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# THE PAPER PULPIT

A quarterly publication of Bible studies presented by the  
Madisonville Church of Christ

## *Gambling: a Plague Upon the Poor*

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### Is Gambling Unscriptural?

**T**he short answer to this question is: "Yes." The long answer to this question goes something like this:

Gambling is not just a "harmless" pastime. It brings down devastating consequences upon those who become involved with it. It is addictive; just like smoking, drinking, drug abuse, pornography, and other vices. It produces a feeling of euphoria that the gambler tries to recapture again and again. Those who surrender themselves to the compulsion of gambling will lose all that they earn, beg, borrow and steal to chase their next high. The Bible warns Christians not to become addicted to any substance or behavior. In Romans 6:12 and 13, Paul wrote, "*Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin...*" The rest of the text, down to verse 18 develops the point further. In First Corinthians 6, Paul tackled the same subject, with the added observation that, while some substances and behaviors may not be against man's law, being brought under their "*power*" is against God's law (1 Cor. 6:12-20).

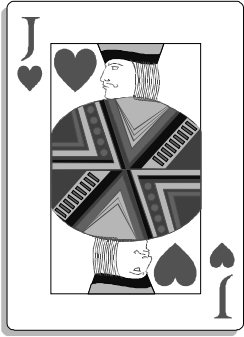
Is there any mention of gambling in the Bible? Sure there is. The most well-

known reference is in the gospel accounts, where Roman soldiers "*cast lots*" to see which of them would take home the Lord's tunic, while He hung on the cross (Mat. 27:35; Luke 23:34; John 19:24). The prophets warned the Jews that their enemies would "*cast lots*" to see which of the surviving Jews they would take home with them, as slaves (Joel 3:3; Oba. 11; Nah. 3:10). The "casting of lots" was viewed by the ancients as a way of determining the will of the gods. It is what Jonah's ship-

**"He that hasteth to  
be rich...considereth  
not that poverty shall  
come upon him."**

**—Proverbs 28:22**

mates did to figure out who among them was the cause of the storm that threatened to sink their ship (Jon. 1:7). It is also how the Israelites divided up the land of Canaan, after they conquered it (Jos. 18:6-8). And, it is how the apostles determined who should take Judas' place, among their ranks (Acts 1:15-26). The idea was that, God, who can manipulate the outcome of chance, would make His choice known through the rolling of dice, or the flipping of a coin. This, of course, applies only to those who were trying to determine what the will of God is. For those who were trying to get rich, like the Roman soldiers, or the Babylonian invaders, it is an exercise in sinful behavior. "*But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare...*" (1 Tim. 6:9,10).



## Quotable Quotations

"People will spend a tremendous amount of money in casinos; money that they would normally spend on buying a refrigerator or a new car. Local businesses will suffer, because they lose customer dollars to casinos."

—Donald Trump

"Most of the people pouring money into their [casino's] slot machines will be local

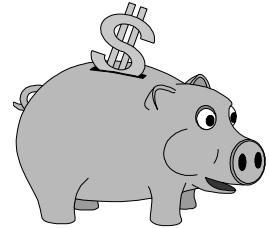
residents. Instead of bringing new dollars to the local economy, gambling will siphon away consumer dollars from other local businesses."

—Robert Goodman, Ph.D.

"In some ways it is an oxymoron to talk about lottery 'winners' at all. The *New York Times* recently reported: 'About once a month on average, a hapless mil-

lionaire winner of one of the 37 state lotteries goes bust and files for bankruptcy, experts say. That's the rags-to-rags fate of about one-third of all winners.'"

—Allen Webster



***"For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. For the love of money is the root of all evil..."***

***—1 Timothy 6:7, 10***

## Astronomical Odds

In addition to being unscriptural, gambling is a pastime that doesn't make good practical sense, either. Casinos make millions of dollars every year, because the odds of winning the games played there are always stacked in favor of the house. The same principle applies to racetracks, raffles and bingo games. State sponsored lotteries are setup in such a way that the payout is always just a fraction of the money that is taken from the bettors. Even when the jackpot is hundreds of millions of dollars, state lotteries never lose money when someone wins.

