Gambling—
Okay; Not Okay!

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The dictionary defines gambling as: To bet money on the outcome of a *game*, *contest*, or an *event*. Another definition says that gambling is: Wagering *money*, or something of *value* on an uncertain event whose outcome is dependent either wholly on *chance* and partly on *skill*. The two key elements are: *chance* or *luck*, and *wagering* of money.

Gambling originates from a selfish desire to get something for nothing; Gambling is greed that feeds *covetousness*—which is opposite to *contentment*. Gambling creates the condition in which one person's *gain* is many others *loss*. Gambling is against *love for our neighbor*. It often masquerades as harmless *fun*, but it more often leads to serious *harm*.

The apostle warned AV 1 Timothy 6:9 *"But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition."* And he is also the one who said NIV Philippians 4:12 *"I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want."* Yes AV 1 Timothy 6:6 *"Godliness with contentment is great gain."*

Gamblers are never content with what they have but continually strive for more by taking another *chance* and making another *wager*—only to suffer more and more losses. 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*. AV 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 Bible says AV James 2:5 *"Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?"*

We either *love God* or we *love money*—AV Matthew 6:24 *"No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon."*

Legalized gambling is a multi-billion dollar industry that expands every year and ensnares more people, especially young people, every day. Gambling takes a person's money but gives nothing in return. The lure of winning large sums of money is addictive—and the tragic results are all too often—lost time, alcohol abuse, neglected children, broken homes, failed marriages; and destroyed families.

Years ago, it seemed if you wanted to go to a casino and gamble, you had to go to Vegas as it is called, but then almost 50 years ago legal casinos were opened in Atlantic City.

Today only 2 states do not allow any form of casino gambling. You can probably place a bet on when those 2 states will allow casino gambling. Satan is very good at what he does, and every municipality needs money, so it would seem to be only a matter of time.

For years Las Vegas has been widely known as "Sin City" due to gambling and other sinful activities. That nickname alone should speak volumes as we say; it reflects the attitude or opinion that most people used to have about gambling. Today that nickname is said to be a playful nod to adult freedom, which in reality means the freedom to do as they please—not worrying one bit about sinning against God. In fact, for many years the slogan: "What happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas" has been widely known because of a campaign promoting that idea.

Of course, we must remember that while we may hide things from other people; we cannot hide anything from God; God sees it all.

Job 28:24, *"For he looketh to the ends of the earth, and seeth under the whole heaven;"*

Proverbs 5:21, *"For the ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD, and he pondereth all his goings."*

Jeremiah 23:24, *"Am I a God at hand, saith the LORD, and not a God afar off? Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him?*

saith the LORD. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the LORD."

Hebrews 4:13, *"Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do."*

1 Samuel 16:7, *"But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart."*

Psalm 139:1-2, *"O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off."*

Those verses emphasize that God is fully aware of everything that happens in the world, in our lives, and within our hearts.

A 2018 Supreme Court decision allowed states to legalize sports betting, and now all 4 major sports leagues (and even the NCAA to a lesser degree) have formed partnerships with gambling companies for advertising and promotions, which really means it is all about the money—money needed to pay the huge salaries that the players receive today.

Although this close association with gambling companies has led more people to question the integrity of sports—whether they are fixed in some way, the leagues have shown that they willing to take that risk because it is all about the money, not really the integrity of the games.

These partnerships between gambling companies and sports leagues are also designed to enhance or improve fan engagement. Sports books as they are called offer interactive experiences, such as live in-game betting available in the palm of your hand through various betting Apps and promotions which can offer credits to entice one to start betting. Satan has inspired all these ideas to attract a younger audience.

Gambling is now described as a prominent aspect of the viewing experience, and it seems that many of our young people are viewing many games each week.

Years ago, most just listened to the games on the radio and attended an occasional game in person when in the case of pro football there was a home game on Monday night.

There is a growing acceptance of legalized sports wagering in the United States; thus, it would surely seem that this leads to greater temptation from the devil, especially for our young people, to join in this Satan inspired "pleasure" of this world.

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, as it is motivated by greed and covetousness. WEY 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"* Rev. 21:8.

The addictive *nature* of gambling leads to more *serious* sins—besides winning any large amount of money instantly becomes a *treasure on earth*—on which we would trust. The money would have to be given to charity because Jesus said AV 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 *diminished* or *non-existent*, and the incentive to honest employment *eliminated*.

