

Money and Gambling

Christ talked more about money than about any other subject other than heaven. Our handling of money and our attitude toward money is crucial to our view of God and our usefulness to Him. Money is the primary cause of problems between a husband and a wife because of disagreements on how to spend, save, and share. If we can get control of our money, we will have gained a tremendous skill in life.

“The silver is mine and the gold is mine,” declares the Lord Almighty. (Haggai 2:8)

The rich rule over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender. (Proverbs 22:7)

“Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,” says the Lord Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have enough room for it.” (Malachi 3:10)

For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. (1 Timothy 6:10)

Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment (1 Timothy 6:17)

Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. (Matthew 6:19-21)

Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.” (Hebrews 13:5)

Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. (2 Corinthians 9:6-7)

Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. (Luke 6:38)

1. What basic assumptions must we have about money as a Christian?
 2. What is the love of money?
 3. Is it wrong to borrow money?
 4. How is a borrower a servant to a lender?
 5. Is it wrong to save money for the future?
 6. What is wrong with gambling?
 7. What dangerous attitude and “promise” does gambling promote?
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MEMORIZE: Matthew 6:19-21

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Gambling and Lotteries

Facts:

- Americans wagered an estimated \$600 billion in 1997
- Bankruptcies are 18% higher in counties that have legalized gambling.
- Compulsive gambling, suicides, broken marriages, extortion, prostitution, and drugs are common consequences of gambling wherever it is permitted.
- 48 states have some form of legal gambling: only Utah and Hawaii do not.

History: Early in our nation's history, almost all states had some form of lottery. However, the consequences of lotteries led Americans to change their minds about state-sponsored gambling. The loose money quickly led to corruption. The states banned all forms of gambling.

Scripture References:

- *They sow the wind, and reap the whirlwind. (Hosea 8:7)*
- *And we urge you, brothers, warn those who are idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone. Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always try to be kind to each other and to everyone else. (1 Thessalonians 5:14-15)*
- *He who sows wickedness reaps trouble. (Proverbs 22:8)*
- *So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. (1 Corinthians 10:31)*
- *You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor. (Exodus 20:17)*

While there is no specific prohibition against gambling in the Bible, it violates many biblical principles. Gambling is built on greed and covetousness. It caters to a base desire to get rich without working and to benefit from the loss of others. Basically, gambling is an attempt to win money that's been lost by someone else, not earned, and produces an intense desire to get what does not rightfully belong to you.

Gambling has a very negative impact on the poor (the majority of money spent for gambling comes from the lowest third of the income scale) and Scripture has numerous admonitions to care for and look out for the poor and disadvantaged. Any get-rich-quick scheme is developed to entrap the weak and especially the poor. Gambling is the ultimate get-rich scheme because (1) The participants may be encouraged to risk money they can't afford to lose. (2) They may know little or nothing about what they are doing. (3) They're forced to make hasty decisions. (4) They operate on the greater sucker theory (some other sucker has wagered his or her money but I'm going to win it for myself).

The social consequences of gambling—addiction, crime, bankruptcies, and family disruptions—have led opponents to conclude that gambling goes against one of Christianity's fundamental principles; to love one's neighbor. It flies in the face of logic to say we love our neighbor if we are hoping we can win at gambling and take away the money he has wagered for the same purpose.

Gambling disregards responsible stewardship and the work ethic and involves gain at someone else's expense. Gambling tends to distract us from actually taking the steps to improve our situation through education, new job, harder work, or new opportunities. Deep down there is a side to us that thinks that all of the wrongs in our lives could be corrected with a big win in the lottery. It is too easy to use gambling as a channel for unrealized dreams. "If only I won the lottery, I wouldn't have any more problems." In the lottery, you don't even have to risk failure, because failure is a given.

Even casual gambling is poor stewardship, because that money could go toward something good, like feeding the poor. Instead it's going toward nothing.

There should be no place for even casual, "recreational" gambling in the life of a Christian. Any money, however small, spent on gambling, brings along with it the greed, illusions, and sinful desires that accompany those who gamble large amounts.

Make it your vow to not spend a penny in any kind of gambling, lottery, or game of chance. It's the only safe and biblical course of action.