The odds of winning an average lottery are about 1 in 15 million. The odds of winning a "big" lottery (with a cash value of 10 million dollars) are about 1 in 146 million. When promoting their lotteries, states always emphasize the amounts of money the winner receives. What they do not publicize is that, for every winner there are thousands upon thousands of losers, which finance the prize and all of the profits. Whenever you gamble, the odds are never in your favor.

As a matter of fact, you have a fifty percent better chance of being struck by

lightening than winning the lottery. You also have a better chance of being killed by lightening. If you drive 10 miles to purchase your lottery ticket, it is eleven times more likely for you to be killed in an automobile accident along the way than for you to win the jackpot. It is also more likely that you will die from falling out of an airplane, coming into contact with scalding water, being bitten by a venomous animal, or being executed by the state than it is for you to win an average lottery. Gambling just doesn't make good sense. Better to keep your money in your pocket.

**PP**

# The Solution to Our Problems?

States all over the country have long touted gambling as the solution to the financial problems they face. Revenue generated from lotteries, casinos, race-tracks and such has been sold to taxpayers as the best way to balance state budgets, fund education and other programs, and effectively “cure” whatever “ails” the state government. But, is that assertion true? Do states have to resort to the sanction, promotion and purveyance of sin, in order to be fiscally sound?

I submit to you, dear reader, that gambling does not solve the problems faced by state government—in fact, it only makes them worse. More than a quarter of a century ago, the Commonwealth of Kentucky instituted a state

lottery, to go along with race track betting and riverboat casino gambling, with the promise that revenue from these activities would fund the state’s lagging education system. Twenty-five years later, state budgetary woes are still frontline news, with lack of money for the school system leading the copy. The state of Ohio has had their lottery nearly twice as long, and their problems with funding education are twice as bad.

What has increased, in both of these states, is the number of people addicted to gambling and the suffering of those around them. People have lied, cheated, stolen, assaulted and even murdered to obtain the money they needed to feed their compul-

sion to gamble. It is same kind of behavior that one sees in drug addicts. When will America’s leadership wake up and realize what legal, institutionalized gambling is doing to the people of our society?

The gambling industry takes money from the pockets of the country’s poorest citizens and puts it in the coffers of some of the country’s richest citizens. Gambling is a sinful activity that does not even make any rational sense. Then again, it is in the nature of sin to provide a temporary feeling of pleasure, while delivering consequences that endure much longer, and may potentially reach into eternity (Heb. 11:24,25; Gal. 6:7).

**“Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth...but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven...for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”**

**—Matthew  
6:19-21**

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—9:30 a.m.

### **Sunday Morning Worship**

—10:30 a.m.

### **Sunday Evening Worship**

—6:00 p.m.

### **Wednesday Evening Bible Study**

—7:00 p.m.

*A Christ-Preaching, Bible-Teaching Church*

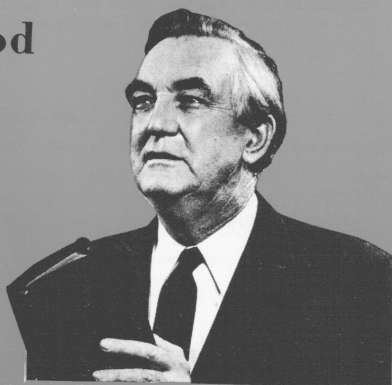
## What About Gambling?

Gambling is many things to many people. Some see it as a harmless pastime—exciting entertainment. To others, it is an addiction, which robs them and those who care about them of money, happiness and dignity. Many politicians think that it is a source of tax revenue, which will solve every financial problem the government faces. Most ordinary citizens do not even realize that it is, quite simply, a tax on the poorest citizens, which keeps them stuck in their poverty. People need to hear the truth about gambling, because the gambling industry in our country paints a false picture of what their product is, in fact. Gambling is an addictive behavior, which results in misery for the gambler and all who are connected with him. Rather than solving problems for governments, gambling creates new problems for local and state authorities. Theft, assault and murder follow in the wake of casinos, race tracks and lotteries. Christians must avoid any entanglement in the sin of gambling, and they must oppose its expansion in our society, whenever possible. In this issue of the Paper Pulpit, we shall endeavor to fight this plague upon the poor.

### Lesson 8

# GOD SPEAKS TODAY

Man's  
Responsibility  
To  
God



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