

THE GREENWOOD BULLETIN

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Gambling VS. Love of God and Man

By Ron Halbrook

Though gambling has become socially acceptable and legal, it is not right according to what God teaches us in the Bible. God teaches us to love Him with all the heart, mind, and soul, and to love our fellowman as we love ourselves (Matt.22:37-40). Everything else God teaches us depends on these two principles (vs. 40). "Love" in this sense comes from a Greek term, AGAPE, referring to the highest kind of love: a love based on principles of truth and right, and a love seeking the best interests of its object rather than mere self-gratification.

Since love of God and of fellowman must be the motives for all our conduct, how do these two principles relate to gambling? God teaches us that we may receive gain in ways which demonstrate love to all parties to any transaction.

We may receive gain in the following ways: 1. The process of labor (Eph. 4:28); 2. Exchange of goods and services (Matt. 13:45-46); 3. Gifts (Matt. 6:1-4). Each of these methods of receiving gain is honest, showing respect for principles of truth and right and for the welfare of all parties involved.

Gambling is a wager on some chance event, with the result that the "winner" takes gain from others without respect for principles of truth and right and without seeking the welfare of all parties involved. Therefore, gambling is a means of taking dishonest gain. The fact that the other

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participants agreed to take part does not mitigate the dishonesty involved, any more than "kickbacks" in a business deal are mitigated from dishonesty by the agreement of the parties involved. Gambling is an exercise in covetousness, seeking mere self-gratification without regard for truth and right or the best interests of everyone involved.

Gambling is sinful, an offense against God and a curse to our fellowman. Because all of us have sinned from time to time, whether through gambling or other deeds, God sent His Son into the world to die for our sins (Rom. 3:23; Jn. 3:16). The death of Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary demonstrates both the justice and the mercy of God: Sin was punished (justice), but punished in a way which extends forgiveness to sinners (mercy). Thus, God proves Himself to be "just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Rom. 3:26). Since God does not force anyone to receive this gift of His grace, we may choose to receive it or to reject it. We receive it by faith in Christ when we repent of our sins (a change of heart resolving to turn away from sin), confess our faith in Christ as God's Son, and submit to immersion in water (Mk. 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; 8:35-38; 22:16; Rom. 10:8-10; 6:3-4).

As a fellow-traveler from time to eternity, I urge you to turn away from gambling and to do everything in your power to convince others to turn away from it. Such a course is based on our love for God and our fellowman because we recognize that gambling is a curse to the human heart, to the home, to the church, and to the nation. Our lawmakers act contrary to love of God and fellowman by legalizing gambling. Churches debase God's standard of morality by promoting it. All who participate in it act to the detriment of themselves and others.

There are no winners in gambling, whether it is in casinos, at the races, in bingo parlors, or in lotteries and raffles. No such activities meet the tests of true love for God and our fellowman.

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“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

- Matthew 6:19-21

Things Men Turn Upside Down

By Steven Deaton

Jesus' Kingdom

Men: Of this world—1,000 year reign in Jerusalem.

Bible: Not of this world (Jn. 18:36).

Church

Men: Irrelevant.

Bible: Important & imperative (Eph. 5:25; Acts 20:28).

Emotional Feelings

Men: Give knowledge of salvation.

Bible: Arise from knowledge of salvation (Acts 8:36-39).

Salvation

Men: Salvation = Belief (Calvinism).

Men: Belief = Salvation + Baptism later (Baptist Doctrine).

Men: Baptism = Salvation + Belief later (Catholicism).

Bible: Belief + Baptism = Salvation (Mk. 16:16).

Love for Man

Men: Accepting men in sin.

Bible: Telling men to get out of sin (2 Tim. 4:2; Rev. 3:19).

Love for God

Man: Do what I want and claim it is out of love for God.

Bible: Keep His commandments (Jn. 14:15; 1 Jn. 5:1-3).

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Grace

Men: Permits.

Bible: Restricts (Titus 2:11-12).

Law

Men: Legalism.

Bible: Liberty (Jas. 1:25; cf. Rom. 6:16-17).