

# The Christian and Gambling

## Various Texts

### Introduction:

1. In 2006, gaming activities generated gross revenues of \$90.93 billion in the United States. (gross rev = total amt wagered - "winnings")
2. What is unique about the current gambling situation is the speed at which it has gone from an undercurrent in American society to high-profile, socially recognized activity.
  - a. The gambling industry has grown tenfold in the U.S. since 1975
  - b. Thirty-seven states now have lotteries
  - c. 15 million people display some sign of gambling addiction
  - d. Two-thirds of the adult pop. placed some kind of bet last year
  - e. Gambling profits in casinos are more than \$30 billion while lotteries are about 17 billion annually
  - f. "Players" with household incomes under \$10,000 bet nearly three times as much on lotteries as those with incomes over \$50,000
  - g. Gambling among young people is on the increase: 42 percent of 14-year-olds, 49 percent of 15-year-olds, 63 percent of 16-year-olds, 76 percent of 18-year-olds.
  - h. Internet gambling has nearly doubled every year since 1997 ? in 2001 it exceed \$2 billion
  - i. After casinos opened in Atlantic City, the total number of crimes within a thirty-mile radius increased 100 percent
  - j. The average debt incurred by a male pathological gambler in the U.S. is between \$55,000 and \$90,000 (it is \$15,000 for female gamblers)
  - k. The average rate of divorce for problem gamblers is nearly double that of non-gamblers
  - l. The suicide rate for pathological gamblers is twenty times higher than for non-gamblers (one in five attempts suicide)
  - m. Sixty-five percent of pathological gamblers commit crimes to support their gambling habit
  - n. Two decades ago, 2 states had legal gambling and 48 states outlawed it. Today, 48 states have some form of legal gambling. Only Hawaii and Utah do not.
3. With gambling so prevalent in our country and our state, it is time we stopped to ask, "What does God think about gambling?"
4. Dave illustration ←

## **I. What is Gambling?**

### **A. Definition of Gambling**

Gambling is taking an artificial risk with the hope that a small investment of money will pay off with excessive gain far beyond what the investment of time, money or skill would justify.

### **B. The Three Elements of Gambling**

1. Artificially high risk
  - a) *This is an unnecessary or chosen risk.*
  - b) *The odds are carefully stacked against the gambler*
2. A small investment or payment is made
3. The hope is to get rich quick
  - a) *Gambling has a selfish goal*
  - b) *Usually to get rich quick*
4. The gain at the expense of someone else

### **C. Common Justifications for Gambling**

1. Everyone Gambles Every Day
  - a) *Driving a car is a gamble*
  - b) *Crossing the street is a gamble*
  - c) *A farmer planting a field is gambling*
2. Answering this argument
  - a) *Getting in a car, crossing a street, a farmer planting a field are not gambling*
  - b) *There is risk in all of life*
  - c) *Gambling involves an artificially high risk which we don't have here*
  - d) *Driving the car or crossing the street have a statistical risk which is not chosen and it is not artificial - the odds are not stacked against the driver*
  - e) *You are not trying to get rich quick crossing the street or driving the car etc.*
  - f) *There is no gain at the expense of others*
  - g) *The farmer is not seeking gain at the expense of others when he plants the fields*
3. Buying Insurance is Not Gambling
  - a) *Gambling is trying to beat the odds*
  - b) *We buy insurance because we know we cannot beat the odds*
  - c) *The motivation for insurance is not to get rich quick*
4. Investing in the Stock Market is not Gambling
  - a) *The risk is not artificial or created*
  - b) *The investor is hoping for a gain or profit just like every other business person*
  - c) *He is hoping for a reasonable gain*
  - d) *The gain does not come at the expense of others*

5. Casting lots in the Bible was not gambling
  - a) *The land of Canaan was divided by casting lots - Num 26:55*
  - b) *The Lord controls lots - Prov 16:33*
  - c) *Lots determined certain jobs in the Temple - Lu 1:9*
  - d) *Acts 1:26 - casting lots to determine the replacement apostle for Judas*
  - e) *Casting lots was a way of making a decision*
  - f) *Flipping a coin to determine who gets the ball first in a football game is not gambling.*

