

Captive's Corner



"Bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ"

2 Corinthians 10:5

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Gambling

Gambling fever rages in America today. Statistics show that today, as a whole, Americans are tithing 10% of their income to gambling. It infects us to the tune of fifty billion dollars a year! In an attempt to get money without raising taxes and also to keep some of this gambling out of the control of organized crime, many states

First of all, we are stewards of all that God has given us. We may not squander our lives, our abilities, or our money. As the faithful servant of Matthew 25, we must put our talents to work.

But if some of the money sent in is used to give a new car to the lucky winner, that money did not reach its goal. The lust to get large returns from small investment is not the nature of true giving.

This is not true concern for the poor or the growth of God's Kingdom.

"The end justifies the means" is not a Biblical principle. God does not permit unholy means to be used to reach holy goals. The claim is made that gambling costs nothing. This is simply not true. Gambling, legal or not, hurts the economy. Much of the money put in does not buy goods or

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services. Gambling is inefficient. The Washington Monument was built by lotteries, but the public had to send in seven times the actual construction cost. State lotteries realize only a 20-30% net profit. But worse is the effect on people. The entire history of gambling in this country and abroad shows that it has brought nothing but poverty, crime, corruption, and a loss of moral and ethical standards.

The thinking citizen should find these reasons sufficient. The Christian, in addition to the above reasons, has clear Biblical principles that should guide his living, even though the Bible gives no specific injunction against gambling. First of all, we are

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stewards of all that God has given us. We may not squander our lives, our abilities, or our money. As the faithful servant of Matthew 25, we must put our talents to work. Secondly, our lives are not controlled by chance, but by a loving heavenly Father. It is misuse of God's providence when we allow chance to determine our gain or loss. A third Biblical principle is that God forbids covetousness. We may expect fair wages for honest work, but we have no right to that which we do not earn. The gambler longingly eyes the big prize and shows that riches are his goal in life. The love of money is identified as "the root of all evil things" – 1 Timothy 6:10. The Christian takes seriously Matthew 6:16-34 where Jesus teaches on temporal versus eternal needs and riches as He states, "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon." Another biblical principle is that if we are to love our neighbor as God commands, we will not wish to win at his expense. If we wish to aid him, let us do so directly without the use of an inefficient, fiscal device. Further, although work in a sinful world is often difficult, it is a blessing of God. Those who want

something for nothing, the thieves, the idlers, the busybodies, are condemned - Ephesians 4:28; 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12; 2 Thessalonians 3:10-12.

Finally, the Christian is a good citizen and seeks the true good of his state and nation, even the

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good of those who in their weakness, foolishness, and shortsightedness willingly participate in legalized gambling. Active opposition to the spread of this insidious evil is another way that the Christian can redeem the times in this evil day - Ephesians 5:15-16.

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