

What is Wrong with the Lottery?

In this paper we are dealing with GAMBLING in general and the LOTTERY in particular. Our society is becoming more and more materialistic and covetous. Everywhere can be seen the LOVE OF MONEY and the LUST OF MONEY. May our all-sufficient Saviour help us to see these issues clearly and to abhor that which is evil, even the sin of gambling. Some of the obvious problems of the LOTTERY are as follows:

1. **THE LOTTERY ENCOURAGES VIOLATION OF THE FIRST COMMANDMENT** (Exodus 20:3). The lottery is a god to many people. They think about it daily. They look to it to meet their needs and to satisfy the desires of their heart. They frequently line up and worship at one of its many shrines. They often tithe their money to it. Their trust and hope is also in the Lottery's companion goddess, "LADY LUCK."
2. **THE LOTTERY ENCOURAGES VIOLATION OF THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT** (Exodus 20:15). Dr. G. Campbell Morgan, in his book *The Ten Commandments* said, "Gambling is stealing. The whole habit of gambling is of the essence of theft...It is a means by which men come into possession of property which is a violation of the laws upon which property may be held. A man who gambles puts into his pocket money for which he has done no honest work; and by the very act he robs the man from whom he receives it and violates the law of love. The gambling fever is the cause of more petty larceny and wholesale fraud than any other form of sin. There is no more insidious evil sapping away the integrity and uprightness of the nation today than this lust for possession without toil, which lies at the root of all gambling. The gambler, whether he wear the purple, broadcloth, or corduroy, is a thief in the sight of God, and ought to be so in the sight of all honest men."
3. **THE LOTTERY ENCOURAGES THE VIOLATION OF THE TENTH COMMANDMENT** (Exodus 20:17). "Did you read about that woman who won 8 million dollars? I want to be like her. If only I could have the luck she had and win what she won!" See Luke 12:15--"Take heed and beware of covetousness."
4. **THE LOTTERY ENCOURAGES THAT WHICH IS UNWISE AND FOOLISH**. The *World Book Encyclopedia* (1958) said this about gambling: "Gambling means staking something of value in a game of chance. True games of chance require no skill on the part of the player. Their outcome depends entirely on luck. People gamble because they hope to win something for nothing. But one can more easily lose, and the loss may involve money which was earned by hard effort and which may be difficult to replace. A serious loss often causes hardship. Hence **it is not considered desirable or wise for anyone to gamble.**" In 1958 even this worldly source warned of the dangers of gambling!

5. **THE LOTTERY ONLY MULTIPLIES THE PROBLEM OF GAMBLING ADDICTION.** In the news we hear much about the BIG WINNERS, but we hear little about the addicts who are the BIG LOSERS. They cannot break the habit. They are hooked. They do not control gambling; gambling controls them.
6. **PLAYING THE LOTTERY IS EXTREMELY POOR FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT.** All the believer has belongs to Christ (1 Cor. 6:19-20) and he is to be a faithful steward of these things. How foolish it is to carelessly gamble away money that could be used for purposes that glorify the Saviour! Families often suffer due to gambling. It is an abomination when a drunkard takes money needed by his family and spends it on the bottle. The same type of thing is done by irresponsible gamblers and lottery players.
7. **THE LOTTERY PAYS POOR DIVIDENDS AND IS A TERRIBLE INVESTMENT.** If the risks were as high on the stock market, no one would invest. As believers we need to invest in eternity and put our treasure where it really pays off (Matthew 6:19-20).
8. **THE LOTTERY CAN DECEIVE PEOPLE INTO THINKING THAT IT IS A BLESSING NOT TO WORK.** Many desire to win the lottery so they can quit work and retire early. This can and often is a curse, not a blessing. Nothing fosters sin as much as idleness. See Ezekiel 16:49 (the sin of Sodom). The lottery promotes the ungodly idea that a person can loaf and live: "I'll win the lottery and retire and take it easy and live the rest of my days in a life of ease" (compare Luke 12:15-20). See Paul's strong admonitions about those who refuse to work in 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15.
9. **THE LOTTERY CAUSES PEOPLE TO LOOK FOR UNREALISTIC SOLUTIONS TO THEIR PROBLEMS.** Those who look to the Lottery for the solution to their problems are greatly disappointed. Even the "big winners" discover that wealth does not solve problems and does not satisfy the deepest needs of the heart. In contrast, all who truly look to the living God are greatly rewarded (Hebrews 11:6).
10. **THE LOTTERY PROMOTES THE UNGODLY IDEA THAT YOU CAN "GIVE A LITTLE" AND "GET A LOT."** "Give a dollar and get a million dollars!" The Biblical principle is this: "Give a lot and get a lot! Sow a lot and reap a lot! Sow bountifully and reap bountifully! Sow sparingly, reap sparingly." See Galatians 6:7 and 2 Corinthians 9:6.
11. **THE LOTTERY TEACHES PEOPLE TO LOOK TO LADY LUCK INSTEAD OF TRUSTING THE LIVING LORD.** See Matthew 6:32--the unsaved seek all these things. Though we cannot condone it, we can understand how those with no Heavenly Father can engage in gambling. As children of the Heavenly Father, may we never insult the God who has promised to meet our every need. God forbid that we should look to

