

GAMBLING, THE LITTLE KNOWN SIN #1

Every thing in life must be considered in light of, “What does the Bible say?” Every choice we make must be filtered through, “what saith the Lord?” Colossians 3:17 makes it very clear, “*And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus....*” It is by His Word that we will be judged (John 12:48).

When concerning any matter we must ask, “is it right or wrong?” What about gambling — the lottery, and all the so-called “innocent bets” — trivial bets?

The word lottery means: “a drawing of lots in which prizes are distributed to the winners among persons buying a chance. Something that is regarded as a chance. Players buy (or are given) chances and prizes are distributed by casting lots.” Lotteries are one of the many forms of gambling.

Gambling is defined as: “the act of playing for stakes in the hope of winning (including the payment of a price for a chance to win a prize). It is the act of risking what is yours in order to get what belongs to another with nothing in return.” Gambling preys upon the greed, selfishness and covetousness of those who “play.” The Bible plainly says, “*Thou shalt not covet*” (Rom. 13:9). “*Covetousness...is idolatry*” (Col. 3:5).

Lotteries are becoming more and more popular as states are seeking additional sources of revenue. Gambling is “BIG business” — generating more revenue than movies, spectator sports, theme parks, cruise ships and recorded music combined — upwards of \$100 billion a year in the USA alone. Lotteries make up approximately 25% of that amount.

Just a few years ago, only two states had legal gambling while the other 48 states outlawed it. Today, at least 44 states have some form of legal gambling. According to wiki.answers.com, Alabama, Alaska, Hawaii, Mississippi, Nevada, Utah and Wyoming do not have state run lotteries; nor do any of these states participate in Mega Millions or Power Ball. Tennessee, Utah and Hawaii do not allow land based gambling such as a casino; while Virginia, Vermont, Alaska, Washington DC and Kentucky do not have any land based casinos within their state lines. In addition, there are currently only two states that do not permit gambling: Utah and Hawaii. But even within these states, players are able to gamble online at age 18. Washington does not allow online gambling and is the only state that has laws against it.

According to cbsnews.com, there are proposals to allow or expand slots or casinos in at least 14 states. Even Hawaii, which along with Utah is one of two states without a lottery or other form of legalized gambling, may consider a change.

While the high-dollar multi-state lottery games such as Power Ball and Mega Millions get most of the attention, Tennessee lottery officials say the “scratch-off” state lottery games is what brings in the money. According to the *Tennessean* newspaper, lottery ticket sales produced \$1.3 billion in the latest fiscal year and “scratch-offs” accounted for more than 80% of total sales. Lottery sales in Tennessee has grown for 8 years in a row and now ranks 6th in per capita instant sales among the 44 states with lotteries. #1 of 5

— *Garland M. Robinson*