

Gambling, Is It Scriptural? (John 19:23-24)

Sunday PM 05/20/18

Introduction:

The Bible addresses all areas of our lives. It instructs us how to worship God but also how to serve Him. It is relevant because we are to serve our Lord every day we live. The specific area we want to look at in this lesson is gambling and what the Bible says about it.

Gambling used to be just around the racetrack or in the back alley. It is now big business with it being touted as a form of entertainment, a way to bring in tourist (Las Vegas, New York City), a way to raise government revenue through state lotteries and casino's. Civic organizations have gotten into the act with their raffles for some worthy cause. We can not over look religion and its part in this. Churches have bingos, and raffles in order to raise money. I once heard of a casino having a priest to come in and bless their slot machines.

Last week the Supreme Court ruled that states have the right to approve gambling. This came as a surprise to me since many states have lotteries. Kentucky has 20 various ways one can gamble legally.

This brings about the obvious temptations to Christians to participate. Also, some may get involved and not realize what the Bible says about the subject.

I) Some Facts About Gambling

A) 46 out of 50 states have legalized charitable gambling.

1. Gambling interests have contributed \$72 million to political parties and candidates at the Federal level in 2016.
2. The exact amount spent at the local level is much greater since most of the laws regulating gambling is at the state level.

B) Gambling is a \$101.3 billion dollar a year industry (2014).

C) Gambling generates more revenue than movies, spectator sports, theme parks, cruise ships, and recorded music combined.

D) The total taken in by gambling is greater than the combined profits of US Steel, General Motors, General Electric, and more than 100 of the largest manufacturing companies

1. 60% of American adults gambled last year; over 80% say that gambling is legitimate and casinos are ok.
2. The fastest growing industry in America is Indian casinos.

II) Some Important Questions

A) What is gambling?

B) Does the Bible address gambling?

1. What principles are involved in gambling?
2. What should our response be to gambling?

III) What Is Gambling?

A) To play a game for money or some of value... to stake money or any other thing of value upon an uncertain event

B) Gambling promises

1. Revenue for government in lieu of taxes (a voluntary tax)
2. The chance of sudden wealth-you never know who will be the next millionaire
3. Entertainment- fun to watch horses run, to go to a casino and be around people playing games, etc

IV) God's Economy/ Legitimate Means of Acquiring Money

A) Labor (the old fashion way) - *Ephesians 4.28;*
Genesis 3.19

1. There is a difference between wages and winnings at a table.

2. You are providing a needed service to others in exchange for wages.

B) Trading (Buying and selling) - *Acts 16* Lydia was a seller of purple

1. Operating stores, selling merchandise, operating a business.
2. You are providing a product in exchange for a fair price.

C) Investing, *Matthew 25.27*

1. Stocks - you are investing in a company.
2. Bonds - you are charging interest for money you are lending to others.
3. In gambling you are not investing in the horse, the casino, or even the government.

D) Gift or charity, *Ephesians 4.28*

1. The giver is intending to help others.
2. Those gambling are hoping to win. If given the choice they would take back their money.

E) Inheritance - *Luke 15.11-32*

1. Also covered under the law of Moses.
2. The gambler is hoping to acquire what is not theirs by right.

F) Taxes - *Romans 13.6*

1. The government provide and we pay for its services.
2. Gambling is not an alternative tax but a way to obtain money by deception.

V) Does the Bible Address Gambling? How?

A) Promotes covetousness and greed, *Luke 12.15; 1 Timothy 6.10*

1. Think of a lottery without money, a horse track without betting, or a casino that does not pay its winners.
2. It is also addictive.
 - a. People will lose everything they have at the tables and slot machines.
 - b. They will fall asleep or use the bathroom at those places.
 - c. Art Schlichter - former quarterback in the NFL

B) It is stealing by consent

1. We can compare it to adultery, or homosexuality, or murder.

2. Again I would say the losers would gladly take back their money if given the opportunity.

C) Violates *Matthew 7.12*

1. You are taking money from those that can least afford it.
2. The poor gamble more (they see it as an investment).

D) Encourages laziness, *2 Thessalonians 3.10*

1. Hoping to get something for nothing.
2. Not the old fashion way, *1 Timothy 5.8*

E) Is poor stewardship

1. Stewardship is the use of God given resources to accomplish God-given goals.
2. *1 Corinthians 4.2* - If it is good stewardship then put all your money in the lottery; how about putting a portion of the congregation's treasury in the lottery?

F) The fruits of gambling

1. Illegal gambling increases where gambling is legal, *Romans 13.1*
2. Other crimes that increase are: prostitution, stealing, embezzlement, abuse, etc.

3. Stagnates business growth.

VI) Answering Arguments for Gambling

A) Farming is a risk, life is a risk, so all of life is a gamble

1. This equates taking a risk with gambling.
2. Farming is a risk, so is driving, or walking across the street
3. The difference is not risk but whether your success comes at another's expense. My making it across the street does not mean you have to get hit by a car.

B) It is for a good cause

1. Situation ethics seeks to justify sinful activities.
2. How about allowing prostitution for a good cause?
How about legalizing street drugs for a good cause?

C) It is not called gambling

1. Some times it is called an opportunity for a return.
2. Changing the name does not change the activity.

D) I do not expect to win

1. Just making a contribution to a good cause.

2. Your chances of winning are usually very small. No one can really expect to win. Your chances of being hit by lightning are 7 times greater than winning a lottery.
3. It is still gambling.
4. Simply make the contribution and do not accept the ticket.

Conclusion:

One sad fact is most winners are losers. They lose their fortune, their jobs, their friends, their families, and their soul. They are afraid for their life, and for their children.