

ORDINANCES AND STANDARDS

- 1 \* I John 5:2-3 "This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments..."
- 2 \* Matthew 26:26-30 The Lord's supper experienced by the disciples  
3 Luke 22:19-20 The bread and the cup represent Jesus' death  
4 \* I Cor. 11:23-29 This was done after supper.  
"Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat and drink."
- 5 Exodus 30:17-20 Washing hands and feet was a part of sacrificing  
6 \* John 13:3-17 What if it said, "If I have kept the first day of the week, you also ought to keep the first day of the week"?
- 7 I Peter 5:5 "God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble"
- 8 I Timothy 5:10 "If she have washed the saints feet..."  
9 Luke 14:33 "Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath..."
- 10 \* Genesis 35:1-4 Jacob hid away all the strange Gods and all their earrings."
- 11 \* Exodus 33:5-6 God told the children of Israel to take off their ornaments
- 12 \* Hosea 2:13 Israel later decked herself with earrings and jewels and forgot God
- 13 \* Ezekiel 23:40-45 Colorful cosmetics and jewelry associated with lewd women
- 14 \* Jeremiah 4:30 God exposes the vanities of outward adornment  
15 \* Isaiah 3:16-26 God said that worldly vanities would be destroyed  
16 Rev. 12:1 A Godly woman wearing the righteousness of Christ  
17 \* Rev. 17:3-4 The Mother of harlots decked with gold, pearls, and costly apparel
- 18 \* I Peter 3:1-5 God has a different kind of ornament for Christians  
The relationship between Bride and Groom is sacrifice and love service  
We're living in an emergency situation at the end of the world  
We learn to live here like we'll live in heaven with God
- 19 Deut. 22:5 "The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man," or vice versa
- 20 I Thess. 5:22 "Abstain from all appearance of evil."  
21 \* Col. 3:16-17 "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus."
- 22 I John 2:15-17 "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world."

"Nothing really wrong in a lottery ticket, is there?" "Just a harmless flutter at the horse races; not like it's serious gambling." "People spend more going to Disney World. Gambling's only another kind of entertainment."

So the rationalizations run, likening gambling to a family day out or a sporting event or a board game. But is it such a harmless pastime-nothing to worry about?

The statistics say otherwise. With more than 15 million "problem and pathological gamblers" and a total of \$600 billion spent on gambling in the U.S. alone last year, the impact of gambling is huge.

Gambling is now all around us. In all but two U.S. states it's legal. Thirty-seven states now sponsor lotteries, and in 1997 those states spent \$400 million on lottery advertising alone.

In just 20 years the U.S. has gone from a country in which only a handful of states permitted gambling to the world's leader in betting on games of chance.

"But so what?", ask the skeptics. Gambling is good for business-in fact, it is a major business. Returns for Native American reservation casinos have grown from \$212 million in 1988 to \$6.7 billion in 1997. Huge business! How should Christians respond?

At its heart, gambling is basically selfish. The primary preoccupation is with me and my own desires for material gain at the expense of many others who are required to lose.

Some gambling operations, including those run by U.S. state governments, cloak this by designating a percentage of gambling income to "good causes", as though funding public welfare of education somehow makes the basic selfish drive to gamble more acceptable. Would "good cause" donations from alcohol or tobacco manufacturers make the use of their product more acceptable?

The truth is that gambling is a craving for money for me at the expense of everybody else. Taking money from the many and giving it to the few is a reverse of the Robin Hood thesis.

And what of ideas of stewardship and responsibility? Christians are called to be stewards (I Cor. 4:2) of their time and talents. Scripture teaches that our time and resources are God's, and are to be used wisely for the best of causes. Satan has invented many ways in which to squander the means which God has given. Betting at card playing, gambling, horse racing, and theatrical performances are all of his own inventing, and he has led men to carry forward these amusements as zealously as though they were winning for themselves the precious boon of eternal life. Men lay out immense sums in following these forbidden pleasures; and the result is their God-given power, which has been purchased by the blood of the Son of God, is degraded and corrupted. The physical, moral, and mental powers which are given to men of God, and which belong to Christ, are zealously used in serving Satan, and in turning men from righteousness and holiness.

The cost of gambling is by no means limited to lost bets. Society annually pays a huge bill from the associated costs of gambling, including welfare payments as families fall apart, costs of treatment, work absences, fraud, theft, and so on. In trying to establish a balance sheet on the impact of gambling in the community, the much-hyped "job creation" and "cash inflow" must be counterbalanced by the massive cost to society of the problems caused by gambling.

