



Gambling

"He that hastens to be rich hath an evil eye,
and considers not that poverty shall come upon him."
Proverbs 28:22

compiled by Diane Dew

STATISTICS /FACTS

At least 12 million Americans are compulsive gamblers. ([Gamblers Anonymous](#))

One in 4 American men and 1 in 8 women plan to gamble in the next Super Bowl. (Gallup poll, "Psychology Today")

Two-thirds of Americans have gambled, and 80% approve of gambling as a means of collecting taxes. (Report by the Federal Commission on the Review of the National Policy Toward Gambling)

The average compulsive gambler has debts exceeding \$80,000 (*Dallas Morning News*, 1/4/84)

"To gamble is to take a calculated risk for monetary or personal gain." (Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counseling).

Gambling exploits the poor, as "the poor bet a much larger share of their income." (National Bureau of Economic Research)

Thirty to 50 percent of money collected by casinos annually comes from about 4 percent of the population.

Legalized gambling increases illegal gambling by 300 percent. (Organized Crime Section of the Department of Justice)

"Winning money is the most important reason why people say they visit a casino." (Survey in

I. Get-rich-quick schemes are a hoax.

A. They bring poverty, not wealth.

Prov 28:22 (cp. Prov 22:16)
"He that hastens to be rich hath an evil eye, and considers not that poverty shall come upon

him."

B. The divinely established means of "getting ahead" is by work.

Gen 2:15; 3:19
Exo 20:9
2 Thes 3:10, 11
Eph 4:28
Prov 6:6; 12:11; 20:4

II. The greed (covetousness) that motivates individuals to gamble is sin.

Ex 20:17
Prov 11:28; 15:16; 23:4-5
Gal 5:21
Eph 5:3-5
Phil 4:11-13
Col 3:5
1 Tim 6:6-11, 17-19

III. Gambling is destructive.

A. Spiritually. It affects our walk with God.

1. It indicates a lack of trust in God's ability to provide.

Mat 6:25-34
Luke 12:15
Heb 13:5
1 Tim 6:6-9

2. True riches are spiritual and eternal.

Phil 4:19 "riches in glory in Christ"

HISTORY OF GAMBLING IN AMERICA:

1624 The Virginia Assembly decreed: "Mynisters shall not give themselves to excesse in drinking or yett spend their tyme idelie by day or night, playing at dice, cards or any unlawful game."

1656 Card fiends in the Plymouth Colony were fined forty shillings (two pounds in 1661).^[1]

1748 Benjamin Franklin helped organize a Pennsylvania lottery "to raise three thousand pounds for military supplies to defend Philadelphia against Frenchmen and Indians."

1765 The Stamp Act places a tax "upon every pack of playing cards and all dice... the sum of 1 shilling..."

1776 Congress organized a lottery of \$5 million to rally a kitty for the war. ^[1]

1777 President Washington issued an order forbidding "all officers... and soldiers... playing at cards, or other games of chance... at this time of public distress men must find enough to do, in service of their God and their country, without abandoning themselves to vice and immorality."

"...the commander in chief... forbids all officers and soldiers playing at cards, dice or any games except those of EXERCISE for diversion." ^[1]

1774-89 The Continental Congress issued orders to stop "extravagance and dissipation, horse racing, and all kinds of gaming or cock fighting."

1963 No state had a lottery. Only Nevada permitted casinos, though many states allowed betting on horse or dog races.

1975 The federal government allowed state lotteries to advertise on television and radio

American Demographics,
May 1997)

"Participation rates increase steadily and sharply as the number of legal types of gambling increases. Social betting more than doubles from 35% in states with no legal games to 72% in states with three legal types; the illegal gambling rate more than doubles from nine percent to 22%; and commercial gambling increases by 43%, from 24 to 67 percent." (*The Final Report of the Commission on the Review of National Policy Toward Gambling*, 1976)

Getting killed by lightning is seven times more likely than winning a million dollars in a state lottery. (*Harper's*, July 1983)

Only 40 cents of every lottery dollar goes to the state budget. Direct taxation costs only 1 cent on the dollar.