CHANCE instead of CHRIST, and trust in LUCK instead of the LORD.

12. **THE LOTTERY PROVIDES PEOPLE WITH A FALSE HOPE AND WITH THE WRONG GOALS.** "You can get rich quick!" etc. People live with expectations which will probably never be realized. "The Lottery is my Shepherd, I shall not want. It makes me to lie down in ease. It enricheth my life. My bank account runneth over, etc." What a lie! Thus the Lottery sets before the minds of people the wrong goals: to get rich quick, to win a million dollars, to become financially independent, to retire early, etc. The believer's goal is to do the will of God (1 John 2:17), regardless of the cost or sacrifice. Pleasing Christ is all that counts (Philippians 3:8; 2 Cor. 5:9--it is our ambition to be well-pleasing to Christ).
13. **THE LOTTERY PROMOTES THE WICKED PHILOSOPHY THAT IT IS MORE BLESSED TO RECEIVE THAN TO GIVE.** To such people it is better to GET than to GIVE. What is gambling all about? It is all about GAINING (GETTING), though most end up LOSING. The Bible teaches that when we try to get for ourselves we lose, but when we give to God and to others we gain: "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty" (Prov. 11:24). Often we as believers wrongly think that we work in order to GET (get a paycheck, etc.), but the Bible presents it differently. The Bible teaches that we work in order to GIVE (see Ephesians 4:28 and Acts 20:35).
14. **THE LOTTERY PROMOTES THE SINFUL LOVE AND LUST OF MONEY.** One writer has said, "Gambling has an uncanny way of elevating money and material gain to the place of priority." Whenever material gain becomes uppermost in our minds, Jesus Christ is dethroned (see Matthew 6:24). "*In God We Trust*" is still written on our coins and currency, but most Americans belie this great motto.
15. **THE LOTTERY TENDS TO GET PEOPLE TO THINK ABOUT WHAT THEY DO NOT HAVE.** Instead they should be THANKING GOD for what they do have (Eph. 5:20; 1 Thess. 5:18).
16. **THE LOTTERY IS IN OPPOSITION TO THE BIBLICAL PRINCIPLE OF CONTENTMENT.** See Hebrews 13:5 and 1 Timothy 6:6-19. Those who have found Christ to be an all-sufficient Saviour know that true life does not consist in the things that a person possesses. HE and HE ALONE is all that the believer needs.
17. **THE LOTTERY CAUSES PEOPLE TO FOCUS ON THE THINGS IN LIFE WHICH ARE TEMPORAL.** See 2 Corinthians 4:18. The person who is greatly concerned for treasures on earth is wise for a second but a fool forever. The lottery pays no eternal benefits at all.

The Lottery can afford good opportunities to share Christ with those who know Him not. Our not using the lottery system can stir up questions as to why we do not use it (see 1 Peter 3:15). We can share with lottery enthusiasts that we have something so precious that it could never be

purchased, not even with millions of dollars! As the unsaved observe us, may they see and know that our Saviour satisfies us fully and provides for us completely! There is not one thing that the believing heart needs that is not found in Jesus Christ our Lord! **"That in every thing ye are enriched by him"** (1 Cor. 1:5a).

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