But more than the monetary cost is the human cost to society in broken families and broken individuals. And other costs from pathological gamblers include additional police effort, court and prison costs, social services costs, and lost work productivity. An increased suicide rate, more frequent car accidents, and an increased incidence of child abuse are also associated with gambling behaviors [Taken from E.L. Grinlos and J.D. Omorov, *Development or Dreamfield Delusions? Assessing Casino Gambling's Costs and Benefits* (Champaign, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1995).

While the church of Jesus must always extend its help to those suffering from gambling or other addictions and avoid blaming the victim, it must likewise disassociate itself from gambling's damaging behaviors in the most emphatic ways. Christians recognize that they have been "bought with a price" and that they are responsible before God for their resources and lifestyle (1 Cor. 6:19,20).

"Gambling is not the only kind of business that can remove dollars from a local economy," said U.S. senator Paul Simon, "but very few remove proportionately as much money for so marginal an increase in public revenue. Given the widespread evidence that gambling hurts a community, what rationale is there for government to act as a conduit for the profits of private promoters? The answer is none. But naïve public officials, like addicted railbirds, remain convinced that someday they'll hit the jackpot. It's a delusion as old as gambling itself." [Senator Paul Simon, 138 *Congressional Record*, S187, Jan. 22, 1992.]

The National Council on Problem Gambling reports compulsive gamblers annually cost American businesses a staggering \$40 billion in lost wages and insurance claims [National Council on Problem Gambling]. Another sad fact is that it's usually those who can't afford it who spend proportionately the most---especially on lotteries. In economic terms, it simply doesn't make sense for a government to sponsor lotteries, since their negative economic impact more than offsets the income they provide the government coffers. Gambling almost invariably removes more from local economies than it returns. Despite the claims, relatively little income from gambling actually benefits the neighborhood school. Less than 4 percent of state and local education budgets were funded by lottery contributions in 11 states that do tag lottery funds for education, an Education Research Service study showed.

A Maryland study found that those with incomes below \$5,000 spent 21 times as much on the state lottery as those whose incomes were above \$25,000. In a Delaware study, researchers found a lottery outlet for every 1,981 people in the poorest neighborhoods, but no outlets in upper-income districts with 17,600 people. Such targeting cannot be coincidental: At worst, it is exploitative and cynical. [Norman L. Geisler, *Gambling--- A Bad Bet* (Old Tappan, N.J.: Fleming H. Revell, 1990), pp 24,25.]

Direct crime (such as robbery and crimes of violence), associated criminal activities (such as drugs and prostitution), and indirect crimes (such as fraud and embezzlement) abound in gambling environments. It is one of the oldest truisms of our civilization: Where there is gambling, there is crime---to support the need to bet, to exploit the winners, to make a profit off the casino or riverboat or betting shop. From the larceny, cheating, and embezzlement practiced by many gamblers themselves to the organized crime, money laundering, and kickbacks now tied to gambling institutions, criminal activity follows wherever gambling flourishes.

At least 40 percent of all white-collar crime is committed by or on behalf of problem gamblers, according to the American Insurance Institute. Two out of every three compulsive gamblers report that they would resort to crime to feed their obsession. One third of all prison inmates are identified as compulsive gamblers; one half are there for gambling-associated crimes. [Durand F. Jacobs and Jerry L. Pettis, "Problem Gamblers and White-Collar Crime" (paper presented at the Seventh International Conference on Gambling and Risk Taking, Institute for the Study of Gambling, Reno, Nevada 89501)]

Between 1978, when Atlantic City's first casino opened, and 1981, the city's crime rate tripled. It went from a ranking of fiftieth in the nation in per capita crime to first. Hardly an enviable record for the city that claims gambling was its salvation. And hardly a good sign for civic leaders who claim to be interested in building strong, secure communities.

On average, about one of 10 gamblers will become compulsive. Along with many other millions, they will not be able to control their habit, and will sink into a vicious cycle of dependence that becomes increasingly costly in monetary terms as well as severely impacting the family. The chances are that they will not recover from their addiction, that they will cause their families to break up and lose their opportunity for a happy life. Some will choose to end their lives as the misery becomes too great.

Jesus asked the still-penetrating question: "For what does it profit a man if he gain the whole world, but lose his own soul?"