

TRAGIC TRENDS OF OUR DAY IV

THE GAMBLING CRAZE

By E. L. Bynum

Gambling is a loser's game invented for losers, and is very addictive. It brings great profit to the professional gambling organizations, and adds poverty to multitudes of people. It is really regressive taxation that brings vast amounts of money to professional gambling organizations and the government, while bringing poverty to a vast number of people. We are reproducing an article from a column in the LAJ, our local Lubbock newspaper. I am sure that the LAJ is for the gambling craze, but this was a part of a larger syndicated article that they were under contract to print. Here is the entire article.

THE FOOL'S SCHOOL: THE BAD MATH OF LOTTERIES

Buying lottery tickets can deliver a little fun or a lot of financial ruin. Consider, for example, that according to a 2008 study, households earning less than \$13,000 annually spend, on average, 9 percent of their income on lottery tickets. Another study found 21 percent of Americans view lotteries as a practical way to build wealth. Yikes! Playing the lottery is just not a smart move.

Math professor Tyler Jarvis has explained why, offering the example of the California Lotto Jackpot, with odds of about 1 in 18 million: "If you have to drive 10 miles to buy this ticket, you are three times more likely to be killed in an automobile accident on the way than to win the jackpot, yet many people would incorrectly think that winning this lottery would be more probable."

It's true that by buying more than one ticket, you can up your chances of winning. But consider this: With odds of 1 in 18 million (and many lotteries offer far worse odds), if you bought 50 tickets per week, you ought to win once every 6,923 years. So you should have won by now—if you'd started playing around 5,000 B.C.

Meanwhile, if you bought 100 \$2 Powerball lottery tickets every week from age 18 to 75, that would total \$592,800. With the jackpot odds at worse than 1 in 175 million, your odds would still have just a 1-in-295 chance of winning. Look at all that money you spent, which could have supported you considerably in retirement!

In fact, cash-strapped governments are often the winners, with North American lotteries raising more than \$300 billion since 1964. It's ironic that many lotteries spend their revenue on education, as a popular saying reasonably points out that lotteries are a tax on people who aren't good at math.

Don't buy more than occasional tickets for fun. Keep in mind the wisdom of Fran Lebowitz, who reportedly quipped, "I've done the calculation, and your chances of winning the lottery are identical whether you play or not." —LAJ, 3/31/13

I challenge you dear readers to go back and carefully read the above reprinted article and see the chance that you have to win. Just think about the following fact that "households earning less than \$13,000 annually spend, on average, 9 percent of their income on lottery tickets." These people are living below the poverty level and are getting food stamps and other forms of government aid, and yet they are spending 9% of their income on lottery tickets. They can buy lottery tickets in convenience stores with their food stamps given them by the government. The innocent taxpayers are paying for the lottery tickets with their income tax, and much of it is being charged to our grandchildren through deficit spending. It is no wonder that God's judgment

is already falling upon the United States. The lottery is fool's gold for the simple who want to waste their money and ruin their family. These people will squeal like a pig caught in a gate if their taxes are raised or their government aid is cut, yet they willingly give up their money to dishonest gamblers, then lose, and keep going back to lose over and over again. That is the definition of insanity, doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different outcome.

GAMBLING CASINOS

The same LAJ, 4/9/13, had a main front page article entitled "Lone Star Gambling" along with the picture of the Riverwind Casino in a neighboring state. They want Texas to reclaim some of the \$3 billion a year that Texans spend in Oklahoma, New Mexico and Louisiana. Of course the newspapers are for the revenue that they would gain for advertising the gambling casinos that would be established in Texas. And they also enjoy the money they get from advertising beer, wine, and whiskey.