Crime rates for counties with casinos are 8% higher than the crime rates of counties without casinos. (*Las Vegas Sun*, 6/17/99)

Crime within 30 miles of Atlantic City rose by 107% in the nine years following the introduction of casinos to the area. (*Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, Aug. 1991)

The rate of compulsive gambling among teens is growing at twice the rate of that of adults. (Dr. Howard J. Shaffer, Director of the Harvard Medical School Center for Addiction Studies)

Crime rates in casino communities are 84% higher than the national average. (*U.S. News & World Report*, 1/15/96)

Jas 2:5 "rich in faith"
1 Tim 6:18 "rich in good deeds"
Eph 2:4 "rich in mercy"

3. We should look to God as our Source of supply:

Phil 4:19
Eph 3:20

4. Gambling expressly denies God's sovereignty and care.

Mat 10:30
Prov 3:5-6)

5. A form of covetousness, gambling violates the tenth commandment.

Exo 20:17

6. Christians are called to a walk of holiness (separation from the world).

Eph 5:3
1 Thes 5:22

7. Gambling destroys contentment.

I Tim. 6:6, 10
Col. 3:2
Jn 6:27
Matt. 16:26

B. Societally. Gambling destroys families and communities.

1. Gambling robs money from the family, for which parents have a responsibility to provide.

2 Cor 12:14
2 Thes 3:12
1 Tim 5:9
Prov 15:27

2. Gambling distorts our love for our neighbor, exploiting the most vulnerable members of society: the poor.

Phil 2:3-4
Zech 7:9-10

3. Gambling is a bad example to others.

1976 A national commission found 0.77% (1.1 million) of American adults were pathological gamblers.

1980 Commercial gambling casinos prohibited in every state except Nevada. Only 13 states had lotteries. Americans spent \$17 billion on legal commercial gambling.

1987 U.S. Supreme Court ruled Native Americans could offer legal gambling games on reservations, without state regulation, if permitted anywhere in the state, in any form. (*California v. Cabazon Band of Mission Indians*).

1988 Congress enacted Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (IGRA) to create orderly process for growth of Native American gambling establishments.

1976-1988 Casinos legalized in Atlantic City. The number of state lotteries doubled.

1989-1994 21 new states legalized gambling casinos legalized. 10 states authorize slot or video poker machines at racetracks, bars.

1995 A study found 5.4% of Iowa's adults (110,000 residents) were lifetime pathological or problem gamblers - up from 1.7% before riverboats came to the state in 1991. Americans spent \$550 billion on legal gambling in 1995 (a 3,200% increase in 20 years!)

1996 President Clinton signed H.R. 497, the National Gambling Impact & Policy Commission Act to investigate gambling in America. Only Hawaii and Utah prohibited all forms of gambling. 37 states and D.C. run state lotteries. 28 states allow casinos. Gamblers legally bet over \$586 billion annually.

1998 Over 40 riverboat casinos in Illinois, Missouri, Iowa. Nearly 50 riverboat and dockside casinos in Louisiana and Mississippi. Approximately 298 Indian casinos and bingo halls were operating in 31 states - up from 70 in 16 states in 1988. 48 states have legalized some form of gambling - lotteries, casinos, riverboat casinos, Indian casinos, video lottery machines, pari-mutuel betting (horse racing, dog racing, jai-alai).



Pathological ("compulsive") gambling is recognized as a diagnosable mental disorder. (The American Psychiatric Asso. and the American Medical Asso.)

Nevada ranked first in crime rates among the 50 states in both 1995 and 1996. (FBI Uniform Crime Report statistics)

More money is spent on gambling than on elementary and secondary education. (*Christianity Today*, 11/25/91)

"But ye who have forsaken the Eternal, ye who ignore his sacred hill, spreading tables to Good Luck, pouring libations to Fate, I make the sword your fate."

Isaiah 65:11
Moffat translation

"Thou shalt not covet."
(Exodus 20:17)

The Hebrew word for covet is *chamad*, defined in Brown, Driver and Briggs' lexicon as a "bad sense of inordinate, ungoverned, selfish desire." It is the same word used for "desire" in Genesis 3:6 - "when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired (*chamad*) to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat...."

Bible Study

1 Corin 10:31-33

4. Gambling encourages stealing, which increases court costs; stresses out marital relationships by burdening finances ("He who is greedy for gain troubles his own house..." Prov 15:27); and forces reliance upon public assistance, bankruptcy, etc.

C. Personally. Gambling is self-destructive.

1. Gambling destroys our work ethic.

Gen 2:15; 3:19
Exo 20:9
2 Thes 3:10, 11
Eph 4:28
Prov 6:6; 12:11; 20:4

2. Gambling is rooted in greed, the love and craving for money, which is "the root of all evil."

Mat 6:31
1 Tim 6:10

3. Gambling is addicting. God wants us to be free!

Rom 8:21
2 Corin 3:17
Gal 5:1, 13
1 Pet 2:16
2 Pet 2:19

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QUOTES ON GAMBLING

Gambling:

"The winner's shout,
the loser's curse."

William Blake

"Gaming corrupts our
dispositions, and
teaches us a habit of
hostility against all
mankind."

Thomas Jefferson

"The best throw at dice
is to throw them
away."

Mark Twain

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^[1] Longstreet, Stephen, *Win or Lose: A Social History of Gambling in America*.

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