

## GAMBLING AND THE LOTTERY

Did you know that there are over seven hundred\* chapters of *Gamblers Anonymous* now? Did you know that one million Americans gamble on some level? Did you know that three hundred billion dollars a year are spent on gambling? It is a serious issue today. The issue has become more complex since the advent of casinos, lotteries, and river boat gambling. What should a Christian think about gambling? Is it OK for a Christian to gamble?

(\* In 2002- about 1500 chapters)

### **Observations:**

God is not against wealth per se (Deuteronomy 8:18; 1 Chronicles 29:12-14). He *is* concerned about how wealth is acquired (1 Timothy 6:17).

God encourages risk-taking, or to use a more comfortable word, investing (Matthew 25:14-30). Two servants invested their money while the second did not.

### **Ten Questions:**

1. Is your risk-taking motivated by greed? 1 Timothy 6:5b-10. God condemns greed (Proverbs 21:5; 28:20, 22). Why do you want to gamble or play the lottery? Is it a thirst for wealth?
2. Is your risk-taking designed to replace God as the supplier of your needs? Proverbs 10:22 God doesn't operate by luck and neither should His children. Matthew 6:19-21
3. Has your gambling replaced productivity? When God made Adam, the first charge He gave him was to be productive (Gen. 2:15). Even in a perfect environment, Adam had a job to do. See also Ephesians 4:28. The hope of becoming rich by gambling cannot act as a substitute for productive labor. 2 Thessalonians 3:10; Proverbs 6:9-11; 10:4; 12:11. If all a person wants is to have money change hands from the state, then this is an illegitimate hope.
4. Am I taking a wise or an unwise risk? A wise man calculates before he makes a decision so he can get maximum productivity from his efforts. A person, it has been stated, has one chance in six thousand of being hurt in an automobile crash, one chance in half a million of being hurt in an airplane crash. In Texas a person has a one in sixteen million chance of winning the lottery. We should only take risks that meet family needs or further God's work (Luke 14:28; Proverbs 24:3; 3:5).
5. Are you becoming addicted to your gambling thing? 1 Corinthians 6:12. No one begins gambling expecting to become its slave. But it can soon move to dependency.

6. Is the risk you are taking exploitative in nature? To put it another way, does it require you or someone else to manipulate and use people to pull it off? See Isaiah 3:14; Amos 4:1-2; Zechariah 7:8-10; Exodus 20:15, 17. Someone has to lose for another person to win. The lottery is aimed at the poor and largely financed by the poor. For me to win means that all these other people have put in their money but lost. The lottery appeals to the weaknesses and not to the strengths of people
7. Does your risk-taking help or hurt society? Romans 14:7. Is my gambling adding to the betterment of my community, or is it adding to the decay and deterioration of the people and environment around us? Is the government really doing its citizens a favor by legalizing gambling? Gambling, legal or illegal, has led to tax evasion, bribery, swindling, and suicide.
8. Does gambling do spiritual harm to others? 1 Corinthians 9:19-22; 8:13. What effect will your gambling have on other believers who are seeking to grow in their Christian life?
9. Can what you do be considered legitimate fun? Ecclesiastes 5:18 ; 1 Timothy 6:17. Is your desire to participate in some form of gambling growing to the point where it is pushing your love for God out?
10. Is gambling good stewardship? To be a steward means that you are a manager for somebody else's property. You own nothing. 1 Timothy 6:7; Luke 16:1-13.

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