

Gambling Violates Seven Biblical Principles

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The idea of gambling as a means of economic success is attractive, until you consider the spiritual and personal ramifications of what the costs really involve. At least seven Biblical principles can be identified that are violated by gambling.

1. Gambling violates the Biblical principle of Honesty

It's a violation of God's commandments against theft and covetousness:

1. Gambling is rooted in deception: bluffing, unbalanced slots, stacking the deck, trickery
2. Gambling is consensual theft: taking someone else's money to profit yourself.
3. Mutual consent does not mean we have God's consent.

Proverbs 26:25-26 - *Though his speech is charming, do not believe him, for seven abominations fill his heart. His malice may be concealed by deception, but his wickedness will be exposed in the assembly.*

Proverbs 11:1 - *The LORD abhors dishonest scales, but accurate weights are his delight.*

2. Gambling violates the Biblical principle of Love

Ever heard anyone say:

"It just affects me...I'm not hurting anyone else..."

"It's my business what I do with my money..."

A Christian should seek to love his neighbor, not profit by his/her loss. Consider these statistics:

1. Each addicted gambler negatively affects 10 to 17 other people – family, work, government.
2. Woman + Man addicted = 10 times domestic violence
3. Woman + Man addicted to alcohol & gambling = 50x domestic violence
4. Suicide attempts – 1 in 5 pathological addicts and 1 in 10 spouses of addicts
5. "... it is the children who are the most helpless." – Dr. Valerie Lorentz
6. If we love our brethren, do we not have some responsibility to help and protect the 20% of the population who fall into gambling additions?

Matthew 22:36-40 - *"Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" Jesus replied: " 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."*

Matt. 25:40 - *"The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.'* (The converse is also true.)

3. Gambling violates the Biblical principle of Stewardship

Ever heard anyone say, *"It's just entertainment...I gamble for fun..."* Then why not play the game for nothing, if it's just for fun?

If you believe that all you have is from God – and is God's (1 Corinthians 4:7) – then why are you giving God's money to the lottery or casinos? Consider this:

1. Professor Earl L. Grinols (University of Illinois, Department of Economics) – gambling fails the cost-benefit test by a factor of more than 3 to 1.
2. 1 Timothy 5:8 - *If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.*
3. 1 Corinthians 4:7 - All we have is from God, it all belongs to him. We are borrowers.
4. Luke 16:1-12 – Parable of the unrighteous steward
5. Luke 16:19-21 - Rich man and Lazarus (poor man), earthly wealth, lack of mercy
6. Haggai 1:6 - Never having enough, purse with “holes,” Lord says, “Consider your ways!”
7. Matthew 25:14-30 - Parable of the talents - teaching on stewardship and accountability to God

4. Gambling violates the Biblical principle of a good Work Ethic

Something for nothing is not part of God’s plan for man. This is more representative of lazy hands or the sluggard in Proverbs. Gambling promotes the false hope of escaping work and education, while living in wealth.

Is this reality? Is this truth? Consider these Scriptures:

1. 2 Thessalonians 3:10
2. 1 Timothy 5:8
3. Ephesians 4:28
4. Genesis 2:15
5. Exodus 20:9
6. Proverbs 12:11; 13:4; 20:4; 21:25; 28:19, 31

5. Gambling violates the Biblical principle of Avoiding Greed

The love of money is the root of all kinds of evil, and the lack of money causes normal people to become desperate criminals. Gambling increases both! Three words define gambling – more, more, more! Money is ALWAYS the bottom line.

1. 1 Timothy 6:6-11 – *... People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. ...*
2. Proverbs 16:2 – *All man’s ways seem innocent to him, but motives are weighed by the Lord.*
3. Proverbs 15:27; 28:20
4. Matthew 6:31
5. Luke 12:15
6. Ephesians 5:3
7. Colossians 3:5
8. Hebrews 13:5

6. Gambling violates the Biblical principle of Trusting God

Where is your faith? In whom – or in what – rests your hope? Gamblers place their hope and destiny in chance and luck – their fate rests in the unknown. Christians place their hope in Christ alone. God provides for His children.

1. Psalm 42:5 - *Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior ...*
2. Matthew 6:31-33 - *So do not worry, ... the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness ...*
3. 1 Timothy 6:10 – Those who put hope in money have fallen away from Christ.

7. Gambling violates the Biblical principle of Avoiding Danger

ABCs of Gambling – statistics are numerous

1. Addiction
2. Bankruptcy
3. Crime and Corruption
4. Destruction of families, Divorce, Suicide
5. Economic Destabilization

Consider these sobering statistics about the destructive nature of gambling:

- 15 million or more men, women and children in the U.S. = 214 NFL stadiums filled to capacity!
- Edward Looney NJ Council for Compulsive Gambling
 - 80% gamble – no problem
 - 15% have a problem
 - 5% cannot control their addiction
- Within a 50-mile radius of a casino = 2x pathological addiction
- Nobody ever set out to become an addict. Now they cannot control the urge to gamble.
- 10% top gamblers = 61% casino revenues
- 10% top lottery gamblers = 65% lottery revenues