

What the Lottery Will Teach Our Children

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According to the politicians, the proposed Tennessee Lottery is for the educational benefit of our children. I submit that, if it passes, the Lottery will indeed help educate our children, but maybe not in the way we're being led to believe. Here's what our children will be taught if we pass the Lottery:

1) They will be taught that gambling is a better solution to a financial problem than work and sacrifice. The Bible teaches that financial problems can be overcome by the work and charity of individuals. The Christian is to "labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need" (Ephesians 4:28). But the lottery will rearrange Ephesians 4:28 in the minds of children so that they think it says, "let him gamble, playing lotto with his hands, that the State may have something to give him who has need." The Bible teaches Christians to pay taxes to support the legitimate functions of government (Romans 13:6-7). Taxes represent a burden and a sacrifice to the citizens of any nation, but they are the proper way to fund the functions of government. The lottery tries to convey that such sacrifices are needless.

2) They will be taught that the end justifies the means. There were those who slandered Paul by claiming that he said, "Let us do evil that good may come" (Romans 3:8). Passing the lottery, ostensibly for the sake of education, will say exactly that to our children. It will say that if you are trying to accomplish something good, it doesn't matter what evil you have to do in the process.

3) They will be taught that a moral principle can always be sacrificed for a financial interest. I read once of a financial interest meeting a moral principle on a narrow bridge. Since they could not pass side by side the moral principle happily laid itself down and was immediately run over and squashed flat by the financial interest. The lottery will teach children that that is just the way it's supposed to be. They need never let morality stand in the way of getting money.

4) They will learn (again) that the older generation - their parents and those in charge of running the country - cannot be trusted to solve social problems, only to create them. It is a simple fact that lotteries create more social problems than they solve. According to a study by Maryland's Attorney

General, child abuse increases dramatically when gambling comes into an area. The Massachusetts Department of Public Health has indicated that, when it comes to illegal activity among young people, gambling is second only to alcohol in prevalence; almost 70 percent of seventh graders have bought lottery tickets there according to the study. Many other similar statistics could be cited. The point is that if adults pass the lottery, they are once again betraying their children's trust.

If the lottery is passed, many children will learn the lessons mentioned above, believing them to be the truth. Are these the lessons you want taught to our children?