

GAMBLING

By Dr. Hal Webb, Evangelist

"Labor not to be rich:..Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? For riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away" Pr. 23:4.

Gambling and the Lottery have become one of our nations worst sins. We are faced with home morgage tragedy, a rise in the cost of food and a shameful rise in gas prices. Everyone is feeling the pinch and cutting back on unnessary driving and limiting their purchases. Still they line up at the counter to purchase lottery tickets and continue to gamble away money needed for food and necessary things. It has become a habit to gamble and begins early in life Based on GREED, CHANCE, or LUCK whatever you call it the only result is TRAGEDY, WASTE, and LOSS. Something for nothing is a principle condemned by the Bible. *"Wealth gotten by vanity shall be diminished" Pr 13:11.* One who gambles, hopes to beat the odds and dreams of winning but always loses. Always!

Trusting LUCK or CHANCE is like *"tempting God"* Matthew 4:7. The roll of a ball, the flip of a card or the rattle of the dice certainly doesn't show ones trust in the provision of the Lord. What happens to us is not the result of a spin or flip of fate but rather the will of God. Gambling in every form also is a tragic source of TEMPTATION. It will cause you to *"fall into temptation and a snare, and unto many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition"* I Tim. 6:9. The lottery and all forms of gambling become a chain which binds the participant to daily waste of financial funds in the hope to gain more. Gambling leads to COVETOUSNESS. *"A faithful man shall abound with blessings: but he that maketh haste to be rich shall not be*

innocent" Pr. 28:20. The gambler removes faith from the provisions of God to a personal pursuit of quick riches that might be. The urge to gamble becomes an ENSLAVING HABIT. Working men spend money for lottery tickets while complaining how hard it is to feed the family. Others are losing their jobs but yet waste needed money on gambling. A complaining populace pours money down the drain of wasteful shattered hope. Such a compulsive desire is unfit for the child of God. *"God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein"* Rom. 6:2. Our provider is the Lord and not a hope to gain the squandered money of others.

There is no question that gambling ENCOURAGES GREED. Those who gamble are never satisfied with what they have, but always sacrifice their cash in the hope of winning. Initiative for work is lost in the hope of something for nothing. The believer is to be content in the things that we have. *"The love of money is the root of all evil"* I Tim 6:10. Notice that money is not the root of evil but the love for it. Gradually the gambler loses the thrill of daily Godly provision, the joy of providing honestly for one's own, for a consuming desire based on chance. The lusting for more, drains away the cash needed for personal and family daily needs. Oh, you say the winner is so happy. The true result is a FALSE HAPPINESS. To win gives a flash of exhilaration but only *"Godliness with contentment is great gain"* I Tim 6:6 Money simply does not satisfy. The tiny fraction who win something are never satisfied but spurred on to greater hopes to be shattered. Most who have won in the lottery have suffered untold problems as the leeches of life try to cash in on their winnings. Even in the life of the sinner money turns his eyes further away from his need for God. When someone occasionally becomes a winner it is NOT A CURE. Remember, *"the love of money is the root of all*

evil: while some have coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." I Tim. 6:10. The results of such winning are really losing in a myriad of ways.

Gambling TAKES FROM OTHERS. It takes losers to make possible a winner. When you gamble you take food off the table, shoes off the babies feet and seek to profit from the addictive loss of others. Your gain always represents the suffering and loss of others who are great losers. *"Many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken"* Isa. 8:15. How can a Christian contribute to such loss and suffering.? Gambling is built on the hope that when much has gone wrong things may get better.

Finally, lets not forget that gambling is a WASTE OF TIME. The believer is to be *"redeeming the time because the days are evil."* Eph 5:16 Time is precious and hours spent gambling fail to lead to satisfaction. Years ago we took the tour boat on the inland waterway toward Alaska, to see my son. Sue and I spent every waking moment on the top deck watching breaching whales, high flying eagles, wonderful snow capped mountains and calving glaciers. The scenery made one breathless, soaking in the beauty of the creation of all things by our God. Below, the same little old lady sat at the slot machine in the doorway stuffing quarters in the bandit while heavenly scenery flowed around the ship. Talk about addiction. She missed seeing the beauties of our Creator while hoping to hit it big. Life is too precious to gamble over what might be and to ignore the sure and promised blessings of the Lord. Remember, *"my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus"* Phil. 4:19. Such a promise stands above all the gambling chances that are taken

by addicted people enslaved by this habitual money wasting habit.

True Christians should avoid and condemn every form of gambling. Before I close I want to warn about card gambling. I have researched this with many articles and the testimony of converted card sharks. A pack of cards is not only a tool of evil but an insult to God. Any professional gambler will tell you each card in the deck has meaning. The King card is the devil, the enemy of God. The Ten Spot represents the spirit of darkness and all that is evil. The Club card speaks of murder and bloodshed and violence through the ages. The Jack is called the lustful libertine and keeper of prostitutes. The Queen card represents the virgin Mary who in card language is called the mother of harlots. Lastly the Joker is Jesus Christ who plays the part of a lustful fool. Now put the meanings together as card dealers of the ages have laughing told it. Jesus (the Joker) is the son of the (the Jack) the lustful father and came from (the Queen) the lustful mother Mary. All this is blasphemy and another long lasting tool of Satan bringing ridicule to the Saviour and all He accomplished for us. Dear believer, be very careful not to play any game with a degrading pack of regular cards. Even a game of solitare is time wasting use with a pack of cards that have brought grief to millions.

The believer is to *"have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them"* Eph. 5:11. To us, time is valuable, our testimony must be unquestionable and what we pursue is a valuable part of that testimony. Praise God for the substance He allows, invest it into the work of God and be a sure winner in eternity. Life is never a gamble but a treasured number of years to serve Christ with the promise of for all eternity. You will always be a winner when you walk with God.