
BIBLE TALK

Welcome to "Bible Talk." This week we are considering this question: **What does the Bible say about gambling?**

As a member of the church of Christ, I am opposed to gambling of any form – whether it be the state lottery, horse racing, dog racing, card games, or wagering on the outcome of a sporting event. Although the Bible does not say anything directly about the subject of gambling, there are some Bible principles which have a bearing on this subject and I would like to share them with you for your consideration.

1) I am opposed to gambling because there is no Bible authority for gambling.

Once a brother in the church asked me this question, "*George, if you could give just one passage of scripture to oppose gambling, what passage would you give?*" I told him, "*Brother, you're asking the wrong question. What you ought to be asking is, 'What one passage of scripture is there authorizing gambling?'*"

According to the NT scriptures, everything Christians do must be authorized by either the Lord Himself or by one of His official representatives (the apostles):

Colossians 3:17

¹⁷ And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

"do all in the name of the Lord Jesus" – means to do something by His authorization.

Here are 8 ways the NT authorizes a Christian to obtain money.

- The NT authorizes Christians to acquire money by **working** (Eph 4:28).
- The NT authorizes Christians to acquire money by **investment** (Mt 25:27).
- The NT authorizes Christians to acquire money by **inheritance** (2 Cor 12:14).

- The NT authorizes Christians to acquire money by **gifting** (Mt 26:6-13).
- The NT authorizes Christians to acquire money by **marriage** (Mt 19:5-6).
- The NT authorizes Christians to acquire money by **borrowing** (Mt 5:42)
- The NT authorizes Christians to acquire money by **begging** (Acts 3:10).
- The NT authorizes Christians to acquire money by **finding money** (Mt 13:44).

Here, then, are 8 ways which are authorized for making money. Gambling is not one of those authorized ways. Since gambling is not authorized, a Christian may not acquire money by gambling.

The amount of money is not the issue which makes gambling wrong. Some think, "If a Christian wagers all his paycheck, that would be wrong, but if he wagers just a dollar at a slot machine, there's nothing wrong with that."

Again, whether it's one dollar or one million dollars, gambling is wrong simply because neither Jesus nor His apostles authorized gambling as a legitimate way for a Christian to make money.

Rather than asking, "What's wrong with gambling?" we should be asking, "Where is gambling authorized?"

2) I am opposed to gambling because it violates the NT commands for good stewardship.

Christians are to be good stewards over the physical possessions which God has placed in their care.

Luke 12:42

⁴ And the Lord said, "Who then is that **faithful and wise steward**, whom his master will make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of food in due season?"

Luke 16:11

¹ "Therefore if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon [money], who will commit to your trust the true riches?"

Being a faithful steward means using ones money, time, and property in the best way possible. Gambling violates this principle. People often take what should be used to pay their debts and

they purchase lottery tickets hoping to strike it rich. They take what should have been used to buy groceries and they waste it on a million to one chance of becoming rich. They take money that could be used for the poor, or for the Lord's service and they waste it and lose it.

Very often when people do win at gambling, they waste what they win. Many, many people who have won millions at state lotteries have wasted their millions as fast as they got it and end up filing bankruptcy with nothing to pay their debts. Gambling, then, promotes poor stewardship.

3) I am opposed to gambling because it promotes covetousness.

Covetousness is a hunger and thirst for money and possessions. It's greed. Covetousness or greed is the source of all kinds of evil.

Ephesians 5:3

³ But fornication and all uncleanness or **covetousness**, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints.

This passage strictly forbids covetousness and greed. For money men do all sorts of evil things. Gambling breeds this inordinate desire for money which will be used, not for honorable purposes, but simply for the winner to bask in his riches.

1 Timothy 6:9-10

⁹ But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition.

¹⁰ For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

Listen to this carefully. The love of money is the root of all sorts of evil and because gambling breeds and promotes this attitude, I am opposed to it. Gambling on either a large or small scale attracts mobsters, cheats, and criminals who extort, swindle, steal, and kill for money.

In July 1994, Columbian soccer player Andres Escobar was murdered because he was responsible for losing a soccer game that had large amounts of money wagered on his winning the game.

4) I am opposed to gambling because it promotes laziness.

The Bible teaches that men are to labor and work for the money they earn. Someone said one time that the Bible promises "no loaves for loafers" and that is certainly true. The Bible warns:

2 Thessalonians 3:10

¹⁰ For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat.

This passage teaches that honest work is the way men should obtain the bread which they eat, but gambling promotes the spirit of gaining something for nothing.

5) I am opposed to gambling because it promotes envy and jealousy.

When someone wins at gambling, it also means that someone loses. Very often the losers become jealous and envious at the winners and hatred, sometimes accompanied with violence, results. The scriptures record:

James 3:16

¹⁶ For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there.

1 Peter 2:1

¹ Therefore, [lay] aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, **envy**, and all evil speaking,

Envy, and those things which promote envy, must be avoided by Christians, and for this reason I oppose gambling.

6) I am opposed to gambling because it is addictive.

There is an organization called "*Gamblers Anonymous*," whose sole purpose it to aid men and women who are addicted to gambling and cannot stop themselves. They become so obsessed they cannot stop. They neglect their debts and their family's needs and waste their money on gambling rather than meeting their financial obligations. Many marriages and homes have been wrecked because of addiction to gambling.

2 Timothy 3:1-3

¹ But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come:

² For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,

³ unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, **without self-control** ...

Notice carefully, men in the last days would lose their self-control. This certainly describes those who are addicted to gambling. They absolutely cannot stop themselves. Because gambling promotes this, I am opposed to it in any form - whether great or small.

SUMMARY

There are other things that could be said. Gambling promotes and breeds dishonesty and deceit. There is enough of this already without fanning the flames and adding more to what we already have.

But I hope I have given you some things to think about. Not everyone will agree with what I have said, and not everyone is concerned with Bible principles. But the fact that you have called this program probably indicates that you yourself are interested in what the Bible says. I hope you will ponder on these things and if you find them to be true, that you will adjust your life as necessary to serve God in the way His word directs.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Well ... thanks for listening to our message this week. We invite you to visit our website www.WillOfTheLord.com. There you may download the notes and the audio file of the message you just listened to.

Call again next week when we consider a new subject on ***Bible Talk***.