

# The BEACON

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## GAMBLING - THE CURSE of A NATION!

In a Bible study class I was teaching recently, the topic of gambling was brought up and much discussion resulted. Much of what was said made me aware of the fact that more study and teaching was needed relative to the Lord's will concerning "gambling." This tract is the result. Please study with me and try to keep an unbiased mind in the process. Be like the "noble Bereans" of whom we read in **Acts 17:11** who "received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things (spoken by Paul ket) were so." Having this mindset admittedly isn't easy since we each come to a given subject with some of our own preconceived conclusions from former studies. If we aren't mighty careful those ideas will cloud our thinking and prevent one from engaging in an objective study.

### Often New Converts Need Such A Study

Some new converts need to study this subject due to their lack of knowledge as well as former practices prior to their conversion. Once a relatively new convert asked me, "Ken, is it wrong for my family and some close friends to play a little poker in a "friendly game" for small amounts of money?" I gave this brother in Christ some literature written by a fellow gospel preacher to consider, but I wasn't content leaving it at that, I wanted material that I could make available which resulted from my own

understanding, resulting from my own study, rather than what others have written. Yes, I do and I have profited from what other faithful brethren have written, but nothing can take the place of doing one's own study and reaching one's own conclusions based on what the Bible itself teaches both in principle well as that which is positively stated.

### **Gambling Often Becomes An Obsession**

Just as the consumption of alcoholic beverages is often addictive resulting in one becoming an alcoholic, so gambling may become such an obsession or addiction, and it is difficult to see any form of gambling as "friendly" in this scribe's estimation. Besides, the amount wagered isn't the point. It is just as wrong in principle, to gamble for pennies as it would be for thousands of dollars. One of the first things a Christian must consider is his example before others (**1 Timothy 4:12b; Matthew 5:13-16**). Parents are admonished to "train up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (**Ephesians 6:4**). Even if you have no children of your own, you should still set a proper example in word and deed before others, for your friends and relatives have children who may follow your example for good or for ill. How can a Christian who engages in things that are "darkness" and still be able to "be a light" to others who observe his actions? (see; **Ephesians**

**5:8; 1 Peter 4:1-4**).

Some refer to those who become compulsive gamblers as having a disease in much the same way as they also refer to alcoholism as a disease. Both may well become a "disease", but first it was a sin for which one's soul may be damned if not cured! Can you imagine God sending one's soul to torment for a "sickness"? Friends, the drunkard and the compulsive gambler who hasn't repented and complied with the Lord's law of pardon, can only expect torment in eternity (**1 Corinthians 6:9-10; 19-20; Ephesians 4:28; Romans 12:17; Matthew 7:12**).

### **Not Everything That's Legal Is Scriptural**

We are all aware of the fact that gambling has become legal in many states in the U.S.A. However, making something "legal" does not assure that it is pleasing to Christ. Drinking is legal after a certain age in our society. Divorce and remarriage repeatedly are allowed under the laws of our land and such is widely practiced in this country and in others. Does the fact that these practices are now legal all of a sudden make them Scriptural? The answer is No! The apostle Peter was commanded by some in authority not to preach or teach concerning Jesus on one occasion. He said to them, "we must obey God rather than men" (**Acts 5:29**). In other words when man's laws conflict with God's, we must choose to obey God and disobey men. There are those who either don't know this principle or who choose to disregard it. Many have divorced their mate and "married" another without following the guidelines laid down by Jesus in the New Testament. Such folks are legally married in the eyes of the laws of our land, but are still bound to another according to the law of Christ (see; **Matthew 5:31-32; Matthew 19:1-9; Romans 7:4**). We are to abide

by the laws of the land when possible of course according to **Romans 13:10-7**, but there are exceptions as noted above.

### **Crime In America**

In an article on the evils of gambling by Gene Frost in a publication he edited some time back, he quoted from an old report put out by the Senate Crime Investigating Committee by the late Senator Estes Kefauver, some facts that are as current today (except for the statistics) concerning the number of states having legalized gambling, as they were in the 1950s: "Gambling produces nothing and adds nothing to the economy or society of our nation. America will be in a bad way if we ever resort to taxing crime and immorality for the purpose of raising revenue to operate our institutions. The fascination of gambling to many people is so strong that, in my opinion, it would be complete folly to make the facilities more available than they presently are."

