

GAMBLING

Some reasons gambling is both sinful and stupid

Definition: "Gambling" – any game of "chance" in which something of value is put at stake and the only way in which to win that stake is for the other person(s) to lose. Gambling is involved when something of value is at stake.

Important note: There is no verse in the Bible which says "Thou shalt not gamble." Therefore gambling is not "**explicitly**" stated to be a sin in the Bible. However, the Bible does "**implicitly**" denounce gambling as a sin by virtue of the fact that gambling breaks many biblical principles which guide us in godly actions. An action need not be explicitly named as wrong in order for that thing to be an actual sin. For example, there is no explicit command against cannibalism, abortion, transgender surgery, recreational drug use, polygamy, or a thousand other sins. Yet those things are clearly sin.

Legalism: It is not legalism to state that an action which clearly violates one or more biblical principles is sin. Whether a thing is sinful is determined by holding an action up to biblical principles and seeing if that action clearly violates those principles. For example, to argue that for "a woman to wear high heels is sin" would be legalism because wearing high heels does not break any biblical principles.

I. GAMBLING BREAKS THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

1. Principle: Ex. 20:3; Col. 3:5. Commandments #1 & #2 – No **idols**. Covetousness is idolatry. You cannot serve God and mammon. Gambling demonstrates a love for money rather than a love for God. Isaiah 65:11 shows that Fortune and Fate are demon idols.

2. Principle: Ex. 20:7. Commandment #3 – Do not take the name of the Lord in vain. Gambling breaks this command when a professing Christian calls himself a "Christian" and yet persists in the sin of gambling. This is taking the name of Christ (i.e. "Christian") in vain.

3. Principle: Ex. 20:12. Commandment #5 – It violates the principle of honoring your **parents**. No godly mother and father would encourage their son to take up gambling, either as a hobby or as a way to make a living.

4. Principle: Ex. 20:15. Commandment #8 – Don't **steal**. Gambling is legalized stealing. Just because the other person may agree that they are willing to be stolen from, that does not make it biblically allowable. For example, in a pistol duel the two combatants may agree to shoot at each other, knowing the risk is death; nonetheless the one who wins the duel will be taken to court for murder.

5. Principle: Ex. 20:16. Commandment #9 – Don't **lie**. It is well known that lying is a crucial part of certain games of chance. The "poker face" is a well known expression. The poker player is lying with his face.

6. Principle: Ex. 20:17. Commandment #10 – Don't **covet!** Covetousness is the heart of gambling. Those who argue that they openly gamble for recreation are deceived by their own sinful heart. If they gambled only for recreation then you can do that without money. For example, a man can go fishing for recreation without gambling on who catches the most.

II. GAMBLING IS UNWISE

7. Principle: Heb. 13:17. Submit to godly leadership in the church. It violates the command for a church member to submit to those who rule over them. Our church leadership is godly and well taught biblically and asks all members to refrain from all forms of gambling. No godly, biblically well taught church leadership would encourage a person to gamble.

8. Principle: Prov. 11:14. It violates the principle of following **the counsel** of a multitude of wise counselors. Luther, Spurgeon, MacArthur, Lawson, Phil Johnson, etc. – the entire Christian church for 2,000 years has looked upon gambling as sin. Surveys of numerous, biblical pastors revealed that 100% of them said that gambling is either itself an outright sin or sins by breaking numerous biblical principles such as wise stewardship, the biblical work ethic, etc.

9. Principle: 1 Cor. 11:16. We "have no such custom nor do **the churches** of God." Paul appeals to conformity to the universal practice of apostolic churches. In other words, if you have a question, look and see what biblical churches have as their consistent practice. Gambling violates the principle of uniform church practice. Bible believing, Bible teaching churches have consistently been opposed to all forms of gambling for 2,000 years.

III. GAMBLING IS CONSISTENTLY PUT IN A NEGATIVE LIGHT IN SCRIPTURE

10. Principle: Judges 14:10-20. Samson's riddle is an illustration of the dangers of gambling. Gambling is never seen in a good light in the Bible. Gambling is never commanded or commended but it is **condemned** in narrative portions.