Greed is an insatiable *desire* to have *more* and *more* with no regard to *need*. *Greed* is a sin because it is opposite to *contentment*—something we can learn. AV 1 Timothy 6:8 *"And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. 9 But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition."*

There have been so many horror stories associated with compulsive gambling and playing

lotteries. 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 deadly *snare* that will AV 1 Timothy 6:9 *"Drown men in destruction and perdition."* It is misplaced love for God; AV 1 Timothy 6:10 *"For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."*

Even though the world runs to the casinos or becomes ensnared with online gambling, God says AV 1 Timothy 6:11 *"But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. 12 Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses."*

If we trust God to supply our needs each day and look to Him for the ability to do our work well, there would be no *reason* or *incentive* to gamble. Greed and coveting are connected only to selfish *wants* and worldly *desires* for riches. AV 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 that is connected with it is against God's will. The believer should *not* be involved with any type of betting, gambling, or wager. Any greed within will look for some *get-rich-quick* scheme, but the Bible condemns greed. AV Proverbs 28:20 *"A faithful man shall abound with blessings: but he that maketh haste to be rich shall not be innocent."*

Gambling is connected to *making haste* to be rich; it is a *thirst* for wealth and is *not* part of God's plan of *trust* and honest *work*. Satan wants people to think that gambling is harmless fun rather than what it *is*—a *dangerous addiction*. We are to be *rich in faith,* not *eager for gain*. Jesus said AV 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 the gaming table, we have WEY 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 *given*.

Gambling can start in *small* ways—perhaps with what are called raffles. A raffle can be defined as a kind of lottery, in which several people pay in shares, the value of something put up as stake, and then determine by chance (as by casting dice) which one of them shall become the sole possessor. A kind of lottery in which the prizes are goods rather than money.

A lottery can be defined as a contest in which tokens are distributed or sold, the winning token or tokens are secretly predetermined or ultimately selected in a random drawing. An activity or event regarded as having an outcome depending on fate.

The word "fate" is said to imply inevitability; fate is often perceived as a guiding force that shapes life events. If one were to get involved in gambling, and they never repent, it surely seems that the most horrible fate awaits them.

Perhaps we have participated in a so-called raffle in which we did not have to purchase any "tickets", and thus there was no risk involved. Maybe we looked at it as innocent entertainment; however, a raffle by definition is a gambling competition.

So, do we want in any way to introduce our children to anything that in any way can be connected to gambling?

1 Thessalonians 5:22 tells us, *"Abstain from all appearance of evil."* So, we should always give God the benefit of the doubt. We should much rather rejoice and praise God for a smallest blessing from Him; instead of entering a contest, seeking a human prize, which can easily instill pride in us and no spiritual blessing from God.

Again, gambling and other related activities can appear to be *innocent entertainment*, but they can quickly become a *big risk* with *enormous* amounts at stake. Gambling is *Not Okay*; but a serious 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.

The gambling *habit* becomes a downward *spiral*. Borrowing money to cover *losses* seems like the only solution, but the debt gets *deeper*, and the temptations more *serious*—which can *then* lead to *theft*, *lying*, and *other sins* to support the addiction. Gambling leads to unpaid bills; hungry families; and betrayed friends—the price to *pay* is *way too high!*

Jesus warned NKJV 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's loss. AV Luke 6:31 *"As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise."* How *selfish* it is to overlook the pain and loss of others—while seeking our *own* pleasure and gain.

Belief in *luck* is against belief in *God*—and since God *exists* then 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—individuals trusted a sovereign God to direct the outcome.

Gambling does not show good *stewardship* and does not use 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* and opposes *learning* NKJV Philippians 4:11 *"In whatever state I am, to be content."*

Gambling creates a *condition* in which one person's *gain* is from other peoples' *loss*. Gambling is opposed to brotherly love. NKJV Matthew 22:37-39 Jesus told us, *"'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 said we should not do *anything* NKJV Romans 14:21 *"By which your brother stumbles or is offended or is made weak."* And WEY 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 says to *not* live as fools, but to make *wise* choices AV Ephesians 5:15-16 *"Redeeming the time, because the days are evil."* God created *time* to work for our *benefit*—we must *not waste* it on unprofitable things, but to *use* it for *His* honor and glory. A gambler wastes this *gift of time* from God—using it for personal *benefit* and selfish *interests*.

God commands us to work at honest labor that supplies our needs—when we can work. NIV 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 AV 2 Thessalonians 3:10 *"When we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat."*

The writer says Hebrews 13:5 NIV *"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 given. NKJV 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 on the matter—being *content* while trusting Him, we are *sure* to be the *winner* of AV Philippians 3:14 *"The prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."* Hitting it *big* and striking it *rich*—is *entering God's Kingdom!*

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**Receive free Tracts email:*
fcgchurch1@gmail.com
Or write to: PO Box 143
Cheltenham, PA 19012
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