

## What About Gambling?

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A recent Gallop poll indicated that over 60% of the US population gambles regularly. More than 80% approve of legal gambling. 26 states now have lotteries. More and more we hear of Christians who gamble. Many fall to the temptation of these lotteries. Others bet on horses, athletic events, etc. Far too many participate in raffles, office "pools", and other forms of gambling. What does God say about all of this?

The Bible never uses the words "gamble" or "gambling," but it clearly sets forth principles that condemn the practice. Gambling is a SIN because:

1. It is addictive. The very fact that there is an organization called "Gamblers Anonymous" proves this point. Christians are not to be "brought under the power of any" (1 Cor. 6:12).
2. It is covetousness. It displays an inordinate desire to gain without giving something of equal value. It aims to gain at the expense of others. (Col. 3:5; 1 Tim. 6:10).
3. It violates the principles of love and the "golden rule." Someone once described gambling as "stealing by consent" (Matt. 22:39; 1 Cor. 10:24; Matt. 7:12).
4. It is bad stewardship. A very casual study of the "odds" proves that you have a much higher percentage chance of losing than winning. You are literally "throwing your money away." God, on the other hand, expects us to be good stewards of what we have been given (1 Pet. 4:10).
5. It violates the legitimate transfer of money or property. The Bible outlines three ways in which things of value can be exchanged: by labor (Eph. 4:28), by trade (Acts 4:32-37), or by gift (Matt. 7:11). Gambling fits none of these.
6. It breeds other problems. Much of the crime in our country is linked to gambling in one way or another.

Clearly, Christians should in no way support or participate in gambling.