

Gambling: The Sin of Selfishness

Gambling is a completely selfish act. A gambler is only concerned with his or her present pleasure and future hopes of greater gain. Let's get to the heart of the matter. Scratch off a lottery ticket and you stroke your flesh and defile your soul. The world around you is dying, individuals, probably including yourself, quickly head to hell while you seek against the odds to win something for yourself. Jesus laid down His life for others and has a loving work for you to do, yet you gamble with the things of His world. Gamblers had fun at the foot of the cross on which Jesus suffered.

When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took his clothes, dividing them into four shares, one for each of them, with the undergarment remaining. This garment was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom. "Let's not tear it," they said to one another. "Let's decide by lot who will get it." This happened that the scripture might be fulfilled which said, "They divided my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing." So this is what the soldiers did. (John 19:23-24)

Jesus bled and died while soldiers gambled blissfully, too selfish to take notice. While the blood dripped down and the pain surged through His body, the gamblers threw the dice. Only a cold, dead heart could gamble at such a time.

No wonder the Bible tells us the self-seeking will be tormented in hell for ever and ever. How right for Jesus to become angry and full

of wrath toward those who use, simply for a little bit of pleasure, the things He created in this world.

But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger. (Romans 2:8)

The Justification

But you say that the money will be used for good purposes. The government sets the profits aside for education and if you personally win you can help your family and maybe others. We love to use such lies in order to justify a faithless attempt to meet our selfish needs. We might as well say that Hitler was a good person because he put people back to work and gave us the Volkswagen, which translated means, “The People’s Car.” Ill-gotten gain is the word that best describes the money won at gambling.

Such is the end of all who go after ill-gotten gain; it takes away the lives of those who get it. (Proverbs 1:19)

Winnings from gambling are ill-gotten gain because they were not received by faith from God, but through the manipulation and schemes of man. God knows your needs and if you seek Him, God will certainly provide. So first of all, gambling tells God that He cannot be trusted to supply our needs.

Secondly, gambling is greed because it demonstrates a desire for things beyond food and clothing (1 Timothy 6:8). Seeking anything beyond such simple things amounts to stealing, for it takes from God what does not belong to you. Just look at the situations where gambling flourishes. While states

declare that they will build roads, parks, and schools with lottery money, our society morally dies. Anyone who says things are on a moral upswing believes a lie.

Next, those who declare gambling is just a little fun fail to grasp that they are decaying spiritually. Indeed, many lives, from the workers in the gambling industry to the gamblers themselves are swept away by a lust for money and things. Gambling is no more “just having a little fun” than putting a bullet in a gun, spinning the barrel, and pulling the trigger. Gambling is a deadly sin that God says takes away the very lives of those who spin the barrel, pull the lever, or throw the dice.

It's Not Your Money

Your money does not belong to you—it is God’s.

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. (1 Chronicles 29:12)



God has loaned you money so that you might live and give to others. Since God has a specific plan for the money that he enabled you to earn, in reality you steal from God by gambling. It would be the same as if you came into my house and I gave you money to buy food and you got drunk instead.

He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need. (Ephesians 4:28)

Now that you know these things, repent and use money to share with those in need.

Worthless Money

Jesus commands that we must hate and despise money. Period. You can read it for yourself in Luke 16:13. I know you don't see this in the church but that doesn't change Jesus' words. Money to God is quote, a "detestable" thing (Luke 16:15). Individuals often retort with "the love of money" is the sin, but not money itself. Well, he who does not hate and despise money loves it. And, in spite of what others might say, God views money as detestable. It is not hard to see why if you get your eyes off petty winnings and see Jesus on the cross.

God's commands delight those who love the selfless love of Jesus. As the following scripture tells us, God will turn our hearts from worthless things, such as money and possessions, to matters of real treasures.

Direct me in the path of your commands, for there I find delight. Turn my heart toward your statutes and not toward selfish gain. Turn my eyes away from worthless

things; preserve my life according to your word. (Psalms 119:35-37)

Don't believe that the selfish gains from gambling are worthless? Consider the many stories of those who have gained the wealth of the world and wished they hadn't. Think of Mrs. Jewel who won, with her husband, \$314,000,000.00, the richest undivided jackpot in America history won with a lottery ticket—three hundred fourteen million. All that money and she now declares,

"I wish all of this never would have happened," Jewel Whittaker told The Charleston Gazette for Tuesday's editions. "I wish I would have torn the ticket up." Wednesday, December 15, 2004

Certainly there are those who love gambling enough that they would never say such a thing. Like a heroin addict, they don't mind the destruction to themselves as long as they can get high. Of course it doesn't really matter that many die regretting their lives, their gambling, and their selfishness. It doesn't matter whether gambling does good, provides some recreation, or benefits society in some way, for God will rightly judge such selfish sinners. God's judgment is a sure bet, a 100% guaranteed sure winner. So sure, it can't really be classified as a bet—God will judge and send to hell those that forfeited their souls for a few moments of gambling pleasure.