## **II. Why Not Gamble?**

### **A. Gambling Shows Discontentment with God as Provider**

*Mt 6:33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*

*Mt 6:24 No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.*

*Php 4:19 But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.*

1. Gambling robs God of the opportunity to provide for us.
2. You say, "Maybe I'll win enough to buy some of the extra things I need."
3. God wants us to look to Him for our provision, not to gambling.
4. Gambling substitutes our God for another.

### **B. Gambling is Motivated by Greed and Covetousness**

1. Gambling is driven by the "love of money" - 1Tim 6:9  
*9 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. 10 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.*
2. The covetousness of gambling goes against the 10<sup>th</sup> commandment
3. Gamblers say that they are just having fun - how many would gamble if the possibility of winnings was removed
4. After they legalized casino gambling in Mississippi, pawn shops became the fastest growing businesses in the state as people pawned their possessions to pay gambling debts. In Kansas City the number of pawn shops increased from 4 to 38 after casinos came to the area.

### **C. Gambling Goes Against the "Golden Rule"**

1. Gambling is predicated on the losses, pain and suffering of others
2. For one to win at gambling, then others must lose
3. It preys on the desperation of the poor - Prov 14:31; 22:16; Zech 7:10a
4. A Mississippi State University study found that the poorest citizens in casino areas spend a far greater percentage of their income and they frequent casinos more than the other income groups
  - a) *Those with incomes less than \$10,000 spent 10% of their income on gambling.*
  - b) *Those who earned 10k-20k spent 4%*
  - c) *Those earning more than 40k /yr spend only 1% on gambling*

### **D. Gambling Violates God Law of Work**

Ex 20:9 Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work:

2Th 3:10 For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. 11 For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies. 12 Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread.

1. God's plan was for man to work six days and rest on the seventh
2. Gambling promotes laziness
3. The Bible gives us four means of getting gain...
  - a) *By honest work - Prov 13:11; Eph 4:28*
  - b) *By fair exchange - Acts 5:3-4*
  - c) *By investment - Matt 25:14-30*
  - d) *By gift - Acts 20:35*
4. Gambling promotes the "luck ethic"

### **E. Gambling Violates God's Law of Temperance**

1. Christians are to possess self-control - 1Cor 6:12
2. Existence of "Gamblers Anon" shows gambling can be addictive
3. Gambling Impact Study in 2001 found that there were 2.5 million pathological gamblers, 3 million more problem gamblers and another 15 million people at risk to become problem gamblers

### **F. Gambling Sets a Bad Example**

1. It destroys one's reputation - Prov 22:1
2. It could lead others into sin - Matt 18:6
3. It manifests a lack of love - 1Cor 8:13
4. It destroys one's influence - Matt 5:13-14

### **G. Gambling Hurts the Home**

1. The home is one of God's ordained institutions - the foundation of society - anything that harms this institution is evil
2. Gambling can cause material deprivations as well as divorce, child neglect and domestic violence
3. An Illinois mother was sentenced to prison for suffocating her infant daughter to collect insurance money to continue gambling

### **H. Gambling Wastes Money – Lu 16:2**

2 And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward.

1. Some may have an abundance and do not miss the losses.
2. However, multitudes do not have money to spare.
3. It could be argued that the money would be spent foolishly some other way were it not for the casinos, but we do not know that.
4. Undoubtedly, there are families going without the necessities of life because mom or dad have been deluded into thinking they are going to strike it rich.

### **I. Gambling is Addictive – 1Cor 6:12**

12 All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.

1. In the same U.S. News and World Report article referred to earlier, Sociologist Rachel Volberg found that four years after the state of Iowa legalized riverboat gambling, the number of problem gamblers had tripled.
2. And stories of ruined credit, bankruptcies, theft and even suicide are numerous.
3. One compulsive gambler from Illinois said, “Casinos are the crack cocaine of gambling.”