It doesn't take a rocket scientist to see the wisdom of the Senator's statements above. He didn't quote even one passage of Scripture and none is needed to see the "folly" of legalizing gambling in our society. Common sense and the existing facts of the great damage gambling has caused and continues to cause cannot be denied. Gambling was not in the best interest of society then and it hasn't become such today. Of course the Christian will take into account the spiritual consequences of gambling when making a decision whether to gamble or to refrain (**1 John 3:4; 5:17; Colossians 3:17; 2 John 9-11**).

If some legislators get their way everything will be legalized from "Pot" and other drugs to prostitution and homosexuality along with so called "same sex marriages." Much of this is done under the guise of making an income for the state coffers. How silly can otherwise smart

men and women be? For every dollar gained through the taxes on liquor, tobacco and other drugs, according to an outdated survey I read, it cost the taxpayers over \$7.00 to pay for just the physical damages done by those consuming these substances. That number has probably quadrupled by now, and that doesn't take into account the broken homes, abused children and battered women. Nor does it take into account the souls that will be lost in eternal torment! All of this resulting from attempting to make something that is wrong and sinful in the eyes of God, legal in the courts of our land.

### **Legalize Gambling And The Mob Moves In**

There are still some states who have not legalized the lottery, but most cannot seem to wait until they overcome all opposition and join the ranks. Many refuse to listen to the folks in other places with the lottery and other forms of legalized gambling who have pointed out that the expected revenue wasn't being generated. Many were hoping to have a great educational system due to said lottery, and already we hear rumblings from educators in states with the lottery that the money just hasn't been forthcoming as they were promised and as they expected. Even if it was, what are we teaching our young people by financing the educational system with gambling money? We are teaching them that "the end justifies the means" that's what. It doesn't even need proof for an honest person to know that were there is legalized gambling, organized crime usually called "the mob," moves in along with other vices that accompany casinos etc. Just ask the folks in Atlantic City among other places and Listen to what has happened there.

### **"The Bible Doesn't Say Thou Shalt Not Gamble"**

The above quote is one I have heard time and again or something akin to the same. I wonder if folks really believe that anything that isn't "specifically forbidden" is alright? If so, they are just wrong to put it bluntly. There are many things condemned in principle that aren't mentioned. The fact that the Bible tells a Christian how to make his living rules out certain other money making schemes or activities. By divine inspiration the apostle to the Gentiles, Paul, wrote: "Let him that stole steal not more: but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth" (Ephesians 4:28).

### **The Very Definition of Gambling Doesn't Fit The Above Means For Making Income**

According to a report in the religious publication, "Christianity Today," many religious people are involved in gambling (July page 54). It would be naive of me to think that none of my own brethren, members of the body of Christ are involved. In fact, I know of some who regularly purchase lottery tickets and others who say they are terribly tempted to do so.

### **"Gambling In America"**

Some time back under the above heading we read. "Millions of Americans are seeking their fortunes through various forms of gambling, according to a New York Times/CBS News survey. Sixty three percent of those questioned said they had placed at least one bet in the past year; 23 percent reported playing the lottery. "The poll also found widespread public acceptance of gambling, with 77 percent approving lotteries and 43 percent approving legal sports betting. Gambling is accepted even among religious people, according to the poll. More than half of all Protestants-and nearly half

of those who said religion is very important to them- reported having gambled at least once in the last year." That poll is outdated I might add, being taken in 1989. The numbers would MUCH larger be if the survey were taken today without a doubt!

