

GAMBLING 135

INTRODUCTION:

A. Facts:

1. Today 39 states have lotteries and several more have voted to join the crowd. In addition the only two states without any kind of legal gambling are Hawaii and Utah
2. The popularity of online gaming is increasing rapidly and this year has seen significant growth in Europe and in Asia. It is estimated that online Casino revenue will increase between \$6-\$10 Billion Dollars in the next 12 months and reach a staggering \$20 Billion by 2005.
3. Millions of people across the United States play the lottery. Last year, 37 state lotteries and the lottery in the District of Columbia generated \$35.8 billion in sales and \$11.8 billion in profits, according to the state lottery organization that compiles this sort of data. Sales and profits of state lotteries generally grow at an annual rate of about 4%.

B. Many of our civil leaders are looking at various forms of gambling as a means of raising funds for the state.

C. It seems that some have the idea that Bingo used as a fund raiser for non-profit organizations is a fine way to raise funds for various organizations.

1. "Americans spend \$10 billion a year at charity--sponsored bingo and casino games. But only 10% goes to help the needy." Money (magazine) October 1993.
2. Many say that the percentage is steadily declining and in some cases the charity only receives a fraction of 1% of the profit.

D. From US News & World Report, March 14, 1994 in an article titled "America's Gambling Craze". "The casino boom is growing daily. But it might not last forever, and its ill effects are Potent." "No one howled in protest last month when H&R Block set up makeshift tax-preparation offices in four Nevada casinos and offered gamblers same-day 'refund-anticipation loans.' And few people cared recently when a Florida inventor won a U. S. patent that could someday enable television audiences to legally bet on game shows, football games and even beauty pageants from their homes."

E. What's the deal? Not that long ago, Americans held gambling in nearly the same esteem as heroin dealing and applauded when ax-wielding police paid a visit to the corner dice room. But moral outrage has become as outmoded as a penny slot machine. In 1955, for example, baseball commissioner Ford Frick considered wagering so corrupt he prohibited major leaguers from overnighing in Las Vegas. Last year, by contrast, Americans for the first time made more trips to casinos than they did to Major League ballparks -- some 92 million trips, according to one study.

- F. "It took six decades for gambling to become America's Pastime, from the legalization of Nevada casinos in 1931 to April Fool's Day 1991, when Davenport Iowa, launched the Diamond Lady, the nation's first legal riverboat casino. The gradual creation of 37 state lotteries broke down the public's mistrust, conveying a clear message that the government sanctioned gambling; indeed, is even coming to depend on it as a tax-revenue source.
- G. Corporate ownership of casinos helped in its own way, too, replacing shady operators with trusted brand names like Hilton and MGM. Casinos now operate or are authorized in 23 states, and soon 95 percent of all Americans are expected to live within a three or four-hour drive of one."
- H. We must then, realize that legalized gambling is already a part of our civilization and is rapidly expanding. So what should be the Christian's attitude toward gambling? Is it just another form of recreation in which a Christian can participate, regulated by good judgment?
- I. While the word gamble does not appear in the Bible, the principles that apply to it are.

BODY:

I. WHAT IS GAMBLING.

- A. It is the creation of an unnecessary risk of losing some-thing we possess with the hope of gaining at the expense of another.
- B. Legally, "Gaming or playing for money, betting on the results of a game, the playing of a game of chance or skill for stakes."
- C. It involves the creation of unnecessary risks.
- D. Things that are not gambling.
 - 1. Farmer -necessary risk.
 - 2. Investor (stock etc.)- becomes owner, productive.
 - 3. Insurance-does not produce risks, it is for the risks which already exist.
 - 4. Giving prizes for accomplishments.
 - 5. Giving as a means of advertising.
 - 6. Sweepstakes that are free.
 - 7. Eating breakfast, driving to work or getting married.
- E. How can I know if it is gambling?

1. Is this investment with reasonable prospects for productive results in goods and services.
2. Will this action create a risk that did not previously exist in the hope of obtaining something for nothing?
3. How will this action affect me?
4. What effect on others?
5. What effect will it have on the church and the cause of Christ?

F. More is spent on gambling than on education or religion in U.S.A.

G. J. Edgar Hoover "The gambling problem must be viewed as a phase of the entire crime picture. . . It corrupts youth and blights the lives of adults. It becomes the spring board for other crimes."

H. "The entire history of legalized gambling. . . shows that it has brought but poverty, crime and corruption, demoralization of moral and ethical standards, and ultimately a lower living standard and misery for all people." Thomas Dewey.

II. WHY IS IT WRONG?

A. Poor stewards of God's money. Americans wager 35.8 billion on lottery each year. Some say trillion dollars annually on all gambling, or \$4,500 for every man, woman and child in the nation.

Population of U. S. in 294,344,972

\$35.8 billion averages out to \$121.63 a year for each man, woman and child in U. S.

\$35.8 billion can pay \$52,000 a year to 688,462 preachers.

