

# Gambling... in Gods Eyes



Have you ever gambled?

If you have not, do you think you will?

What would you do if your friends asked you to go on a trip to Las Vegas? (you know that gambling will be part of the weekend 'fun')

Would you be comfortable playing low-stakes poker with some friends on a regular basis?

How do you feel about frequenting the casinos in our area?

What do you think about playing the lottery?

What would you think if you saw your pastor:

Playing Blackjack at a local casino?

Slots?

Bingo?

At the dog track or horse track?

Defend Gambling as NOT sinful. Why might someone say that Gambling IS sinful?

Entertainment

Poor stewardship/management of our resources

Doesn't hurt anyone

Hurts families/individuals—run out of money

Bible doesn't say that it's wrong

If you have the extra money=OK

What reasons do people give for gambling?

The money would go to other entertainment anyway

Not much money

Current info on gambling in America (*This Bible Study was taught in 2005.*)

\$68 Billion spent per year on gambling

Involvement in the Phoenix area Gamblers Anonymous is 60% men, 40% women.

The national 1-800-GAMBLER helpline received nearly 76,000 calls in 1995;

12 percent of callers were under the age of 21.

More than 15 million Americans struggle with a gambling problem

**Gambling is...** Any betting or wagering, for self or others, whether for money or not, no matter how slight or insignificant, where the outcome is uncertain or depends upon chance or "skill" constitutes gambling. (Source: Gamblers Anonymous)

**TYPES OF GAMBLERS** (from "Scriptural View On Gambling"—Pastoral Conference Paper and [www.azccg.org](http://www.azccg.org))

**COMPULSIVE** A progressive disorder characterized by a continuous or periodic loss of control over gambling; a preoccupation with gambling and with obtaining money with which to gamble; irrational thinking; and a continuation of the behavior despite adverse consequences.

**PROBLEM** An involvement in risky gambling behaviors that adversely affects the individual's well being; this may include issues of relationships, family, financial standing, social matters and vocational pursuits.

**ACTION** Usually domineering, controlling, manipulative men with large egos. They see themselves as friendly, sociable, gregarious and generous. They are energetic, assertive, persuasive and confident. In spite of all this, they usually have low self-esteem. Historically they started gambling at an early age, often in their teens, by placing small bets on sporting events or playing cards with friends or relatives. They progress through the four phases (the Winning Phase, the Losing Phase, the Desperation Phase, the Hopeless Phase) of gambling over a ten to thirty year time span.

**ESCAPE** Usually women, but more and more men. Most Escape Gamblers have been nurturing, caring and responsible people for most of their lives. Most are not egotistical, have no indications of narcissism and are not out-going. They appear to be "normal" and have an almost exact opposite character profile than that of the Action Gambler. During their lives, various psychological traumas have occurred. These individuals frequently suppress those negative feelings and do not deal with them. As time goes by and the traumas increase, a single traumatic event will take place which causes depression. It may be situational or clinical depression. Friends and relatives of the person become aware of the depression of the person. After the predisposing issues come to the surface, depression is prevalent and the individual will do what most do, attempt to self-medicate or escape from the trauma (make themselves feel better). These individuals are prone to use drugs, food, sex, alcohol or gambling as a way to self-medicate. Often, a friend or family member will suggest to the individual that they do something "fun" to help forget about the problems. When they choose gambling, the individual will realize that the act of gambling does help them forget about and escape from their problems. The individual may become addicted to gambling the first time they gamble and the progression of the disorder begins.

*\*95% of the women and 37% of the men who contacted the Arizona Council On Compulsive Gaming in the last year met the criteria for Compulsive Escape Gambling.*

*\*\*Most Escape Gamblers began gambling recreationally playing "luck" games (slots, keno, bingo, lottery, etc.)*

## **“GAMBLING” IN THE BIBLE**

As you look at the following examples from Scripture, consider whether the actions should be considered ‘gambling’/left to ‘chance’ and whether or not the actions would have been considered sinful by God.

