

GAMBLING IS A BAD BET!

When you oppose gambling, you are accused of “trying to legislate morality!” I plead guilty. However, all legislation represents someone’s sense of morality. “But you are trying to impose your convictions on others,” others shout. Exactly! I respond. My convictions on this issue reflect truth, and truth should always prevail.

It is a moral issue when the government decides to derive income from an activity that more adversely affects the poor than the rich. It is a moral issue when the state encourages citizens to participate in an inefficient immoral form of tax gathering. It is a moral issue when the state adopts a form of taxation guaranteed to draw off large amounts of money from poor people they claim to be helping. Do not be deceived by a smoke screen, I urge you not to participate in, promote, or support this vice.

THE GAMING BUSINESS IS BUILT ON LIES

Proponents of gambling promise an economic windfall that never comes. Gaming robs the poor to subsidize the rich. Remember when we Texans were asked to vote for a state lottery? We were assured it would provide for schools. Where are they? Recall why the lottery was recently modified? Because people had abandoned it, realizing they had virtually no chance of winning. Casino gambling did not produce an economic windfall for Atlantic City, New Jersey. It did not produce one for Tunica, Mississippi. It will not

in your community either. Gaming produces great wealth for those who run the game. It brings many problems which outweigh any monetary benefit.

Lie two is that gaming is a solid industry providing economic diversification. In fact, it is a dishonest business. It is in no sense an industry. It produces no legitimate product.

Gaming renders no honorable service. You have a much greater chance of being struck by lightning than winning big at a casino. The lottery did not produce what it promised.

Gambling ships did not produce what they promised. Horse and dog racing did not deliver on their promises. A casinos do not deliver on their promises either.

Lie three is that gaming does not take money from the poor. The summary report in a congressional research project on legalized gambling noted: "Gambling is a parasitic business, which is completely nonproductive in that it tends to create no new wealth but simply serves to redistribute wealth from lower income groups to higher income groups" (Congressional Research Service Report No.83-84E, Updated, April 22, 1983). Nothing has changed about the gambling business. It is still parasitic. It still places a tax on people's hope.

Lie four is that gaming simply allows people to gamble. In fact, legalizing a casino means the state sanctions and promotes gambling. When governments enter the gaming business they are not neutral regarding morals. They are promoting the worst instead of the best interest of citizens.

GAMING VIOLATES THE LAW OF GOD

Gaming violates the biblical principle of love. Jesus said, “In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets” (Matthew 7:12 NASV). No one gambles so others can win. They gamble hoping others will lose. The more others lose the more the gambler wins. Biblical love will not allow self-seeking without regard for others. Paul said, “Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others” (Philippians 2:3-4 NASV). The principle of love is clearly violated when personal profit is gained through the loss of another.

Gaming is wrong because it is addictive. It is known a significant number of those who gamble will become addicted. There is no way to predict in advance who they will be. However, it is prohibited for a Christian to become a slave to his habits. Paul said, “All things are lawful for me, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be mastered by anything” (1 Corinthians 6:12).

Gaming violates the divine law of labor and earning. God described the proper way to earn a living. Paul said, “Even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat... Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread” (2 Thessalonians 10, 12). The proponents of gaming are opposed to this view. They

encourage a “get something for nothing” attitude. The enterprise is founded on greed instead of productivity and service.

Gaming violates the biblical principle of stewardship and economic responsibility. All things belong to God. He entrusted his possessions to his stewards. Paul said, “For the earth is the Lord’s, and all it contains” (1 Corinthians 10:26). As people entrusted with the Lord’s possessions there are several things money may legitimately be used for: basic needs (2 Thessalonians 3:10); family support (1 Timothy 5:8); support of the Lord’s work (1 Corinthians 16:1-2); meeting the needs of the poor (Ephesians 4:28); payment of taxes (Matthew 22:21). Material resources are not entrusted to anyone for the purpose of squandering away.

Gaming promotes greed. Jesus warned, “...Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions” (Luke 12:15 NASV). Yet the gaming advocates, motivated by self-interest, appeal to the greedy tendencies of others to sucker them. They try to convince people they really can “get something for nothing.”

Gaming is deceptive and dishonest. All the hype and promotion focuses on how wonderful it will be when you hit the jackpot. They never tell you the game is rigged so that the house is assured to keep 90% of what is wagered (Bingo). It sucks money out of the economy that might otherwise be used for legitimate business enterprise.

Gaming is wrong because of the fruit it produces. Jesus said, “So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit” (Matthew 7:17-18). Simply listing the fruits of gambling condemns the practice: drugs, prostitution, child abuse, wife abuse, broken families, bad debt, violent crime, addiction, political corruption, more demand for social services, etc... It is not hard to see that gaming contributes nothing to the common good.

Gaming undermines good values, mocks work, finances crime, robs children, enslaves its addicts, subverts governments, and poisons whatever it touches. The Bible compels Christians to reject its false promises and say no to gambling. The wise man said “better is a little with righteousness than great revenues with injustice” (Proverbs 16:8).

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