



St. Paul the Apostle

Often I encounter questions regarding the Christian stand on "gambling." I am frequently asked what are "types of gambling?" The three common types of gambling that mostly surround those who reside within the Southern Diocese of the United States are 1) casinos, 2) lotteries, and 3) raffles.

First let's examine what gambling actually is. Gambling (compulsive) according to the DSM III R criteria has these essential features:

- 1) Failure to resist an impulse, drive, or temptation to perform an act that is harmful to self or others. The act may or may not be resisted, premeditated or planned.
- 2) Increased tension/ arousal before committing the act is present.
- 3) Experience of pleasure, gratification, or release at the time the act is committed. Immediately after the act, there may be genuine regret, self-reproach, or guilt.

Those who seek treatment for gambling disorders have a chronic and progressive failure to resist

impulses to gamble and can exhibit gambling behavior that compromises, disrupts, or damages the person, the family unit, or occupational pursuits. Problems characteristic of gambling include extensive indebtedness, disrupted family relationships, inattention to work, and financially motivated illegal activities to pay for gambling. People began to believe that money causes and is also the solution to all their problems. If gambling increases the gambler usually lies to obtain money to continue gambling (Rawlins, Williams & Beck, 1993, p.287).

People who gamble are often over-confident, easily bored, and like to spend money. Even so they may be likely to show obvious signs of depression, anxiety, and personal stress. About 2% to 3% of the population in general is affected by gambling. Men more often than women are affected (Rawlins, William & Beck, 1993, p.287).

Therefore, we can gather from nonreligious reference sources that "gambling," reflects the human being's love for money. This love of money can be in both the winning and the losing. A loss of money gambled often forces the gambler to attempt to compensate for his losses by gambling even more money, and more than likely losing again. A chain

reaction has begun which may end in extreme losses of money and addiction.

The Holy Bible warns us about greed and the love of money. *"For of this you can be sure: no immoral, impure, or GREEDY person-who is an idolater-has any inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ and God"* (Ephesians 5:5-6). This verse declares that the greedy person is an idolater and has no inheritance in God's Kingdom of Heaven and God's wrath shall come upon him. We are to be imitators of the Lord Jesus Christ and be worthy of the calling as St. Paul tells us in Ephesians 4:1.

Gambling entices dreams of laziness and a path in which one can become rich quickly without working or expending any effort. It is good for man psychologically to be useful and contribute to society. The Holy Bible again very directly teaches us, *"He who has been stealing must steal no more, but MUST WORK, doing something useful with his hands, that he may have something to share with those in need"* (Ephesians 4:28).

A gambler must rely on "luck" to win. "Luck" can easily become a "god" in the process of repeated gambling. If "luck" runs out, families can lose homes, alcoholism can emerge, and everyday needs cannot be met. *"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 will destine you for the sword, and you will all bend down for the slaughter; for I called and you did not answer, I spoke but you did not listen. You did evil in My sight and chose what displeases Me" (Isaiah 65:11-12).

Many psychologists note gambling as a type of "ego building." This appears in the desire to be a winner. The Holy Bible teaches, *"To be humble and meek and to fear the Lord is to hate evil; I hate pride and arrogant evil behavior and perverse speech"* (Proverbs 8:13).

Gambling, as an addiction, can destroy the life a person leads in much the same way as drug abuse and alcoholism. Gambling may cause one to commit crimes to fund the addiction. Do you know that many whose family lives were destroyed, was through repeated gambling at casinos? *"Everything is permissible for me but not all things are beneficial; Everything is permissible for me, but I will not be mastered by anything"* (I Corinthians 6:12).

Using raffle tickets as fund raisers to build additions to churches, purchase playground equipment or furnish a library is not permissible. We should not

tempt others to donate money to God's Houses by promising a reward if you are "lucky." The only reason for giving should be a love in your heart for the Lord. In the Apostles' Era, the "spirit of giving" was such that the followers of the Lord sold their belongings in order to put it at the Apostles' feet and at Church's doors.

The Apostles law forbade the acceptance of money not rightfully earned. Beware of ungodly ways that can become practice was written by St. Paul, "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is. His Good, Pleasing, and Perfect Will."

Did you know that your chance to live to be 107 is 7000 times greater than winning a lottery?

Gambling, as medically studied and Biblically documented, is not a mentally healthy behavior and MOST IMPORTANTLY not a spiritually healthy behavior.

May we all seek to do His Good Will.

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For further reading, please
visit <http://www.geocities.com/samirbillatos/Gambling.html>