11. Principle: Matt. 27:35. The soldiers gambled for the Lord's clothes at the foot of the cross. This story is plausibly understood to be included to show this as another sin for which Christ died.

12. Principle: Heb. 11. The hall of faith. No one in the hall of faith is commended for being a gambler. Gambling is never exalted as admirable in Scripture. No one in Scripture is commended for gambling.

13. Principle: Rom. 14:23. "Faith." Whatever is not of faith is sin. Faith in chance or lady luck or the goddess of fortune is a misplaced, false faith. No one may legitimately argue that they can pray for God to bless their gamble, or trust God to make them win. That would be like thrusting your hand into a fire and praying that it not be burned. This was the lie of Satan to Christ, "Throw yourself down from the pinnacle of the temple and God will give you a safe landing!" Jesus replied, "You shall not test the Lord your God!"

IV. GAMBLING HURTS OTHER PEOPLE

14. Principle: Matt. 7:12. Gambling violates the "**Golden Rule.**" "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." No gambler who loses would want another person to take away their money without giving something of equal value in return.

15. Principle: Rom. 13:8. Gambling violates the "**Law of Love.**" To play a game of chance with another person, even if they agree, and then to take away their money without giving anything of value in return is an unloving act toward them. If you know that you can beat them it is an especially heinous act.

16. Principle: 1 Cor. 10:32. Evangelism. Gambling damages our witness to the lost. It undermines any evangelistic testimony. Imagine winning a big poker game on ESPN. The announcer puts the microphone in your face and says, "Wow, you just won \$500,000.00! What do you have to say for yourself?" And you answer, "I'd like to thank God. I am a Christian and I prayed for God to enable me to win my opponents' money without giving him anything of value in return. I also want to set a good example for all the kids out there in TV land. I am trying to follow the teachings of Christ in all I do." You would be the laughing stock of the world and a grief to all Christians.

17. Principle: 1 Cor. 6:12. Gambling is addictive. This is a matter of fact. The addiction rate for gambling is far higher than that of drinking alcohol.

18. Principle: Rom. 12:17. It violates the principle of "**a stigma.**" Gambling is viewed by most everyone in mainline culture and certainly in Christianity as a dishonest, lazy, covetous, dishonorable, degenerate way to make a living. God commands that we "provide things **honorable** in the sight of all men" (Rom. 12:17; 2 Cor. 8:21; 2 Cor. 13:7; Phil. 4:8).

19. Principle: 1 Cor. 8:12. Gambling **emboldens** the weak conscience of a weaker brother, and so is sin.

20. Principle: 1 Cor. 10:31. Do all to **the glory of God.** Gambling cannot be done to the glory of God. You cannot glorify God for making you win money by hurting other people. In gambling there is only one way to win and that is by hurting another person. In a legitimate business when the company makes money the whole economy benefits. Jobs are created, more wealth is created, support companies are formed and so forth.

21. Principle: Prov. 16:33. Gambling depends upon luck and **chance** (fortune and fate). This is a tacit denial of the sovereignty of God. God determines "the roll of the dice."

22. Principle: 1 Cor. 6:12 & 10:23. Gambling is not spiritually **edifying**.

23. Principle: 1 Cor. 10:24. Gambling does not seek the **well-being** of the other person. This is a crucial principle. Gambling is actually the opposite of this principle. **PONDER THIS ONE!**

24. Principle: 1 Cor. 8:10. Gambling defiles the **conscience**. If a person does not have a tender conscience regarding gambling, then begins to gamble, their conscience will get seared. If they do have a tender conscience then begin gambling, they will go against their conscience and therefore sin.

25. Principle: 1 Cor. 11:1. Bad example. Gambling sets a bad example for young children and young people to follow. It is a wicked heritage to leave for one's children.

V. GAMBLING IS ASSOCIATED WITH EVIL

26. Principle: 1 Cor. 15:33. "**Bad company** corrupts good morals." Everything that goes with gambling is corrupt. Look at Las Vegas. What is another name for Vegas? "Sin City!" Why? Gambling has filled it with organized crime, prostitution, greed, coveting, robbery, addictions, violence, suicide, and laziness.

