

GAMBLING DEFINED

Before we look at what the Bible says about gambling, we must first give a definition for it. A threefold definition for gambling is:

- using money or something of material value to bet on an event;
- trusting in luck (or in some situations it can depend on a skill, i.e., shooting pool for money);
- hoping to get more money and/or more possessions in a short period of time.

THREE REASONS PEOPLE GAMBLE

1. Some people are trying to acquire money or things they cannot get through their regular income.
2. Some people gamble for recreation.
3. Some people are addicted to gambling.

(Regardless of the reason, people gamble because they are trying to get additional wealth without the labor—Genesis 3:19; Proverbs 10:4; 14:23a).

BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES IN REFERENCE TO GAMBLING

1. Gambling personifies luck and turns it into a god which makes it a form of idolatry.

Is there a god beside me? yea there is no god; I know not any (Isa. 44:8).

Let him not deceive himself by trusting [luck], for he will get nothing in return (Job 15:31).

2. Gambling can lead to bondage and addictive behavior.

“Everything is permissible for me”—but I will not be mastered by anything (1 Cor. 6:12 NIV).

“...for a man is a slave to whatever has mastered him” (2 Peter 2:19 NIV).

3. Gambling does not exhibit good stewardship.

The Master expects his stewards to make wise investments with his money (Matt. 25:14-30).

“Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful (1 Cor. 4:2).

4. Gambling encourages the love of

money.

“For the love of money is the root of all evil” (1 Tim. 6:10).

5. Gambling encourages covetousness and greed.

“Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have” (Heb. 13:5 NKJV)

6. Gambling can lead to devastation and poverty.

“A greedy person tries to get rich quick, but it only leads to poverty” (Prov. 28:22 NIV).”

7. Gambling takes away allegiance to God.

“No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.” (Lk. 16:13)

8. Gambling creates an appetite that can never be satisfied.

“No matter how much we see, we are never satisfied. No matter how much we hear, we are not content.” (Eccl. 1:8 NLT).

ARGUMENTS USED TO SUPPORT GAMBLING

1. *I gamble for recreational purposes.* Whatever the reason, it is not being a good steward over the resources God has entrusted to you (Matt. 24:14-30; 1 Cor. 4:2).
2. *I gamble in moderation.* Once again, it is not being a good steward over the resources God has entrusted to you (Matt. 24:14-30; 1 Cor. 4:2).
3. *If I hit it big I will give money to God's work, help my family members or give to some good cause.* You should not have to hit it big to give (Lk. 6:38). Also if you have not given with what you have, it is unlikely that you will give if you get more (Lk. 16:10).
4. *I gamble because part of the money goes to a good cause.* Only a small percentage of what you lose goes to good causes, why not give directly to that cause (Phil 4:14-15).
5. *Gambling creates jobs.* Gambling does create jobs but it also creates devastation (Prov. 28:22).
6. *It is my money; I can do what I want to do.* It all belongs to God (Ps. 24:1; 50:10-12).
7. *People invest in the stock market and this is a form of gambling. Investing is different from gamble.* The Bible indicates it is wise to invest (Matt. 24:14-30). Investing is based on wise planning, long-term high-odd return. Gambling is based on an arbitrary, get rich quick, low-odd return decision.
8. *Gambling is the same as casting lots in the Bible.* Casting lots in the Bible never involved anyone risking their own personal money. Also, we must distinguish between the sport (Matt. 27:35) of gambling and seeking the will of the Lord (Acts 1:23-26).

THE BIBLE AND GAMBLING

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There are no verses in the Bible that say, "Thou shall not gamble." However there are many Scriptures that refer to the concept of gambling. In the following study we will look at Biblical principles in reference to gambling. While all of the following principles may not apply to everyone who gambles, at least one or more will touch anyone who does gambles.