

Gambling & The Scriptures

(Philippians 4:8-9)

- Introduction:
1. One need not look very long or hard to discover that the thinking of people change with the times to reflect the thinking of their culture.
 2. At one time, one would not hear Christians defending the practice of gambling.
 3. Today, there are at least 26 states that have a lottery; 35 states allow pari-mutual gambling and a recent Gallup Poll showed that 82% of Americans favored some form of legalized gambling.
 4. Thus I think it is a very relevant question to ask what the Bible says about this issue.

I. The History Of Gambling

- A. Gambling has a rather ancient history.
 1. Homer (850 B.C.) wrote about the knucklebones of sheep and cattle marked on four sides and rolled like dice.
 2. Gaming boards were discovered on the island of Crete as early as 1800 B.C.
 3. Race tracks existed in ancient Rome.
 4. Lots were cast for the garments of Jesus (Matthew 27:25).
- B. Gambling was often referred to first and second century writers.
 1. They pointed out that such was not the practice of those who followed Christ.
 2. Tertillium (200 A.D.) "If you say that you are a Christian, when you are a dice player, you say what you are not, because you are a partaker of the world."

II. A Definition Of Gambling

- A. Part of the confusing regarding gambling is that it has often been poorly defined as simply taking a risk.
- B. Properly defined, gambling is wagering something of value on the chance outcome of an event wherein there is a winner and a loser.
- C. Thus, normal risks of life do not fall into this category.

III. The Dangers of Gambling

- A. Of course, one will search the Bible in vain for a passage that explicitly states, "Thou shalt not gamble."
 1. But neither will one find passages that explicitly forbid arson, abusing drugs, kidnaping, and counterfeiting.
- B. So what we must do is address this topic through biblical principles.
 1. Gambling often appeals to greed and covetousness (Luke 12:15; 1 Timothy 6:9-10).
 2. Gambling is selfish. Gamblers win at the direct economic loss of others (1 Corinthians 13:5; Romans 13:10; Matthew 7:12).
 3. Gambling is contrary to honest work and responsible stewardship (Ephesians 4:28; 1 Corinthians 4:1-2).
 4. Gambling is stealing by mutual consent. Gambling bears the same relationship to stealing that dueling does to murder (Proverbs 28:6).
 5. Gambling is highly addictive (1 Corinthians 9:25; Galatians 5:23).
 6. Gambling is associated with worldliness (Romans 12:17; Philippians 2:15-16).

- Conclusion:
1. Is gambling an appropriate activity in which a Christian ought to engage? I wouldn't bet on it!
 2. Brethren, let's live above the world. Don't lower the bar, but excel to a higher standard of living that brings honor to Christ.