

What Does The Bible Say About Gambling?

As this article is being written there are advertisements coming across the television advertising The Kentucky Derby on May 6, 2023. When it comes to gambling there are many forms and many tempting calls for one to participate. Gambling is definitely popular. A person can choose from a long list. Here are but a few: horse racing, dog racing, internet gambling, betting on sports, card games, raffles, casinos, and state lotteries.

A simple definition of gambling is creating a risk (possible loss of one's own) by chance in order to gain something (loss to another). Webster defines it as: (1) to play a game for money or property; (2) to bet on an uncertain outcome; and (3) to stake something on a contingency (chance). Anytime one wagers little or much it is gambling.

For one who is a Christian and following God's Word it should be asked, "What does the Bible say about gambling?" Christian ethics are not determined by popularity. Neither are they established by which way the wind is blowing (i.e., John the Baptist and Herod's unscriptural marriage). They are not right for one person and wrong for another. They do not depend upon the situation. On the other hand, Christian morality is an absolute which is determined by God's Holy Word. They are firm and apply to every situation. Christian ethics are governed by a full spectrum of divine principles both positive and negative.

Gambling Violates These Positive Bible Principles:

- **Law of work – Eph. 4:27,28** "Neither give place to the devil. Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth."
- **Law of buying and selling – Prov. 31:16** The worthy woman "She considereth a field, and buyeth it: with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard."
- **Law of love – Matt. 22:37-39** "Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. 38 This is the first and great commandment. 39 And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."
- **The Golden Rule – Matt. 7:12** "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets."
- **A good tree has good fruit. Matt. 7:16, 17** "Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? 17 Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. "
- **Trust in God – I Tim. 6:17** "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy;"
- **Sharing & Helping – I Tim. 6:18 (NASB)** "Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share,"
- **Be a Good Samaritan – Lk. 10:30-37** "And he said, "The one who showed mercy toward him." Then Jesus said to him, "Go and do the same."

APPLICATION: Gambling is none of these principles. It is just the opposite. Remember that "legal" and "moral" are two different things. Gambling attempts to sidestep the work ethic to get something for nothing. Every million-dollar winner has robbed multimillion losers. Look at the fruit that which gambling is associated: alcohol, poverty, crime, and illicit drugs. The tree is corrupt and its fruit is addictive. Instead of trusting God, an individual gambles trusting one's own skill. Instead of neighborly love, there is the attempt to take what belongs to others. How

does a person claim to be following Jesus' teaching on love and mercy while attempting to take what belongs to another(s)?

Gambling Violates These Negative Bible Principles:

- **Do not covet – Exodus 20:17** “Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbor’s. **Lk:12:15** Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.” **“Col. 3:5,6** (NASB) “Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: For which things’ sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience:”
- **Flee from the love money – Eph. 6:9-11** “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. 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. But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.”
- **Do not steal – Rom. 13:8-10** “...You shall not steal... You shall not covet, and if there is any other commandment, are all summed up in this saying, namely, you shall love your neighbor as yourself. Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.” **Eph. 4:28** “Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.”
Gambling is legalized stealing by consent!

We as citizens of the state of Alabama are being pressured more and more to legalize gambling. The cry goes out from our friends, “Legalize the state lotto. Allow casinos in Alabama.” They cite the need for taxes, improved education, and keeping our own money in Alabama. Nothing is said about how it harms individuals, families, and communities. There is silence about its addictive nature. Not a peep about what the Bible has to say. Let me say loud and clear I am against it not for physical or political reasons, but for spiritual/ moral reasons. It is damning to one’s soul. Biblical principles in the Scriptures given before should cause every child of God to oppose it. We ought to hate it, because clearly it is something that God hates. Remember it is one of the many specific sins that was displayed before and during the time that Jesus was on the cross. Alongside hatred, jealousy, bribing, bearing false witness, mockery, and physical harm to Jesus, there was also the gambling of the very clothes on His back by Roman soldiers before His eyes. It was a shameful sin and disgrace then. It is just as sinful, shameful, and disgraceful now!

On May 28th we had corresponding lessons on this topic. Check our website for sermons titled “With Whose Money Am I Gambling (Psalm 50:7-15)” from the AM service and “Calloway (1 Timothy 6:6-19)” from the PM service. Also, you can find our worship services on our Facebook page.