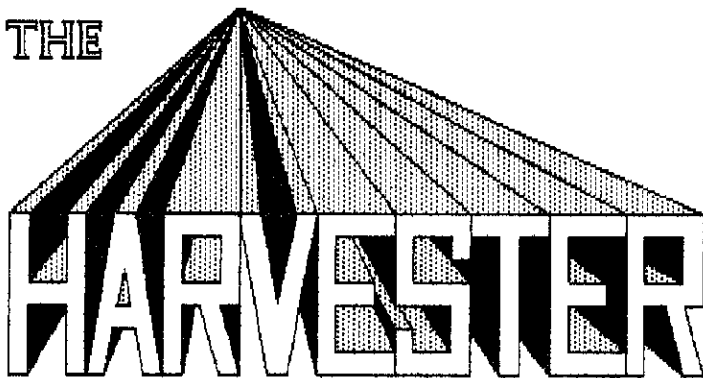


THE



"The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest." (Luke 10:2)

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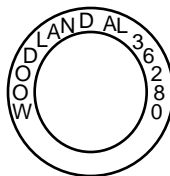
IS GAMBLING WRONG?

How could something that seems fun, provides potential for financial gain, and helps charities and education be bad? Before studying this subject further, let's look at three true real life cases and their consequences.

Case 1: Just for the fun!

A housewife was invited to a birthday lunch with some friends on a nearby river boat which also had gambling. After lunch, everyone gambled some "for fun" and then went home. She went back again and lost more money, then she went back

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again and again hoping to win back the money so she would not have to admit to her husband how foolishly she had lost their hard earned money. After about two years she had lost the family's savings of \$8,000, reached the credit limit on all of their credit cards, and had not made a house payment in 19 months. Furthermore, her husband did not even know they had any financial problems because his wife paid all of their bills. With the sheriff coming to repossess their house, she knew the truth of her gambling would be found out. She left a note on the front door telling the sheriff she could be found in her car in the parking lot of a nearby mall where she had committed suicide. Her husband then had to be told that he had lost his wife, house, and savings. I'm sure this woman never intended to "gamble everything away," and the results were anything but fun.

Case 2: If I win, all my problems will be over!

A man who had very little and many misfortunes all of his life lived in a small boarding house. He bought lottery tickets each week hoping one day to win "big" and then all of his problems would be over (he thought). Then one day it finally happened; he won the lottery, \$10 million to be paid out evenly over the next 20 years! Before he even collected his first payment, his landlady filed a lien against his winnings claiming she loaned him money for lottery tickets and was entitled to part of the money. After about a year of court battles, the landlady won a claim to one half of his winnings. Under the contest rules if the

winner dies, the payments go to the next of kin. His brother and sister then hired a "hit" man to kill him so they could get the money. Eight years after "winning," he got permission from a judge to sell his future payments for one lump sum to pay off all of his debts. After doing this, the man went away to live a life of seclusion. While the man may have solved part of his problems by winning the lottery, the new set of problems he received was far worse than he had before.

Case 3: It seems to do so much in helping others.

A bingo establishment operated for charity took in more than \$6 million in one year but after "expenses" only \$17,000 was given to charity. What price will be paid in the name of helping education or the less fortunate? How many families have suffered the loss of the necessities of life that was gambled away?

Is physical gambling a problem in our country? According to one source, 3 - 4% of the population are compulsive gamblers. Many others see gambling as a form of recreation. But, is gambling a sin? To answer this question, we must look to the Bible: the word that will judge us in the last day (Jn. 12:48).

Gambling is against the nature of God. In 1 Tim. 6:9-10, we find that the "*love of money* (not money itself) *is the root of all evil.*" Having money is not wrong; covetousness is a sin (1 Cor. 6:9-10; Eph. 5:3-5). Can we not learn from the wisdom of Solomon who tells us in Prov.

THE HARVESTER is a monthly publication intended to encourage all men everywhere to become laborers into God's harvest (Luke 10:2). This paper is mailed free of charge to anyone who wishes to receive it. Please submit name, address and all correspondence to:

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13:11 that *"Wealth gotten by vanity shall be diminished: but he that gathereth by labor shall increase."* A man is to work to provide for himself and his family. In 2 Thes. 3:10-11, we find *"that if any man would not work, neither should he eat."* Also, in 1 Tim. 5:8, we find *"if any will not provide for those of his own house, he has denied the faith and is worse than an infidel."* Because of the sin of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, they were told that *"...in the sweat of thy face shall thou eat bread ..."* (Gen. 3:19). Mankind had a place of paradise in the Garden of Eden where food was plentiful and free, where work was not required, and where pain, suffering, and death did not exist. However, because of sin, man lost this paradise and, as much as he may try, he will never regain it on this earth. Gambling, or casting lots, was used as Jesus hung on the cross to decide who would get His clothes (Jn. 19:24). I think enough information has been covered on physical gambling. Remember, it does not matter about man's opinion unless it is in accord with what the Bible teaches because the words of the Bible will judge us on the last day.