### **J. Gambling Attracts the Criminal Element**

1. The U.S. News and World Report article says that towns with casinos have experienced an upsurge of crime at the same time that crime as a whole was dropping in the rest of the nation.
2. A 1994 survey revealed that crime rose 5.8% in those towns, while crime as a whole dropped 2% nationally.
3. The 31 towns that got new casinos just the year before saw their crime rate rise 7.7%.

### **K. Gambling is a Form of Stealing – Eph 4:28**

28 Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.

1. Dr. G. Campbell Morgan, the great 19th-century preacher wrote, "...the whole habit of gambling is of the essence of theft, and this for the reason that it is a means of coming into possession of property for which one has done no honest work.
2. Whether their practices are gilded by the glory of a court, or tarnished by the vulgarity of a slum, the gambler is a thief in the sight of God, and ought therefore to be so in the sight of all honest men."

### **L. Gambling Costs Society More Than the Revenues It Produces – Job 4:8**

8 Even as I have seen, they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same.

1. When the members of Gamblers Anonymous of Illinois were surveyed in 1994, 26% said they had divorced or separated because of gambling, 34% had lost or quit a job, 44% had stolen things from work, 21% had filed for bankruptcy, 18% had gambling related arrests, 66% had contemplated suicide, and 16% had attempted suicide.
2. The costs for services for compulsive gamblers, including treatment and court expenses, has been estimated at between \$13,000 and \$35,000 per person.
3. Estimates of the number of compulsive gamblers in America are between 6 and 10 million!
4. You do the math!

### **M. Legalized Gambling Makes the Government a Promoter of a "get something for nothing" Attitude**

Ro 13:4 For he is the minister of God to thee for good.

2Thess 3:10 For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.

1. Our nation has enough problems without government adding its endorsement to this evil.
2. In reality, government should set the example of morality and righteousness in a nation.
3. But there is nothing "good" about encouraging people to lose their hard-earned money at the casino or the race track, or in the lottery.
4. A nation that encourages such conduct is gambling with its own future.

## ***N. Legalized Gambling Destroys Morals, Character, and Leads to a More Decadent Society***

**Gal 6:7 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap,**

1. Just because something has been legalized by passing a law, does not make it right, and the evidence is abundant that society suffers when gambling reigns.
2. America has ills which many think can be cured by revenues from games of chance.
3. But the spiritual effects will plunge this nation further down into the pit of degradation.

### **Conclusion:**

1. The lottery is not just harmless entertainment
  - a. It is not like bowling, fishing, sports
  - b. It is a greed-driven, predatory vice, scientifically designed to squeeze the maximum amount of money from every patron
  - c. It is wholly dependent on victims - it is consensual theft
  - d. Gambling exploits the poor and desperate and is responsible for increased crime, divorce and family disruption and it creates a multitude of new addicts
2. Gambling is a sin and must be condemned as such in all of its forms.
3. Vote against gambling
4. Rom 13:1-5 says that God ordained govt to protect the welfare of its citizens and to suppress evil
5. State sanctioned gambling does just the opposite

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In 1993, Dave moved his family from Florida to Tennessee to escape creditors and legalized gambling. He knew his family had suffered there from his gambling addiction, especially horse racing. He recalled when he moved to Florida he saw signs as they crossed the state line: "Welcome to Florida. Play the Florida Lottery." Thomas, who had already begun to gamble before moving to Florida, began spending \$2-\$3 a week on lottery tickets. He justified it because of the low cost of the tickets and the idea he could help his family. He dreamed of buying his parents a better house. Soon, however, the few dollars he spent weekly on lottery tickets grew to \$50 by playing the daily "Cash 3, Cash 4, or Pick 5" tickets. Then Thomas was introduced to dog racing. He began asking for advances on his salary. In the 10 years his family lived in Florida, they moved 11 times, often in the middle of the night to escape landlords and often after having the utilities turned off.