What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul? (Matthew 16:26)

Getting Rich

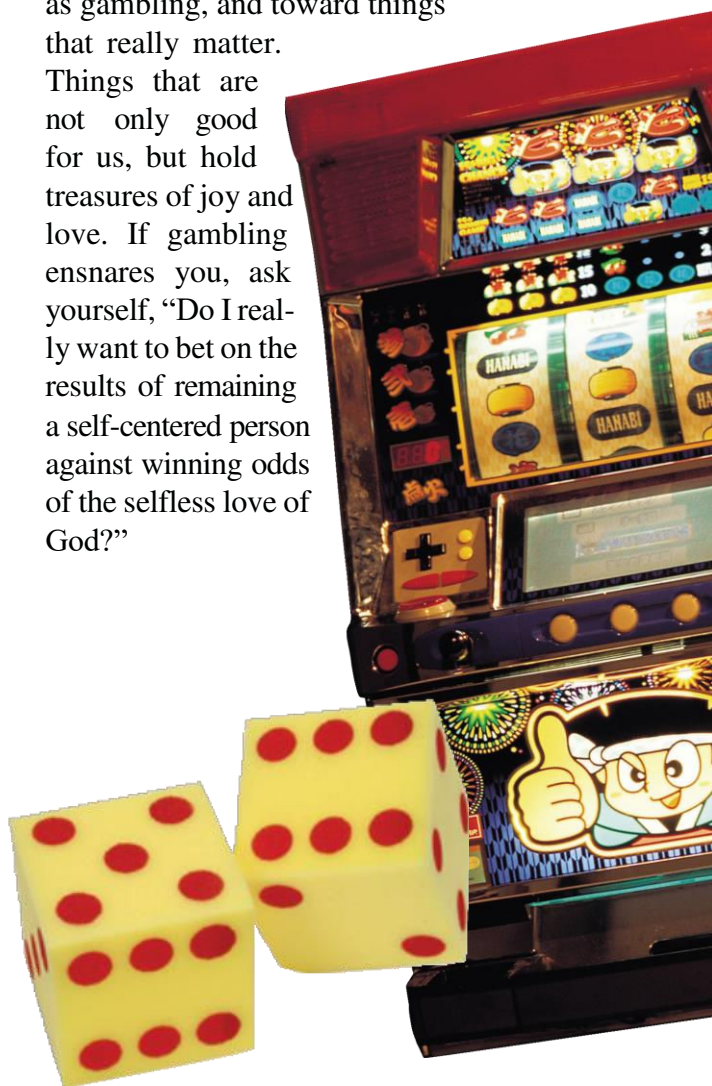
Jewell and her husband provide God's examples to us of what money and things can do to us. Their story stands as a warning to those willing to look and reveal an act of love for God to speak this way to us. Books have been written of the rich and famous and tragic lives. Pages and pages tell of those who became rich and perished in their greed and of those who desired wealth, but never gained it, and as a result, ruined themselves and others around them. Stories of great gold rushes are littered with bodies and souls of men; their misery, and the pain they caused others, etched in human history. After all it doesn't take riches to ruin a man—it only takes the desire to be rich. Struggling to become wealthy traps men and women into thinking money will bring happiness while allowing them to feed their "harmful desires." Just think of your thoughts, lusts, and wants. If you had all the money and time to fulfill those desires what a vile creature you could become. It would, as this scripture describes, plunge you into ruin and destruction.

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. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. (1 Timothy 6:9-10)

Many who were once Christians have by one coin after another wandered from the true faith in Jesus. In the name of good stewards they have sought for themselves the detestable money of this world and "pierced themselves with many griefs."

The solution? Seek the living God who can turn your heart from worthless activities, such as gambling, and toward things that really matter.

Things that are not only good for us, but hold treasures of joy and love. If gambling ensnares you, ask yourself, "Do I really want to bet on the results of remaining a self-centered person against winning odds of the selfless love of God?"



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