

Don't Bet on It!

INTRODUCTION

- A. Illustration about man dying in a hotel fire because he stayed to play one more game of cards, Encyclopedia of 15,000 Illustrations, #4152.
- B. Gambling is a big business in America.
 - 1. Eighty percent of Americans gamble.
 - 2. In 1990 Americans legally gambled \$278 billion.
 - 3. That amount is:
 - a. Two times the amount spent on education.
 - b. Ten times the amount given to churches.
 - c. Ten billion more than is spent on medical care.
 - d. Over half of what we spend on food.
- C. Gambling is a problem in America.
 - 1. Eight million Americans are compulsive gamblers.
 - 2. 2.7 million of them are women.
 - 3. 1.6 million of them are teenagers.
 - 4. 96% started before the age of 14.
 - 5. 1 in 10 gamblers become compulsive gamblers.
- D. Gambling is becoming an important issue in this state.
 - 1. Governor Wise & several members of the legislature are seriously discussing regulating & taxing gaming machines throughout the state.
 - 2. We need to be alarmed by this, & contact the governor & members of the legislature to oppose this legislation.
 - 3. We don't need to oppose this legislation based upon our political preferences; we need to oppose this legislation based upon Scripture.
 - 4. Tonight, we want to examine what the Bible has to say about gambling.

WHAT IS GAMBLING?

- A. In order to understand what the Scriptures teach concerning gambling, we must understand what the term means.
- B. Gambling is risk taking where you transfer something of value from one person to another on the basis of pure chance.
 - 1. Some people say, "All of life is a chance--what's the big deal with gambling?"
 - a. It's true that all of life is a chance, & we take chances every day--every time we get in the car we take a chance of having an accident, every time we turn on the stove we take the chance of its blowing up, & every time we walk across the floor we take the chance of falling.
 - b. But, gambling is pure chance, something over which we have no control--we have some control in the car (we can drive defensively), we have some control over the stove (we can keep it clean), we have some control over the floor (we can keep objects out of our way).
 - 2. Some people say, "Gambling is no different from playing the stock market."
 - a. Having stocks & bonds in the stock market is very different from gambling.
 - b. Stocks & bonds represent partial ownership & are essential to the existence of our commercial & industrial life.
 - c. In addition, investing in the stock market is not just throwing your money to chance--you should

research before you invest, you should only invest in solid corporations, etc.

C. Now that we have some understanding of gambling, let's examine why it's wrong.

GAMBLING INVOLVES COVETING

A. The Bible teaches us not to covet.

1. Ex 20:17.
2. Lk 12:15.
3. Heb 13:5.

B. Gambling is coveting.

1. Desiring what belongs to another is wrong.
2. Gambling is coveting what does not rightfully belong to us, a strike-it-rich scheme.
3. The desire to win money we did not work for is covetousness.

C. Illustration about sailor sinking with the steamship "Kent Indiaman," *Encyclopedia of 15,000 Illustrations*, #2031.

GAMBLING IS A FORM OF SLOTHFULNESS

A. We cannot be a slothful people.

1. Prov 21:25-26.
2. Prov 28:20.

B. We need to be a people who work.

1. Gn 3:19.
2. Eph 4:28.
3. 2 Thess 3:10.

C. Gambling teaches that work isn't really necessary--all one needs to do to earn an income is to sit back & wait to win the lottery; no work is necessary.

D. Illustration about the soldier wanting to take Secretary Frank Pace's photo digging a foxhole, *Encyclopedia of 15,000 Illustrations*, #11761

GAMBLING SERVES MAMMON

A. Jesus taught us that we cannot serve God & mammon (Mt 6:24).

B. Yet, that's exactly what happens when a Christian gambles--he's attempting to serve both God & mammon.

GAMBLING INDICATES A LACK OF TRUST IN GOD FOR OUR NEEDS

A. We're to trust God to provide the things we need in this life--Mt 6:33.

1. The "these things" refers to our material needs.
2. Jesus promises that if we obey God all these our needs will be added to us.

B. But, when we gamble, we're trying to gain these things for ourselves. Instead of trusting God to provide for our needs, we're trusting in ourselves to do so.

C. Our coinage reads, "In God We Trust," yet, if we are trying to gain money through gambling, we're trusting in ourselves & not in God.

GAMBLING DESTROYS THE FAMILY

A. Gambling can have disastrous effects on the family.

1. Prov 15:27.
2. 1 Tm 5:8.

a. When individuals gamble, they often take money that should be used for the family & use it for

- gambling.
 - b. Perhaps children don't get the pair of tennis shoes they need, don't get as much to eat (or perhaps it's nutritional because all Mom & Dad can afford is junk), don't get to go on the school trip--all because Mom & Dad gamble.
 - c. 1/3 of families with under \$10,000 in annual income spend 1/5 of their income on lotteries.
- B. How can that which takes away from a family be beneficial?

GAMBLING OVERPOWERS THOSE WHO GAMBLE

- A. So many of those who gamble become overpowered by it & addicted to it.
 - 1. As we have already said, there are 8 million compulsive gamblers in America.
 - 2. 1 in 10 gamblers become compulsive gamblers--Would you get on an airplane if you knew there was a 1 in 10 chance that it would crash?
- B. We as Christians cannot participate in anything where there is a great likelihood that we will become overpowered by it.
 - 1. 1 Cor 6:12.
 - 2. Rm 6:2--We cannot be involved in anything where we begin obeying it.
- C. Being overpowered by gambling causes so many problems.
 - 1. Gambling means crime.
 - a. Following the opening of Atlantic City's casinos, violent crime increased 250%.
 - b. Gamblers commit 40% of all white-collar crimes.
 - c. 20% of wife-abuse cases result from compulsive gambling.
 - 2. Gambling is listed by the FBI as one of the 6 selected dangers hurtful to young people.
 - 3. The late J. Edgar Hoover said, "Gambling is a vicious evil. It corrupts our youth & blights the lives of adults. It becomes the spring-board of other crimes--embezzlement, robbery, even murder."
- D. Why be involved in something so dangerous?

CONCLUSION

- A. We as Christians can have nothing to do with gambling, & we must oppose gambling wherever it exists.
- B. The odds are against us when we gamble.
 - 1. You are more likely to die in a car accident, die of AIDS, be hit by a falling object, die in a plane crash, or be eaten by a shark than to win the Florida lottery.
 - 2. The odds are 14 million to 1 against you that you won't win the Florida lottery.
- C. Although the odds are against us when we gamble, the odds are in our favor that if we obey Jesus we'll go to heaven.
 - 1. Mt 7:21.
 - 2. Are you doing God's will? If so, he will reward you--without a single doubt. If you're not, he'll punish you--without a single doubt.