

Gambling - Win or Lose!

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Gambling feeds covetousness, which is directly opposed to God's call for contentment. The apostle said 1 Timothy 6:6 *"Godliness with contentment is great gain."* He Philippians 4:12 *"learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want."* Gambling comes from greed—that selfish desire to get something for nothing.

Gambling creates the condition in which one person's gain is many other persons' loss. Gambling is against love for our neighbor. Gambling masquerades as harmless fun, but can quickly lead to serious harm. 1 Timothy 6:9 *"Those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition."*

Gamblers are never content with what they have, but continually strive for more by taking another chance and making another wager—only to suffer another and another loss. Those supporting this lucrative business renamed it *gaming* to have participants think they are *playing an innocent game* instead of being *deceived by a wicked devil*. Proverbs 27:20 *"Hell and Destruction are never full; So the eyes of man are never satisfied."*

An article says that Americans *gamble* more money each year, than they spend on food. Gambling is seen as *a ticket from poverty*, but the Word asks James 2:5 *"Has God not chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who*

love Him?" We either love *God* or we love *money*; because Matthew 6:24 *"You cannot be the bondservants both of God and of gold"*—it is one or the other.

Legalized gambling is a 41 billion dollar industry that expands every year and ensnares more people every day. Gambling takes the person's money, but provides no service in return. The lure of winning large sums of money has always been addictive, and the results are all too often—broken homes, failed marriages; abuse of alcohol, neglected children, lost time, and destroyed families.

Not long ago most people considered gambling to be addictive and dangerous, and many homes would not even allow standard *playing cards* in the house—as they were so connected with betting or gambling. Changing the name to *gaming* continues the deceit that gambling is just harmless entertainment; rather than a dangerous and addictive habit.

When state lotteries are proposed, the public is told that enormous funds will be generated for education, despite studies showing that after states legalize lotteries, they actually *reduce* spending for education. The promised *money for schools* has been a scam—like so many other aspects of the gambling industry.

Gambling is morally wrong and against Bible teaching because it is motivated by greed and covetousness. Colossians 3:5-7 *"Therefore put to death your earthward inclinations—fornication, impurity, sensual passion, unholy desire, and all greed, for that is a form of idolatry. It is on account of these very sins that God's anger is coming, and you also were once addicted to them, while you were living under their power."* Idolaters will have their place *"in the fiery lake of burning sulfur"* Revelation 21:8.

The addictive nature of gambling leads to more serious sins. Winning any large amount of

money instantly becomes a *treasure on earth*—on which to place our trust. It would have to be given up anyway, because Jesus said Mark 10:24 *"Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!"* If the money was retained, our trust on God would be gone, and the incentive to work at honest employment eliminated.

Greed is a continuing desire to have more and more with no regard to need. Greed is a sin because it is opposite to being content. The apostle wrote that 1 Timothy 6:8-9 *"having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition."*

Horror stories associated with compulsive gambling, and playing lotteries, are endless. As gamblers get deeper into debt, they become desperate to win it back—which almost never happens. Even if they win, they can quickly lose it again. Gambling is a serious temptation and a deadly snare that will 1 Timothy 6:9 *"drown men in destruction and perdition."* It is misplaced-love for God; because 1 Timothy 6:10 *"the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."*

Even though the world runs to the casinos and gaming tables, the Word says to 1 Timothy 6:11-12 *"flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses."*

If we trust God to supply our needs each day, and we look to Him for the strength and ability to do our work well for the employer, there would be no reason or incentive to gamble.

Greed and coveting are connected only to selfish wants and worldly desires for riches. Mark 4:19 *"The deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful."*

Gambling, and all things connected with it, is against God's will, so the believer should not be involved with any type of wager, betting, or gambling. A greedy person is always looking for *get-rich-quick* schemes, but the Bible condemns all greed. Proverbs 28:20 *"A faithful man will abound with blessings, But he who hastens to be rich will not go unpunished."* Gambling is directly connected to the desire to be rich; it is a thirst for wealth, and not part of God's plan of trust and honest work.

Satan wants people to think gambling is harmless fun, rather than what it is—a deadly and dangerous addiction. We are to be *rich in faith*; not eager for money. Jesus said Acts 20:35 *"It is more blessed to give than to receive,"* but gamblers never consider giving to be more blessed than receiving.

If our confidence in God's faithfulness, has been replaced with a lucky spin at gambling, we have, 1 Timothy 6:10 *"so hankered after money as to be led astray from the faith and [will] be pierced through with countless sorrows."* The issue is not how much we *have*, but how much God has already given.

Gambling starts in small ways as harmless entertainment, but it quickly becomes a big risk, with enormous amounts at stake. Gambling is a very destructive addiction. Casino workers are trained to maintain a party atmosphere—helping the gamblers make bigger wagers, while the stakes get ever higher. Millions have lost everything—hoping to hit it big.

Gambling becomes a habit that leads to a downward spiral. Borrowing money to cover losses seems like the only solution, but the debt

gets deeper, and the temptations more serious, which often leads to theft, lying, and other sins to support the addiction. Gambling leads directly to unpaid bills; hungry families; and betrayed friends—the price to pay is way too high.

Jesus warned Luke 12:15, *"Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses."* We are to share what we have with others, and never gain from someone else's loss. Luke 6:31 *"Do to others as you would have them do to you."* How selfish it is to overlook the pain and loss of others to seek our own pleasure and gain.

Belief in luck is totally against belief in God—and since God exists, luck makes no sense. Things do not just happen, but there is a spiritual cause for everything. Belief in God dispels any idea of *luck* or *chance* as a factor with things that happen. The casting of lots in the Bible was not gambling, because no money or other value was placed at risk in hopes of gain, but individuals trusted a sovereign God to direct the outcome.

Gambling is not showing good stewardship and not using good judgment. Proverbs 12:11 *"He who works his land will have abundant food, but he who chases fantasies lacks judgment."* Those who yield to the lure of quick riches are chasing a *something-for-nothing* fantasy. Gambling feeds covetousness, which is in opposition to God's call for contentment. Philippians 4:11 *"I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content."*

Gambling creates a condition in which one person's gain is from many other persons' loss. As such, gambling is opposed to brotherly love. Matthew 22:37-39 Jesus said, *"You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind." This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'"*

Gambling substitutes love of neighbor, for love of self. The apostle told us that we should not do anything Romans 14:21 *"by which your brother stumbles or is offended or is made weak."* And Romans 15:1 *"As for us who are strong, our duty is to bear with the weaknesses of those who are not strong, and not seek our own pleasure."*

Time is a gift from God and must not be wasted. Scripture tells us to not live as fools, but to make wise choices Ephesians 5:15-16 *"Redeeming the time, because the days are evil."* God created time to work for our benefit, so we must not waste it on unprofitable things, but to use it in His service and for His honor and glory. A gambler wastes this gift of time that God has given—using it for personal benefit and selfish interests.

God commands us to work at honest labor and in a way that supplies our needs—when we are able to work. Proverbs 28:19 *"He who works his land will have abundant food, but the one who chases fantasies will have his fill of poverty."* The apostle said 2 Thessalonians 3:10 *"when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat."* The gambler hopes to get money without working.

The writer admonishes us to Hebrews 13:5 *"Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, 'Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.'"* And the tenth Commandment says volumes on being content with what God has already given. Exodus 20:17 *"You shall not covet"*—anything that belongs to another.

If we are involved in any type of gambling, we are sure to lose; but if we follow God's will and Word—being content while trusting Him, we are sure to *"win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus,"* Philippians 3:14.



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