27. Principle: Matt. 7:16, 20. "By their **fruits** you shall know them." The destructive influence of gambling is simply a matter of fact. Communities which allow gambling (e.g. Indian reservations) are besieged by addictions (to booze, drugs, gambling), organized crime, 300% increase in suicide, degenerating schools and so forth.

28. Principle: Isa. 65:11. "Fortune" and "Fate" are demon idols. Gamblers rely on fortune and fate in their vain hopes to win.

29. Principle: Gambling is demotivating and counter productive to building a career and earning an education. A gambler who may be winning for a time feels no drive to pursue the hard work of building into his life all of the ingredients needed to become a productive member of society.

VI. GAMBLING VIOLATES THE BIBLICAL WORK ETHIC

30. Principle: slothfulness. Gambling produces slothfulness. The lazy fool imagines that he can earn a living gambling and so gambles and sleeps.

31. Principle: for every winner there are losers. In business and recreation for every winner there are more winners. In contrast, with gambling, the only way to win is for the other guy (or guys) to lose. Gambling does not increase the size of the financial or economic pie. In gambling there are always losers. You can only win when there are losers. This inevitably creates hard feelings, vengeance, anger, and more sin.

32. Principle: Eph. 4:28. Give good, honest, hard day's work for a fair day's pay. God commanded Adam to earn his living through good, honest hard work. Those who steal must steal no longer, but rather let them labor, working with their hands what is good.

33. Principle: Poor stewardship. It is obvious to anyone who has observed a gambler for any length of time that they are not handling God's money wisely.

34. Principle: It violates the principle of "**fair exchange**." It is a sin to overcharge for a product. Gambling provides no valid product. In every gamble there are losers.

35. Principle: Valid means of increasing wealth. God's word gives us some legitimate means of increasing our wealth: 1] honest labor; 2] investments; 3] inheritance; 4] charity. Gambling is the moral equivalent of stealing, which is not a legitimate means of gaining wealth.

VII. THE ARGUMENTS IN FAVOR OF GAMBLING ARE FORCED AND TWIST SCRIPTURE

1. "I gamble for recreation/ fun."

Response: No you don't. You are deceived and do not even know or admit your true motives. Gamblers repeatedly state that what makes gambling fun is the thrill of the chance to win. If they truly gambled only for recreation then why do they always use money? Coveting is the heart of gambling. You covet more money for no work. Gambling, like all get-rich-quick schemes is wrong.

2. "All of life is a gamble."

Response: investments, farming, insurance, etc. are totally different from gambling in that they do not succeed through the loss of another. Also, the risk is not artificial, and the odds are not loaded against you. The farmer has thousands of years of history to show that seedtime and harvest follow year after year in spite of an occasional bad year. When a person invests in a company there are many factors which the person considers (management, track record, marketing, product, etc.). When the investor makes money the whole economy makes money.

3. "We mutually agree to lose the money."

Response: Those who murder their baby in an abortion mutually agree with the abortionist. Those who engage in a "gunfight" or duel mutually agree to a murder. Many sins are done with the mutual agreement of those in the sin. Mutual agreement to steal from each other is not a valid defense for gambling.

4. "There is no verse in the Bible which says, "Thou shalt not gamble" so it is a liberty issue."

Response: This blind reasoning is usually followed by the argument that to disallow gambling is legalism. It is important to understand that **there are many sins for which there is no explicit verse which says, "Thou shalt not!"**

There is no verse which says, "*Thou shalt not eat thy neighbor.*" And yet it is obviously a sin to commit cannibalism because it violates so many other biblical principles. No verse says explicitly, "*Thou shalt not commit polygamy*" and yet polygamy has been understood to be a sin by the entire church for 2,000 years, (except by wicked cults like Mormonism). There is no verse which explicitly forbids recreational drug use, or transgender surgery, or dueling with pistols or swords, or inviting the family pet to participate in the Lord's Supper.

It is simply a bogus argument to say that because the Bible does not specifically forbid gambling that it is a liberty issue. Hermeneutics and exegesis demand that the student identify the biblical principles which are taught in the text and then apply those to an issue. Any issue which clearly violates a biblical principle is sin.