**Leviticus 16 2 The LORD said to Moses... 6 “Aaron is to offer the bull for his own sin offering to make atonement for himself and his household. 7 Then he is to take the two goats and present them before the LORD at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. 8 He is to cast lots for the two goats—one lot for the LORD and the other for the scapegoat. 9 Aaron shall bring the goat whose lot falls to the LORD and sacrifice it for a sin offering. 10 But the goat chosen by lot as the scapegoat shall be presented alive before the LORD to be used for making atonement by sending it into the desert as a scapegoat.**

- ◆ **Simply a way of making a choice—God told him how to do it!**

**Numbers 34:1,12-13 The Lord said to Moses... ““This will be your land, with its boundaries on every side.” 13 Moses commanded the Israelites: “Assign this land by lot as an inheritance.**

- ◆ **Like drawing straws—objective way of portioning out the land—again, God commanded**

**Joshua 18:5 You are to divide the land into seven parts. Judah is to remain in its territory on the south and the house of Joseph in its territory on the north. 6 After you have written descriptions of the seven parts of the land, bring them here to me and I will cast lots for you in the presence of the LORD our God. 7 The Levites, however, do not get a portion among you, because the priestly service of the LORD is their inheritance. And Gad, Reuben and the half-tribe of Manasseh have already received their inheritance on the east side of the Jordan. Moses the servant of the LORD gave it to them.”**

**8 As the men started on their way to map out the land, Joshua instructed them, “Go and make a survey of the land and write a description of it. Then return to me, and I will cast lots for you here at Shiloh in the presence of the LORD.”**

- ◆ **Again, a way to select land for the tribes—done in the presence of the LORD.**

**1 Chronicles 24:31-25:1 31 They also cast lots, just as their brothers the descendants of Aaron did, in the presence of King David and of Zadok, Ahimelech, and the heads of families of the priests and of the Levites. The families of the oldest brother were treated the same as those of the youngest. 1 David, together with the commanders of the army, set apart some of the sons of Asaph, Heman and Jeduthun for the ministry of prophesying, accompanied by harps, lyres and cymbals. Here is the list of the men who performed this service:**

**1 Chronicles 25:8 Young and old alike, teacher as well as student, cast lots for their duties.**

- ◆ **Merely a way to divide duties.**

**1 Chronicles 26: 13 Lots were cast for each gate, according to their families, young and old alike. 14 The lot for the East Gate fell to Shelemiah. Then lots were cast for his son Zechariah, a wise counselor, and the lot for the North Gate fell to him. 15 The lot for the South Gate fell to Obed-Edom, and the lot for the storehouse fell to his sons. 16 The lots for the West Gate and the Shalleketh Gate on the upper road fell to Shuppim and Hosah.**

- ◆ **Merely a way to choose.**

Nehemiah 10: 34 “We—the priests, the Levites and the people—have cast lots to determine when each of our families is to bring to the house of our God at set times each year a contribution of wood to burn on the altar of the LORD our God, as it is written in the Law.

- ◆ **Other duties were also assigned here—equivalent of drawing names or numbering off.**

Esther 3: 6 Instead Haman looked for a way to destroy all Mordecai’s people, the Jews, throughout the whole kingdom of Xerxes. 7 In the twelfth year of King Xerxes, in the first month, the month of Nisan, they cast the *pur* (that is, the lot) in the presence of Haman to select a day and month. And the lot fell on the twelfth month, the month of Adar.

- ◆ **Lot was just a way to choose, but the planned action is sinful!**

Psalms 22: 16 Dogs have surrounded me; a band of evil men has encircled me, they have pierced my hands and my feet. 17 I can count all my bones; people stare and gloat over me. 18 They divide my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing.

Mark 15: 22 They brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha (which means The Place of the Skull). 23 Then they offered him wine mixed with myrrh, but he did not take it. 24 And they crucified him. Dividing up his clothes, they cast lots to see what each would get.

- ◆ **Lot was just a way to choose, but the planned action is sinful!**

Jonah 1: 6 The captain went to him and said, “How can you sleep? Get up and call on your god! Maybe he will take notice of us, and we will not perish.” 7 Then the sailors said to each other, “Come, let us cast lots to find out who is responsible for this calamity.” They cast lots and the lot fell on Jonah.