### **At This Point Let's Define Gambling**

Webster says gambling is, "to stake money or other things of value upon an uncertain event; to hazard; to wager." A gospel preacher friend of mine, Gene Frost observed the following things involved in gambling. 1). The deliberate hazarding of something of value. 2). That profit is determined by an uncertain event which is arbitrarily determined, i.e. the event is not inherent in the activity of gambling: It may be whatever the participants choose and may differ from event to event. 3). One profits at the loss if others who participate, without whose participation there could be no gamble; i.e. he gains all or part of what they lose."

### **The Problem of Confusing Gambling And Risk**

I have had countless discussions with people in which I have attempted to show that the gambling condemned in principle in God's word, is not the same thing as involving one in some activity where there is risk or chance. The most often used "proof" offered in defense of gambling is the gamble a farmer takes when he plants a crop or the risk one takes who gets into an automobile or an airplane to take a trip across the country. They say you are betting your life by such activities. Some say you bet your life when you attempt to cross the street. Gene gave a good answer to such quibbles. He said first of all, "that's absurd!" I agree. "When I cross the street, whatever risk may be involved are not arbitrarily and deliberately brought into play.

Secondly, I do not stand to gain the property of others because I successfully transact the walk (or drive) across the street or the country, nor do others (by a deliberate participation) stand to gain something of value that I have put up with an understanding that I will lose if I don't make it across the street or the country. Just because there are natural dangers about us, and one confronts specific risks in particular activities, does not mean that one has deliberately and arbitrarily selected what the risks are and has wagered something of value to forfeit if he is unsuccessful, while standing to gain that value from others is he is successful." In farming, for example, profit is not sought at the expense of others and risk is not contrived. The farmer would be pleased if there were no risks involved. But you cannot have gambling without contriving the element of chance, nor without someone gaining value at the expense of others who lose."

Not only is the foregoing true, but natural risks do not contribute to a compulsive addictive disorder. When one engages the kind of gambling condemned by principle in the Scriptures, he may well become a compulsive gambler. I've never heard of anyone who successfully crossed the street becoming a compulsive street crosser. Have you? Let's clear our minds of all such trash introduced by those who wish to justify their sin. Let's consider why gambling is indicted in Scripture as a SIN.

### **Three Legitimate Means of Transferring Property**

Insofar as I am able to determine, there are only three legitimate means of transferring property from one to another. Those three means are: 1). Working for a living or getting paid for physical or mental efforts expended producing something for someone else. 2).

Exchange. I take pleasure sometimes in swapping something I have for something someone else possesses. Sometimes I receive "boot", sometimes I have to pay the other fellow. In any case we each receive what we want and each is happy after the transaction hopefully. 3). Receiving or giving a gift with no desire or expectation of anything in return. Our Lord said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (**Acts 20:35**). Let's look at some scriptures which support what I have said above.

I will not be able to print out each Scripture citation fully due to space limitations I have placed on myself to keep this tract small enough that folks will hopefully read it from beginning to end. May I request that you take the time to read each passage of Scripture from your own Bible before you go to the next point in our study of this timely subject.

1). Labor: (**Ephesians 4:28; 2 Thessalonians 3:12; Luke 10:7; 1 Corinthians 9:9-10; 2 Corinthians 11:8; Matthew 20:1-15**).

2). Exchange by buying and selling: (**Matthew 25:27; 13:44-45; Acts 16:14; Luke 22:36**).

3). Receiving a gift: (**Ephesians 4:28b; Acts 2:45; Acts 11:29; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2; 2 Corinthians 9:13-15**).

If we are right in the fact that these three means of income are the only legitimate means thereunto, then gambling is a sinful practice which violates all three even though law makers have made it legal. The Christian must steer clear of this soul damning practice (**Colossians 3:17; 2 John 9-11; 1 John 3:4**).

1). Gambling does not involve gain by reason of legitimate labor. The gambler covets the fruit of other's labors. Gamblers want to win the million dollar lottery without doing any work to earn it; They covet the fruits of labor expended by others.

2). The gambling does not involve exchange

of equal values. No, the gambler wants to put up something of relatively insignificant value to gain great value. In some states, gamblers put up a dollar for each chance in a desire to win a million, never mind that the change of winning is estimated to be at one in 7.25 billion. That statistic is probably outdated as well due to population increases etc.