1. 1 Cor. 4:2 Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful
2. Rom. 14:12 So then each of us shall give account of himself to God
3. Whether one is wealthy or poor, what we possess is entrusted to us by God.

B. Gambling is prompted by the sin of covetousness. (take away the money and see what happens to it).

1. An inordinate desire for money or material things.
2. Col. 3:5 Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry

3. 1 Tim. 6:10a “For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil ..”

4. 1 Cor. 6:9-11 Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.

C. Such is not honest labor.

1. Christians are to work with their hands that which is good.

2. Eph. 4:28 Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need.

3. 2 Thess 3:12 Now those who are such we command and exhort through our Lord Jesus Christ that they work in quietness and eat their own bread.

4. Efforts to receive much greater benefits than we provide are dishonest.

5. Gambling is an effort to steal from another with his approval.

6. We must be honest in our dealings- Rom. 12:17 Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men.

D. 1 Tim. 5:8 But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

1. They have become so "hooked" that they forfeit most of their income and often go deeply into debt.

2. They c/n provide for their family.

E. Gambler cannot obey Rom. 13:10 Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

1. When one wagers his money he hopes to get the better end of the deal.

2. It matter not the difficult straits into which such will place the other person of his family.

F. Stumbling block for others.

1. Rom. 13:12-13.

2. Rom. 14:21 It is good neither to eat meat nor drink wine nor do anything by which your brother stumbles or is offended or is made weak.

3. Rom. 15:1 We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak, and not to please ourselves.

G. Evil companions.

1. 1 Cor. 15:33 **Do not be deceived: "Evil company corrupts good habits."**

2. Prov. 24:1 **Do not be envious of evil men, Nor desire to be with them;.**

3. 2 Cor. 6:14a Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers

H. Appearance of evil.

1. 1 Thess. 5:22 **Abstain from every form of evil.**

2. If nothing else it appears evil.

I. Produces evil fruits.

1. Matt. 7:16-20 You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore by their fruits you will know them

2. Crime, poverty, corruption, misery, etc.

III. ANSWERING THE ARGUMENTS.

A. Will raise money from taxes for good things.

1. Has yet to be proven.

2. There is no such thing as some-thing for nothing. Robert Goodman, professor of urban planning at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst, says that Atlantic City, the faded New Jersey resort that ended Nevada's monopoly in 1976, is a prime case of what can go wrong. "During a 16-year period," Goodman said, "they pulled in revenues of \$44 billion--more than \$1 million for every man, woman and child in the place. It was a major benefit for the casinos, but the community lost 26 percent of its population and 100 of the 250 restaurants that were there when the casinos moved in. On top of that the city has the highest unemployment in the state and a lot of homelessness." Mclean's (magazine) May 30, 1994

3. One Senator said "America will be in a bad way if we ever have to resort to taxing crime and immorality for the purpose of raising revenue to operate our institutions. The fascination of gambling to many people is so strong that, in my opinion, it

would be complete folly to make the facilities more available than they presently are."

4. Produces nothing of value and adds nothing to the economy

- a. Not everyone is amused. "The country is flying blind," says William N. Thompson, a professor of public administration at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, who studies gambling policy. "State legislators think this is free money," says Thompson, "but it's not free. It's just taken from other parts of the local economy." Fortune (magazine) November 1, 1993.
- b. States frequently overestimate the financial impact of gambling revenue, too. "Legalized gambling is never large enough to solve any social problem," says gambling-law professor and paid industry consultant I. Nelson Rose. In New Jersey, for example, horse racing alone accounted for about 10 percent of state revenue in the 1950s. Today, despite the addition of a lottery and 12 casinos, the state earns only 6 percent of its revenue through gambling. "Atlantic city used to be a slum by the sea," says Rose, "Now it's a slum by the sea with casinos." US News & World Report, March 14, 1994

5. Rom. 3:8. **"Shall we do evil that good may come, God forbid."**

B. People will gamble anyway why not make it legal.

1. Same is true of drugs.
2. Murder, stealing, prostitution, etc.
3. Some will not do it if it is illegal.

C. If we don't get it someone else close by will.

1. Think about this, what if everyone felt this way.
2. I will be immoral just to beat someone else to it.

D. Churches play bingo and school children sell chances.

1. If gambling is a violation of divine law why are religious people not more vigorously opposed? This quote from US News & World Report, March 14, 1994 "The sky is not falling yet. Apart from a handful of academics and the odd politician, few Americans are seriously questioning the morality of an industry that is expected to help gamblers lose a record \$35 billion in 1995 alone. Religious leaders have been oddly silent, perhaps because so many churches and synagogues rely on bingo revenues. 'The biggest things we have to help people are churches and temples and the government,' says Arnie Wexler, executive director of the Council

on Compulsive Gambling of New Jersey. 'And now they're all in the gambling business.'"

2. True church does not raise money this way.
3. Children should be taught gambling is wrong not taught to do it.

E. Only small amounts should be allowed.

1. Just as bad to steal a penny as a million dollars.
2. Small tends to grow too large.

CONCLUSION:

Rom. 12:1-2 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.