

IS GAMBLING A SIN?

Definition of “gamble”

- 1 ***a* : to play a game for money or property**
 b : to bet on an uncertain outcome

- 2 : to stake something on a contingency : take a chance

There is no direct mention of gambling for money in scripture, but scripture does provide principles that can be applied to gambling.

One thing we do find in scripture:

John 19:23-24 – “**23** Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also his coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. **24** They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots. These things therefore the soldiers did.”

Are there any other examples of gambling in scripture?

Article: “Pastor warns Christians not to play Mega Millions lotto”

March 30, 2012

From:

<http://blog.chron.com/believetornot/2012/03/pastor-warns-christians-not-to-play-mega-millions-lotto/>

Evangelical leader and pastor John Piper, like Americans across the country, couldn't ignore the Mega Millions mania. But instead of joking about the odds or going in on a ticket for the \$640 million jackpot, Piper warned followers of the dangers of gambling saying it should be considered “spiritual suicide.”

If you win, “don't tithe your lottery winnings to our church. Christ does not build his church on the backs of the poor,” he said. “Pray that Christ's people will be so satisfied in him that they will be freed from the greed that makes us crave to get rich.”

Piper listed seven reasons why Christians shouldn't play the Mega Millions, calling it a destructive habit that wastes God's money, preys on the poor and builds up foolish hopes.

Texas pastor Jim Denison highlighted the plague of lottery winners who have gone on to make destructive choices and ruin their lives.

Even “ministers are not immune from the lottery curse,” Denison wrote. “Billy Bob Harrell, Jr. was a preacher who won \$31 million in Texas' lottery in 1997. Some 20 months later, after

divorcing his wife and buying a half-dozen homes for relatives, he took his own life with a shotgun.”

When we gamble, are we relying on God’s provision in our lives?

Matthew 6:25-34 – “**25** Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? **26** Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? **27** Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? **28** And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: **29** And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. **30** Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? **31** Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? **32** (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. **33** **But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.** **34** Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.”

Jarom 1:19-22 – “**19** And we multiplied exceedingly, and spread upon the face of the land, **and became exceeding rich in gold, and in silver, and in precious things**, and in fine workmanship of wood, in buildings, and in machinery, and also in iron, and copper, and brass, and steel, making all manner of tools of every kind to till the ground, and weapons of war; **20** Yea, the sharp pointed arrow, and the quiver, and the dart, and the javelin, and all preparations for war; **21** And thus being prepared to meet the Lamanites, they did not prosper against us. **22** **But the word of the Lord was verified, which he spake unto our fathers, saying, That inasmuch as ye will keep my commandments, ye shall prosper in the land.**”

1 Kings 3:5-13 – “**5** In Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night: and God said, Ask what I shall give thee. **6** And Solomon said, Thou hast showed unto thy servant David my father great mercy, according as he walked before thee in truth, and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with thee; and thou hast kept for him this great kindness, that thou hast given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day. **7** And now, O LORD my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: and I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in. **8** And thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude. **9** Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people? **10** **And the speech pleased the LORD, that Solomon had asked this thing.** **11** And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life; **neither hast asked riches for thyself**, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies; but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment; **12** Behold, I have done according to thy words: lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee. **13** And I have also given

thee that which thou hast not asked, **both riches**, and honor: so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days.”

The Nephites in the Book of Mormon were blessed temporally at times because of their obedience (but also fell into temptation time and time again because they eventually focused on these things more than the Lord).

QUESTION: Do you think it's alright to sell tickets for a raffle at church for raising money? If not, how should money in the church be raised?

Our struggles with money benefit our character

Romans 5:1-5 – “**1** Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: **2** By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. **3** And not only so, **but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; 4 And patience, experience; and experience, hope: 5** And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.”

James 1:2-4 – “**2** My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; **3** Knowing this, **that the trying of your faith worketh patience. 4** But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.”

If we gamble and win, will our hearts become set on riches?

Matthew 19:16-24 – “**16** And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? **17** And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. **18** He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, **19** Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. **20** The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet? **21** Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me. **22 But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions. 23** Then said Jesus unto his disciples, **Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. 24** And again I say unto you, **It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.**”

What would happen if we did when the lottery and become rich? Would it be difficult to keep those things from taking the place of God?

Do we know for sure we can withstand the temptation to not lust over money when we gamble?

James 1:13-15 – “**13** Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: **14** But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. **15** Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.”

1 Peter 5:8-9 – “**8** Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: **9** Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.”

1 Timothy 6:6-10 – “**6** **But godliness with contentment is great gain.** **7** For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. **8** **And having food and raiment let us be therewith content.** **9** **But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.** **10** **For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.**”

When we do buy a lottery ticket, and loose, is there any shred of disappoint, or do we simply say to ourselves “no problem” and move on? It’s difficult not to be disappointed and have your thoughts turn to covetousness.

Will winning as a result of gambling truly solve all of our problems?

Ecclesiastes 5:10 – “**He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver;** nor he that loveth abundance with increase: this is also vanity.”

1 Timothy 6:17 – “Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, **nor trust in uncertain riches,** but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy;”

Proverbs 13:11 – “**Wealth gotten by vanity shall be diminished: but he that gathereth by labour shall increase.**”

Proverbs 15:6 – “Better is little with the fear of the LORD than great treasure and trouble therewith.”

Proverbs 28:22 – “**He that hasteth to be rich hath an evil eye,** and considereth not that poverty shall come upon him.”