In James 4:17, we are told *"to him that knows to do good and does it not, to him it is sin."* If we know that obedience is required of us and we ignore it, are we not gambling spiritually with our souls? In Matt. 7:13-14, Jesus warns us that the gate to destruction (or Hell) is wide and many will go that way and the gate that leads to life (or Heaven) is narrow and few will find it. Do we gamble that our good intentions in serving God will take the place of what God tells us to do? For example, in 1 Chr. 13:9-10 we see the nature of God in what He expects of us. Uzza knew that he was not to touch the ark but when the oxen stumbled and Uzza put his hand to hold the ark he was smote by God for his disobedience. We cannot gamble on improving God's way. Prov. 16:25 tells us that *"there is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the ways thereof are the way of death."*

Are you gambling that God will accept you even if you have not obeyed the gospel and been baptized for the remission of sins? In 2 Thes. 1:8, it tells us when Jesus returns He will come *"in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ."* Mark 16:15 tells us *"he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved ..."* Another verse, Acts 2:38, tells us to *"repent and be baptized for the remission of sins ..."* Or are you gambling that you will have another time and opportunity in the future? In either case, a person is gambling with their eternal soul.

What if those of us that have obeyed the gospel and been baptized, believe we

cannot fall and lose the hope of salvation? In 1 Cor. 10:12-13, we are told to take heed lest we fall, but also we are given the assurance that we will never be tempted more than we can bear and will always be given a way of escape. Therefore, we cannot afford to gamble on our salvation being assured or giving the excuse that we sinned because the temptation was too great for us to bear.

Are we going to gamble on not studying the Bible? In 2 Tim. 2:15, we are told "*to study to show ourselves approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*" We cannot rely on what others tell us; we must study for ourselves. You and I will stand alone before Jesus Christ and be judged by the Bible according to the life we have lived.

We should always avoid gambling both physically and spiritually by always striving for perfection (Heb. 6:1). In 1 Thes. 5:22, we are told to "*abstain from all appearance of evil*", not just avoid things we know are wrong but to avoid those things that might even appear to others to be wrong. The destiny of our soul for all eternity is much too precious to be left to chance.

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It's better to help others to get on
than to tell them where to get off.

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

1. Who killed Saul's three sons -- Jonathan, Abinadab, and Melchi-shua?
2. How long was a captive woman, taken as an Israelite's wife, allowed to mourn for her parents?
3. One should put on the Lord Jesus Christ and not make provisions for what?
4. In what book of the Old Testament do we find the words: "Vanity of vanities; all is vanity."?
5. Did Abraham actually take hold of the knife to kill his son, Isaac?

ANSWERS NEXT MONTH ...

and remember last month's questions?

1. What appeared to Moses in the burning bush? AN ANGEL OF THE LORD (Exo. 3:2)
2. Where was the spirit of the living creature Ezekiel saw in his vision? IN THE WHEELS (Ezek. 1:21)
3. How long does God's mercy endure? FOREVER (1 Chr. 16:34)
4. In the book of Revelation, upon the opening of the sixth seal from what did the people of earth want to be hid? WRATH OF THE LAMB (Rev. 6:16)
5. According to Luke 13, how many years did the man seek fruit on his fig tree and found none? THREE (Lk. 13:7)

GOSPEL MEETINGS

<u>DATES</u>	<u>PLACE & TIME</u>	<u>SPEAKER</u>
October 1 - 3	West Broad Street Wedowee, AL	Wilbur Bass (Auburn, AL)
October 11 - 17	Ashlock Church near Celina, TN	James McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
October 21 - 24	Marrowbone, KY	Wilbur Bass (Auburn, AL)
October 22 - 24	Valley, AL	Ray McManus (Woodland, AL)



WATCH OUT FOR SONG LEADERS

A preacher and a song leader in a certain church were not getting along. This began to spill over into the worship service. One week the preacher preached on commitment, and how we should dedicate ourselves to service. The song leader then led the song, *I Shall Not Be Moved*.

The next Sunday, he preached on giving and how we should gladly give to God. The song leader then led the song, *Jesus Paid It All*.

The next Sunday, he preached on gossip and how we should watch our tongues. The song leader led, *I Love To Tell The Story*.

The preacher became disgusted over the situation, and the next Sunday told the congregation he was considering resigning. The song leader led the song, *Oh, Why Not Tonight*.

The preacher resigned the next week and informed the church that it was Jesus that brought him there and it was Jesus that was taking him away. The song leader led, *What A Friend We Have in Jesus*.

Submitted by Larry C. Messer
(Himself a noted song leader
with a merry heart - Prov. 17:22)