It is not mentioned by name – Neither is suicide, embezzling, bootlegging, racketeering, etc.
 - a. Expected to discern between good and evil. (**Heb. 5:12-14**).
2. It fits no divinely revealed means of gain.
 - a. Not freely giving and/or receiving (cf. **1 Cor. 9:7**) – Give for sake of giving, not getting.
 - b. Not working at honorable employment for wages (**Eph 4:28; Acts 20:35; 2 Thess 3:8-10**)
 - c. Not buying and selling for profit (cf. **Jas. 4:13-15**).
 - d. Not investing for a reasonable return. (Cf. **Matt. 25:27**).
3. It is contrary to good stewardship.
 - a. We are but stewards of the Lord’s goods. (Cf. **1 Cor. 10:26; 1 Tim. 6:17**).
 - b. We must not waste (squander) material blessings (**Lk 16:1; Lk 15:13**).
4. It encourages an impure heart (cf. **Mt. 5:8; Phil. 4:8**).
 - a. Promotes greed, selfishness – opposites of love (**1 Cor. 13:5; Rom 13:10**).
 - b. Gets possession of hearts - addiction (GA) - destroys self-control cf. **1 Cor. 6:12; 2 Pet 1:6**).
 - c. It violates the golden rule (**Mt. 7:12**).

5. It attracts undesirable elements and companionship. (**1 Cor. 15:33**)
 - a. Vegas and other such cities: Crime, prostitution, drinking, etc.
 - b. Is it the “worldly” or “spiritual” crowd that frequent such places.
6. It weakens our influence for good (cf. **Tit. 2:7-8**).
 - a. Questionable to most of those likely to obey the gospel.
 - b. Cause church to be spoken against unnecessarily – Punch board as a child.
7. It’s fruits are not good. (**Matt. 7:17-19**).