

What is Wrong with Gambling?

I Timothy 6:8-12

Preached by Dr. Terry L. Long at FBC, Butler on January 31, 2016

A horror story is unfolding in Alabama and across America at this very hour! Typical of that story is a provocative article that appeared in the Baptist State paper of Louisiana a few years ago when I pastored in that state: "*A Compulsive Gambler commits suicide—is the casino responsible?*" (tell story)

And this kind of horror story is being repeated hundreds of times across the United States as Casino and lottery gambling is being promoted and accepted as "just another form of harmless family entertainment." But one thing is for certain—whatever else you may think about gambling, it is NOT another form of harmless family entertainment! Gambling destroys families! Gambling destroys communities! And Gambling destroys character!

Definition of Gambling: "Gambling is the act of risking what is yours, in order to get what belongs to another, with nothing given in return." With gambling, you must always remember that when you get something for nothing, somebody else winds up with nothing for something!

Definition of Covetousness: "A craving to have more, especially what belongs to another." When you peel back the outward veneer of gambling, what you find is a spirit of covetousness. Covetousness is the heartbeat; the core; the lifeline of gambling.

(Explain and illustrate the difference between gambling and *risking*.)

Some interesting statistics on gambling:

*Only seven states do not have a lottery: (Alabama, Mississippi, Alaska, Hawaii, Nevada, Utah, and Wyoming.)

*We live in a nation of gamblers. 88% of all men say they gamble or have gambled. 76% of all women say they gamble or have gambled.

*In 1996 customers wagered \$923 million dollars on \$1 slot machines at MS casinos alone.

*Professional gambling increases \$50 billion dollars every year.

*This year, Americans will gamble away over \$900 Billion dollars on everything from Casinos and lotteries to greyhound racing.

*To put that in perspective, Americans give only \$17 Billion dollars annually to all churches!

*There are 15-20 million compulsive gamblers in the US right now. There are more addicts to gambling than there are addicts to drugs or alcohol.

Here are ten reasons why gambling is wrong for the community, wrong for the nation, and wrong for the Christian:

1. Gambling Breeds a Covetous spirit.
2. Gambling prostitutes the gifts and possessions God has given to us as His stewards.
3. Gambling makes it harder for Christians to keep a right perspective about material things.
4. Gambling preys upon the weak and those who can least afford it.
5. Gambling destroys the basic work ethic of our society.
6. Gambling violates the Biblical principle of love.
7. Gambling is a major cause of family breakdown.
8. Gambling draws in other sins.
9. Gambling leads to the disintegration of the individual and the community.
10. Gambling, when state-sponsored and state supported, requires the state to abandon its God-ordained role as a minister of God to protect its citizens.

What can I do about Gambling?

1. Repent of any spirit of covetousness and discontent in your heart that has made you susceptible to gambling in any form.
2. Refuse Satan any place in your life from this day forward through petty or hard-core gambling including Bingo, fantasy sports, or raffle-tickets.
3. Get godly counsel if you or a loved one is a compulsive gambler.
4. Get involved and take a stand in your community, state, and nation against gambling
5. Check your own personal stewardship and purpose to seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. People who gamble generally do not tithe. Possessions, to a gambler are very, very important. They do not ask, "What can I give to God's work", but "what can I get for myself?"

Who is the greatest gambler in the world? Jesus told us in Matt. 16:26, "For what does it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul"?

The greatest gambler in the world is the person who doesn't give his life to Jesus Christ, and he goes all through life trying to grab everything he can get his hands on, not realizing that someday he's going to have to leave it all behind, and he misses heaven because of it. That is not even a gamble....that is a sure thing!

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