A recent tour bus overturned near Dallas, killing two people and sending many more to the hospital. It was leased to senior citizens who were on their way to a casino in Oklahoma. These seniors would cry out against any cut of their Social Security, but they will gladly lease a bus to go gamble their money away. Winning in the casinos is quite rare and for a very good reason. How do you think the casinos can build such lavish buildings and grand hotels? They do it from their winnings at the gaming tables. Besides this, the casinos siphon off vast amounts of money which goes to the owners. Many of these people making the huge profits are of questionable character and often allied with powerful politicians.

I remember in World War II, I went to Tonopah, Nevada for flight crew training. It was a little dried up town with nothing for soldiers to do except go to the Tonopah Club to gamble. I remember as a green country kid walking in to view the tables loaded with silver dollars stacked 18 to 24 inches high. I'm not talking about one stack but dozens of stacks of those beautiful silver dollars. The soldiers all got paid in cash once a month. You could hardly find a paper dollar bill in the entire town. You would go into a store to buy a pack of gum or a piece of candy and give them a \$5, \$10 or \$20 bill, and they would always give you change with silver dollars. They did this to tempt you to put the silver dollars in a slot machine or at the gaming tables. The pay that soldiers got in that day were miserly small, but the soldiers would go to town and gamble all of their pay away and then come back and beg to borrow PX money from those who did not waste their money. Some of them still owe me money, and one friend still owes me. The last time I saw him was in Ft. Worth and he was still broke.

It was told to me at the time, that a powerful politician in Nevada owned the Tonopah Club. Former Senator John Montford is heading up the big push for getting the people of Texas to vote for the bill introduced by Senator Jim Carona. You can well imagine the big fee that Montford is collecting from the gambling interests. Of course they tell us all the money that will come from taxes which will support schools, etc. That is the same argument that they made in the 1990's in favor of the state lottery. The lottery money was supposed to go to the schools, but did it go there? No, the schools are still crying for money. We sincerely pray that the casino gambling bill will not pass the legislature, but if it does, it will be another tax on the poor, and will be a real money tree for the casino owners.

THE BIBLE IS OPPOSED TO GAMBLING

"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. 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." (1 Timothy 6:9-10) Gambling is an attempt to get rich or at least to make great gain. The above Scripture tells us

exactly what will happen to people who fall into the trap of gambling. Gambling leads to the love of money which is definitely a sin and is the “root of all evil” according to God’s Holy Word.

Gambling is based upon covetousness, and the Bible speaks clearly about this sin. “Thou shalt not covet . . .” (Exodus 20:17) “Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness.” (Psalms 119:36) If people would heed God’s testimonies (Bible) they would not covet the money they hope to win by gambling. “But godliness with contentment is great gain.” (1 Timothy 6:6) This verse tells us how we can have real contentment instead of covetousness.

Gambling has four parts:

- An artificial risk. Many risks in life are necessary to take; when you gamble you are creating risks of your own choosing.
- A selfish goal. The basic objective of the gambler is not to improve society, even when he buys a lottery ticket from the state. His basic goal is to win a million dollars.
- No productive by-product or social betterment. An investment is used to benefit others; a wager achieves no social good.
- A gain at someone else’s expense. In an investment, everyone may gain; in betting, the odds are carefully stacked so that there will be more losers than winners.

GAMBLING IS FAULTY THINKING

We should guard our thoughts and make sure that they are right. “Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.” (Philippians 4:8) There is no way that gambling could possibly fit into what we ought to be thinking about.

Gambling is not true and honest for while they lure you with money, they will take your money without caring one bit about you. Gambling is not pure—it is anything but pure; and is often controlled by crime figures. Gambling is not lovely for I would doubt if anyone would call a one-armed bandit lovely. It certainly is not lovely to lose your hard earned money on a roulette wheel. Gambling is not of good report. Gambling is of a bad report where people lose their grocery money, and their rent or house payment money to the casino. When a bet is placed and you win, you are taking somebody else’s money and not that of the casino. The casinos win every day, because the games are heavily weighted for them to win.

There is no virtue or praise in gambling, and it is not spiritual but carnal.