3). Gambling does not involve a gift with no desire for anything in return. If there was no incentive, no million dollar pot, I'm sure that folks would not have given the various states \$95 to over a hundred million each week. Gambling produces nothing and adds nothing to our economy. It is, in fact a parasite on the legitimate economy and exists without divine sanction. State officials are drawing the economic blood of its citizens. How would you like to be in business in an area where immediately the economy is depressed by millions of dollars? Shortly after Florida voted in the state lottery there were businesses asking for tax credits or other governmental assistance as was reported in "The Orlando Sentinel" 1/24/88). Eventually the depressed economy will trickle down to effect the entire business community. Drive by the "Paradise" in East Peoria, Illinois and see the parking lot stacked full of cars and busses for hours on end. How may business people do you suppose aren't able to collect what they are owed due to gambling? More and more there will be cropping up organizations known as "Gambler's Anonymous" designed to assist folks who have become addicted and have reached the point that they will sell the farm and break up their families just to place another bet. They are hooked. Gambling and alcohol may become a sickness to be sure, but first they are a sin engaged in wilfully and then once hooked, folks often need outside assistance to stop.

The compulsive gambler will use his last dollar to place a bet or buy a lottery ticket for a possible change of "hitting it big." He will sign an I.O.U. He will allow his wife and children to go hungry and his debts to go unpaid. There is absolutely no defense for gambling. Its fruit is all rotten and evil (**1 Thessalonians 5:22**).

### **Some Things of Which To Be Careful**

Christians need to learn to control our language. How we speak is how we think and will eventually become the way we behave. "Our speech should always be with grace, seasoned with salt..."(**Colossians 4:6**). In fact, how we speak is how we are already thinking, and unless we change our speech our actions will soon follow suit.

### **I Try To Avoid The Following**

- 1). "Put your money where your mouth is."
- 2). "I'd bet my bottom dollar on it."
- 3). "Ya wanna bet?"
- 4). "I'll bet you a dollar to a doughnut."
- 5). "Let's draw straws so see who goes first."
- 6). "Let's draw cards to see who wins"
- 7). "I'll flip you for it...I'll take heads."

Sound speech prepares the heart not to think in such terms and consequently steer clear of influences that may lead one into catching what is called "gambling fever." After all, its our souls that are under consideration (**Matthew 16:26**)

Article by ---- Kenneth E. Thomas

### **Christ is All These & More!**

1. He is the Lord (**1 Cor. 8:6**).
2. He is the Savior (**Matt. 1:21**).
3. He is the Way (**John 14:6**).

4. He is the Lamb (**1 Pet. 1:19**).
5. He is the Door (**John 10:9**).
6. He is the Head (**Eph. 1:22f**).
7. He is the Judge (**John 5:30**).
8. He is the Bread (**John 6:48**).
9. He is the Truth (**John 14:6**).
10. He is the King (**Rev. 17:14; John 18:36**).
11. He is the Shepherd (**John 10:14**).
12. He is our Advocate (**1 John 2:1**).
13. He is our High priest (**Hebrews 8:1**).
14. He is our Mediator (**1 Timothy 2:5**).
15. He is our Bridegroom (**Ephesians 5:22-32**).
16. He is our Master (**John 3:2**).
17. He is our Friend (**John 15:14**).
18. He is our God (**John 1:1; 20:28**).
19. He is the Light (**John 1:4**).
20. He is the Life (**John 1:4**).
21. He is our Propitiation (**1 John 2:2**).
22. He is our Redeemer (**Luke 1:68**).
23. He is our Life (**Colossians 3:4**).
24. He is the Rock (**1 Corinthians 10:4**).

What is Christ to YOU? Why not take these thoughts, study the implications of them and then get out a good concordance and see just how many others you can find that indicate what Christ is to you and potentially to all the world?

“Jesus is the worlds’ only Savior,  
Jesus is the worlds’ only Lord;  
But He’s only Lord & Savior,  
to those who **RESPECT and Obey**  
**His HOLY WORD.**”