- ◆ **Don’t know how they did it, but God allowed it to fall correctly to Jonah.**

Acts 1: 21 Therefore it is necessary to choose one of the men who have been with us the whole time the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, 22 beginning from John’s baptism to the time when Jesus was taken up from us. For one of these must become a witness with us of his resurrection.” 23 So they proposed two men: Joseph called Barsabbas (also known as Justus) and Matthias. 24 Then they prayed, “Lord, you know everyone’s heart. Show us which of these two you have chosen 25 to take over this apostolic ministry, which Judas left to go where he belongs.” 26 Then they cast lots, and the lot fell to Matthias; so he was added to the eleven apostles.

- ◆ **Qualifications, Prayer, Trusted God would choose.**

Judges 14

12 “Let me tell you a riddle,” Samson said to them. “If you can give me the answer within the seven days of the feast, I will give you thirty linen garments and thirty sets of clothes. 13 If you can’t tell me the answer, you must give me thirty linen garments and thirty sets of clothes.” “Tell us your riddle,” they said. “Let’s hear it.”

14 He replied, “Out of the eater, something to eat; out of the strong, something sweet.” For three days they could not give the answer.

15 On the fourth day, they said to Samson’s wife, “Coax your husband into explaining the riddle for us, or we will burn you and your father’s household to death. Did you invite us here to rob us?”

16 Then Samson's wife threw herself on him, sobbing, "You hate me! You don't really love me. You've given my people a riddle, but you haven't told me the answer."  
"I haven't even explained it to my father or mother," he replied, "so why should I explain it to you?" 17 She cried the whole seven days of the feast. So on the seventh day he finally told her, because she continued to press him. She in turn explained the riddle to her people.  
18 Before sunset on the seventh day the men of the town said to him, "What is sweeter than honey? What is stronger than a lion?"  
Samson said to them, "If you had not plowed with my heifer, you would not have solved my riddle." 19 Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon him in power. He went down to Ashkelon, struck down thirty of their men, stripped them of their belongings and gave their clothes to those who had explained the riddle. Burning with anger, he went up to his father's house. 20 And Samson's wife was given to the friend who had attended him at his wedding.

- ◆ **Samson is a foolish man in many ways—here he gambles and loses. Sinful actions before and after!**

### Isaiah 65

<sup>11</sup> "But as for you who forsake the LORD and forget my holy mountain, who spread a table for Fortune and fill bowls of mixed wine for Destiny,  
<sup>12</sup> I will destine you for the sword, and you will all bend down for the slaughter; for I called but you did not answer, I spoke but you did not listen. You did evil in my sight and chose what displeases me."

What is the difference between the examples of God's people "casting lots" and gambling/leaving things to 'chance'?

**Venture/Risk** God's people left things to Lord's direction and used prayer. They did not trust 'luck' or 'chance'. They were trusting in God. They were not foolishly putting money or things at risk if it didn't turn out. This is VERY different from playing slot machines or shooting craps or staking their life savings on a spin of the roulette wheel.

## A CHRISTIAN'S APPROACH

Christians are Managers

Romans 12 5 so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. 6 We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. 7 If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; 8 if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.

We have a God-given obligation to: manage God's gifts

1 Corinthians 15:2 On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income. (1)

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2 Corinthians 8 10 And here is my advice about what is best for you in this matter: Last year you were the first not only to give but also to have the desire to do so. 11 Now finish the work, so that your eager willingness to do it may be matched by your completion of it, according to your means. 12 For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what he does not have. (2)

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2 Corinthians 9 6 Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. (3)

7 Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. (4)

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God expects offerings to him which are given (1) regularly, according to what He has (2) given to us, that we be (3) generous in our giving, and that they be given from a (4) joyful/cheerful heart.

## Responsibilities

\$ Offerings for the spread of the gospel and those who preach and teach

*See passages above*

1 Corinthians 9:14 In the same way, the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel.

\$ Helping those in need

Mark 14:7 The poor you will always have with you, and you can help them any time you want. But you will not always have me.

Romans 12:13 Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

\$ Caring for our families

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.

\$ Taxes to our government

Romans 13:6 This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. 7 Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor.

## "Luck" or "Chance"?

1Chronicles 29 11 Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, O LORD, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all. 12 Wealth and honor come from you; you are the ruler of all things. In your hands are strength and power to exalt and give strength to all.

Proverbs 16:33 The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD.  
Proverbs 22:2 Rich and poor have this in common: The Lord is the Maker of them all.

