



Managing GOD's Money

Presentation to 100 Huntley Street 28 September: Gambling - Wasting God's Money

Like borrowing, society accepts gambling as normal with many viewing it as just another potential income source, ignoring the many negative effects.

The get rich quick and effortlessly doctrine propels many folks to gamble. In vain they strive to raise income to gain wealth and independence.

Then again, some folks say they gamble for fun. They say they spend "only" \$ 1.00 or \$ 2.00 each time. To these folks I say, since it is only a dollar or two, why not give it to God's work?

Let's get more specific. I suggest you keep a savings box and call it your ONLY box. Each time you decide to spend one dollar or other amount on a lottery ticket or other gambling form put that amount in the box instead. Indeed, whenever you plan to spend and you say you will spend because it is ONLY some amount. Stop; put that amount in your ONLY box.

At the year's end or other time, send the amount in your ONLY box to Crossroads. You would be helping to present the Gospel of Jesus Christ to many more people. Isn't that better than risking God's money? Think about it!

Then there is gambling's dark side that Governments and gambling operators don't see as a problem: addiction.

A 1997 study by Harvard University found 11.1 million adolescents in Canada and USA were gambling addicts.

More recently the Illinois Institute for Addiction Recovery *reported that current estimates suggest that three percent of the adult population will experience a serious problem with gambling that will result in significant debt, family disruption, job losses, criminal activity or suicide.*

Further, research conducted by Henry Lesieur, Ph.D., Durand Jacobs, Ph.D., and others show that adolescents are about three times more likely than adults to become problem gamblers.

In Canada, a 2002 Statistics Canada's study points out that 1.2 million Canadians are "at risk gamblers or problem gamblers." Folks, however we look at gambling, is not good!

Let's understand that gaining wealth under God's control is fine. To be sure, we need funds to further God's Kingdom. But when we covet it, become obsessed by it, weary ourselves to gain it, it control us. **So the real is this:** will you trust Jesus to supply your needs or will you displace Him by gambling the funds He has entrusted to you? Apostle Paul shows God's graciousness as a supplier of our needs in 2 Corinthians 9:10:

Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. --- 2 Corinthians 9:10

To those who say they gamble for fun, I ask you to think about these three matters:

1. Do you realize that if you win others like you must lose, and always, the gambling operator wins! Are you happy with this?
2. What part of the gambling gives you the fun you seek? Winning, which is rare? Or losing which is normal?
3. Believers, do you know the message your gambling tells your children and others about God? Work? Money?

I encourage you to look at the negative effects gambling is having on our society. If your church or Christian charity promotes gambling dressed as fund-raising, remind the leaders of their stewardship responsibilities. As well, understand that we the body of Christ are responsible to fund our Christ-centered churches and Christian charities, not by buying lottery tickets they sell but by accepting our responsibilities and under the Holy Spirit's guidance giving these groups needed funds.

If a member of your family has a gambling problem, understand that he or she will deny it; don't pressure him or her, because denial is the normal response. This person needs help, so you need to ask God to show you how to deal with him or her.

Next time I will talk about the Slow Burn Principle. God bless and remember Jesus loves you.