

The Problem with Gambling

Introduction:

- A. **Gambling**, wagering of money or other items of value on an uncertain event that is dependent either wholly on chance, or partly on chance and partly on skill. Gambling has been practiced by people throughout history.¹
- B. “Gambling is the child of avarice, the brother of iniquity, and the father of mischief” - Geo. Washington
- C. Gambling comes in many shapes and forms.
- D. Gambling on the minds of many Alabamians this week.
 - 1. If this were merely a political issue, I would have nothing to say from this pulpit.
 - 2. This is a moral issue that Christians must address, regardless of how the vote goes.
- E. The purpose of this lesson:
 - 1. Not to tell anyone whether or how to vote in an election.
 - 2. To inform Christians who plan to vote of the problem with gambling.
 - 3. To prepare Christians to deal with gambling should it become legalized.
- F. This lesson will contain two parts:
 - 1. The proponents’ points for gambling.
 - 2. The Scriptural principles against gambling.

Discussion:

I. Proponents’ Points for Gambling.

- A. ***“Gambling is not condemned by name in the Bible.”***
 - 1. Neither is suicide, embezzling, bootlegging, racketeering, bikinis, etc.
 - 2. A thing can be condemned either by name or by principle.
 - 3. Christians are expected to discern between good and evil (Heb. 5:12-14).
- B. ***“Gambling is just like ordinary risks that one takes in life.”***
 - 1. Gambling is not an ordinary risk.
 - a. It has a built in “loss” principle – win only when losers lose.
 - b. It is a risk left mostly to chance.
 - 2. Driving a car – a risk of injury or death.
 - a. Is it the same as Russian Roulette?
 - b. Is it the same as 100 men and 99 loaded guns and one unloaded betting their lives on which one is unloaded?
 - 3. Farming
 - a. God ordained that men eat by the “sweat of their face” (Gen. 3:19).
 - b. Farming encourages work and dependance on God’s providence. (cf. 1 Cor. 3:6.7)
 - 4. Stock Market
 - a. Buying stock is purchasing interest in a corporation.
 - b. Corporation uses money as capital to expand, enlarge, etc.
 - c. Corporation makes profits from services and products.
 - d. Corporation pays portion of profit to the investor.
 - e. Investor may buy or sell his stocks (share in the business) for a profit or loss just as any small business man may do.
- C. ***“Gambling is alright as long as it is for a good cause.”***
 - 1. Gambling is either right or wrong.
 - 2. This assumes that the end justifies the means (cf. Rom. 3:8).

II. Scriptural Principles against Gambling.

- A. ***Gambling fits no divinely revealed means of exchange.***
 - 1. Giving and receiving gifts (cf. 2 Cor. 9:7).
 - a. Give for the sake of giving (cf. Acts 20:35), not in order to get.
 - b. If real purpose of a lottery is to help a good cause, why not just give the money.
 - 2. Honorable employment for wages (Eph. 4:28; 2 Thess. 3:8-10).
 - 3. Buying and selling (Jas. 4:13-15).
 - 4. Investing for a reasonable return (cf. Matt. 25:27).

B. Gambling is not good stewardship.

1. We are but stewards of God's goods (1 Cor. 10:26; 1 Tim. 6:17; 1 Cor. 4:2)
2. We must waste (squander) material blessings (cf. Matt. 25:27)
3. Is it good stewardship to risk God's material blessing in a game that in which you are 250 times more likely to be hit by lightning as you are to win?²
4. Is it good stewardship for 61 cents of every dollar to go for overhead before it reaches the state treasury?

C. Gambling depends on greed, covetousness, and selfishness.

1. These are against the teachings of Christ.
2. These are the opposite of a pure heart (cf. Matt. 5:8; Phil. 4:8).
3. These are the opposite of love (1 Cor. 13:5; Phil. 4:8).

D. Gambling violates the law of love

1. Love neighbor as self. (Matt 22:37-39)
2. The "golden rule" (Matt. 7:12).
3. "But gambling is done by mutual consent"
 - a. So is fornication.
 - b. So is dueling.

E. Gambling is highly addictive.

1. Gambler's Anonymous set up to deal with the problem.
2. Risk being brought under its power (cf. 1 Cor. 6:12).
3. Risks destroying self-control (2 Pet. 1:6).

F. Gambling produces bad fruit.

1. A tree is known by its fruits (Matt. 7:17-19; 12:33).
2. Gambling depends on the love of money that produces much evil fruit. (1 Tim. 6:10)
 - a. Broken homes, neglected children, unpaid bills, etc. are fruits of gambling.
 - b. Gambling attracts criminal element.
 - c. State sponsored gambling reduces tax base.
 - d. State sponsored gambling exploit the poor.

G. Gambling weakens a Christian's influence for good.

1. Christians must live so that men will see their works and glorify God. (Matt. 5:16)
2. Christians must not give opposition a club to hit them with (Tit. 2:7-8)
3. Many good moral people who are not Christians are opposed to gambling.

Conclusion:

- A. There is no really good reason to gamble.
- B. There many good reasons not to gamble.
- C. Gambling, all gambling, is a sin because it violates great Bible principles.

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2. "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 realist return on risk, the lottery is a farce. You are 250 times more likely to be hit by lightning." – St. Petersburg Times.