## Contentment OR Covetousness/Greed?

**1 Timothy 6 6** But godliness with contentment is great gain. **7** For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. **8** But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. **9** 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. **10** For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. **11** But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness.

**Risk** The word “risk” appears 3 times in the New Testament. In ALL 3, Christians put their lives at risk for Christ and the spread of the gospel.

**Acts 15:26** Judas called Barsabbas, Silas, Paul and Barnabas—men sent to the Christians in Antioch

**Romans 16:4** Priscilla and Aquila—risked their lives for Paul, as he served Christ.

**Philippians 2:30** Epaphroditus—serving to spread the gospel when others couldn’t

## Love Your Neighbor

**Matthew 7:12** So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.

Does the Love of our Neighbor play a part in our decision to gamble?

**It may if you consider that for you to win, someone(s) must lose.**

## Help those in Need

**Proverbs 22:16** He who oppresses the poor to increase his wealth and he who gives gifts to the rich—both come to poverty.

The Lord tells his people to help the poor. What does the Gambling Industry have to do with that?

**The Gambling Industry preys on the poor. Does the Christian want to be part of that?**

## Trust In God

**Matthew 6** <sup>25</sup> “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? <sup>26</sup> Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? <sup>27</sup> Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life? <sup>28</sup> “And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. <sup>29</sup> Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. <sup>30</sup> If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? <sup>31</sup> So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ <sup>32</sup> For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them.

God Envisions a Proper Work Ethic for his people

**2 Thessalonians 3:10** “If a man will not work, he shall not eat.”

**Proverbs 12:11** He who works his land will have abundant food, but he who chases fantasies lacks judgment.

Can Gambling violate God’s will when it comes to honest work?

If we are looking to get “something for nothing” or we are trying to avoid work.

What biblical advice can you give to someone about gambling?

*Checklist of Questions:*

1. *Am I giving suitable offerings back to the Lord in thanks for his salvation and gifts?*
2. *Am I managing all that God has given me in a way that pleases him?*
3. *Am I meeting responsibilities to my family?*
4. *Have I been helping those in need?*
5. *Have I met all my financial obligations and have I prepared to meet future obligations?*
6. *What are my motives for gambling?*
7. *Am I POSITIVE that I can handle the temptations associated with gambling?*
8. *Is this the BEST USE of my “extra” money?*
9. *Would Jesus be pleased with this use of my money, or does he have something in his kingdom that I could help with instead?*
10. *Can I, in good conscience, do this?*

**Gamblers And Hymn Selections**

According to *Holiday* magazine, the most popular numbers at Monte Carlo’s roulette tables are 17 and 29. What has this to do with the church? More than the churchmen would care to believe. For it is further reported that in the English church in Mexico, no hymn with a number lower than 37 is sung, for fear that hunch-players in the congregation will rush out to back it. An American may be shocked at this, but he may not be smug. For in early New Zealand the practice of betting on the numbers of the next Sunday’s hymns was not unknown, even if this was somewhat less disturbing to the decorum of the worship service than the quaint Monacan custom.

What practical advice can you give to someone about gambling?

1. Your odds of winning or “coming out ahead” are VERY bad! There is a reason casinos make a ton of money!
2. Be aware of the addictive nature of gambling and the dangers that go along with it.

So, can a Christian gamble or not? Is all gambling sinful?

We cannot say that ALL gambling is ALWAYS wrong. God has not prohibited that activity specifically. If we are not meeting our other God-given obligations, then it would be sinful. If we go against our conscience, that too is sinful.

**1 Corinthians 6:12** “Everything is permissible for me”—but not everything is beneficial.  
“Everything is permissible for me”—but I will not be mastered by anything.

What other activities *might be* considered ‘gambling’ besides ‘games of chance’.

Stock Market

Collectibles

What would you say to the following arguments:

“A portion of the money goes to a good cause (e.g. Native American Education).

Then why not just give it to them—cut out the middleman (casino) so that they can help even more!

“When I play, I expect to lose.”

Then why play?

“I only spend \$10 per week on Lottery tickets.”

Just think what over \$500 a year could do to help! Such as: pay off personal debts, help a needy family, support a missionary, help the church youth group or children’s programs, help the church meet its financial needs, etc.—all God-pleasing things!

*\*There are many people who barely give God \$10/week.*

**Hebrews 13:5**

***Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.”***