THE GAMBLING BUSINESS THRIVES ON LUST AND COVETOUSNESS

The person who gambles does so because he covets the money that belongs to someone else. “I have coveted no man’s silver, or gold, or apparel” (Acts 20:33). The owners of the Casinos covet the money of the customer. The customer covets the money of the Casino owners. A person would be very stupid to gamble to lose money; every gambler hopes to win because he covets what others lose. “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” (1 Timothy 6:10). For any who doubt my contention that gambling thrives because of the covetousness of the carnal nature, let me ask some questions.

Does a person put money into the office pool betting on a basketball game for any reason other than hoping he wins what everybody else puts in? That is covetousness.

Does a person go down and buy a lottery ticket for any other purpose than that he hopes he will win a lump of the other money that other covetous people put down for tickets? That is covetousness!

Does a person call a bookie or go to a horse or dog track and buy a ticket betting on some horse or dog for any other reason than that he hopes he wins some of the money the other bettors will lose? That is covetousness!

Does a person put a coin in a slot machine for any other reason than that he hopes he will hit the jackpot and win what others have lost? That is covetousness!

Does a person play the crape table or the roulette table for any other reason than his hopes that he will win what others have lost? That is covetousness!

Do gambling establishments set up business for any other reason than their hopes that enough suckers will lose enough money that they can make millions of dollars? That is covetousness!

The deceitfulness of riches and the lust of other things are often forces behind gambling. "And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful" (Mark. 4:19). These lusts of the flesh which cause some to gamble can result in much hurt. "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" (1 Timothy 6:9).

These lusts which drive some to gamble can be the cause of war in the home or in the church. "From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?" (James. 4:1).

Now that I have firmly established that gambling thrives because of the covetousness of the carnal nature, we should consider God's attitude toward the covetous. The Lord abhors covetous people. "For the wicked boasteth of his heart's desire, and blesseth the covetous, whom the LORD abhorreth" (Psalms 10:3).

Paul admonished the church at Corinth to exclude members from their fellowship who were covetous. "Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world. But now I have written to you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat" (1 Corinthians 5:10-11).

Paul warned that covetous people will not inherit the kingdom of God. "Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Corinthians 6:10). "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" Ephesians 5:5). Covetousness will disqualify a man as a pastor. "Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous" (1 Timothy 3:3).

GAMBLING THRIVES BECAUSE OF MAN'S DESIRE TO HAVE SOMETHING FOR NOTHING

God has commanded that His people work for what they get; gambling discourages the work ethic ordained by God. "Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth" (Ephesians 4:28).

God blesses wealth that is gained by labor but not that which is taken from another, such as is done in gambling. "Wealth gotten by vanity shall be diminished: but he that gathereth by labour shall increase" (Proverbs 13:11).

God will sooner or later take that which is obtained through the wrong means, and then where will the gambler be? "As the partridge sitteth on eggs, and hatcheth them not; so he that getteth riches, and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at his end shall be a fool" (Jeremiah 17:11).

CONCLUSION

Gambling is not good stewardship and puts the gambling man or woman in conflict with God's Word. In Matthew 25:14-30, we have the parable of the talents, which teach a great lesson on stewardship. A talent in this story means, "a sum of money weighing a talent and varying in different states and according to the changes in the laws regulating currency." Each of the men received talents of money. "For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey. Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents. And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two. But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money." (Matthew 25:14-18) They each had to give an account of how they had used their talent when the master returned.

What if the man that received five talents had to tell his master that he had gone down to the casino and had hoped to make a lot of money. Then when the master returned, he had to tell him the sad story how he had lost it all. He would have told the owner that he was worse than the man who buried his one talent.

We are responsible for all the money that comes into our hands. God is going to reward us according to how we used it all. It will not be just the tithe, but all that comes into our hand. It is foolish to spend the money on the lottery, the casino, or the horse races. It is a serious matter and we had better be careful how we use our resources.