James 5:1-3 – “**1** Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. **2** **Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are motheaten.** **3** Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days.”

QUESTION: If you play in the lottery and win money, but later wonder if you should keep it, would you keep it, return the money, give it all to charity, give it to church, throw it away, or other?

If we gamble, we may covet money, and the things that this money can buy

When we gamble, are we tempted to covet?

Exodus 20:17 – “Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbor's.”

Hebrews 13:5 – “**5** Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.”

Luke 12:13-21 – “**13** And one of the company said unto him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me. **14** And he said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you? **15** And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: **for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.** **16** And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: **17** And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? **18** And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. **19** And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. **20** But God said unto him, **Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?** **21** **So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.**”

Covetousness has SERIOUS consequences

Ephesians 5:5 – “For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, **nor covetous man**, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.”

1 Corinthians 6:9-10 – “**9** Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, **10** Nor thieves, **nor covetous**, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.”

Can the example of my gambling cause another brother or sister to become addicted?

1 Thessalonians 5:22 – “**22** Abstain from all appearance of evil.”

How would you feel if you walked up to a lottery vending machine, purchased a ticket, and then found out that the next person right behind you that purchases a ticket has a gambling addiction. This person's gambling addiction has destroyed their family. Are we tempting that person as a result of our example? If that person knows you are a Christian, will that give them more justification for doing it?

Gambling can create a recipe for envy between those that loose, and those that win (though envy is a personal decision)

Galatians 5:19-21 – “**19** Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, **20** Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, **21 Envyings**, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, **that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.**”

When we gamble, are we yoking ourselves with unbelievers and those that lust for money?

2 Corinthians 6:14-18 – “**14** Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? **15** And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? **16** And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. **17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate**, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you. **18** And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.”

Many things that are associated with gambling (particularly casinos) are not wholesome in nature (drunkenness, showgirls, the lust of money, greed, etc.).

We should be wise stewards of our money and not risk losing it

Could our money be used in better ways?

Acts 20:35 – “**35** I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, **It is more blessed to give than to receive.**”

Mormon 4:50 – “For behold, ye do love money, and your substance, and your fine apparel, and the adorning of your churches, more than ye love the poor and the needy, the sick and the afflicted.”

Jacob 2:22-24 – “**22** Think of your brethren, like unto yourselves, and be familiar with all, and free with your substance, that they may be rich like unto you. **23** But before ye seek for riches, seek ye for the kingdom of God. **24** And after that ye have obtained a hope in Christ, ye shall obtain riches, if ye seek them; **and ye will seek them, for the intent to do good; to clothe the naked, and to feed the hungry, and to liberate the captive, and administer relief to the sick, and the afflicted.**”

2008 Focus on the Family Study

From: <http://www.focusonthefamily.com/socialissues/social-issues/gambling/cause-for-concern.aspx>

SMR Research Corporation called gambling "the single fastest-growing driver of bankruptcy."

Professors from Georgetown University and Purdue University performed research on the link between gambling and bankruptcy. They concluded, "We found statistically significant increases at the county level in the number of personal bankruptcy filings due to the introduction of casino gambling."

The U.S. Department of Justice and The National Institute of Justice (NIJ) found a correlation between high levels of criminal activity related to pathological gambling. The percentage of pathological gamblers among arrestees was three to five times higher than the general population, and compulsive or pathological gamblers were significantly more likely to have sold drugs than arrestees who fit the other gambling types.

In a report titled *Casinos, Crime and Community Costs* (2004), university researchers found that a casino's effect on crime is low shortly after it opens and grows over time. Casino counties had notably higher crime rates than non-casino counties, and, for most offenses, the statistically significant differences tend to appear two or three years after casinos open.

In a survey of nearly 400 Gamblers Anonymous members, 28 percent reported being either separated or divorced as a direct result of their gambling problems. In the National Gambling Impact Study, the lifetime divorce rates for problem and pathological gamblers were 39.5 percent and 53.5 percent, respectively; the rate in non-gamblers was 18.2 percent.

In Indiana, a review of the state's gaming commission records revealed that 72 children were found abandoned on casino premises during a 14-month period.

A University of Nebraska Medical Center study concluded that problem gambling is as much a risk factor for domestic violence as alcohol abuse.

Domestic violence murders in at least 11 states have been traced to gambling problems since 1996. Three years after casinos were legalized in Deadwood, South Dakota, felony crimes increased by 40 percent, child abuse increased 42 percent, and domestic violence and assaults rose 80 percent.

One in five pathological gamblers will attempt suicide, while one in ten of their spouses will attempt suicide.

In Gulfport, Mississippi, suicides increased by 213 percent (from 24 to 75) in the first two years after casinos arrived. In neighboring Biloxi, suicide attempts jumped by 1,000 percent (from 6 to 66) in the first year alone. A survey of nearly 200 Illinois Gamblers Anonymous members found that 66 percent had contemplated suicide, 79 percent had wanted to die, 45 percent had a definite plan to kill themselves, and 16 percent had actually attempted suicide.

Summary

If we gamble, will we do any of the following?

1. Trust in money more than God for our provision
2. Covet
3. Have our hearts turn to greed
4. Love our money more than God
5. Regret when we lose
6. Be tempted to envy the ones that win
7. Be yoked with unbelievers and the things of the world
8. Be a bad example to those that may severely struggle with gambling
9. Become addicted

If gambling results in any of the above, then gambling becomes a sin.