

## CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

### SHOULD A CHRISTIAN GAMBLE?

The Bible does not say 'Thou shalt not gamble'. Does that mean that it is acceptable to God?

1. Consider Proverbs 28:22 - statistically it has been shown that one out of seven people become addicted to gambling (ie it ruins their lives) - things such as lotteries, scratchies etc.
2. Consider Proverbs 21:20 - of those who win the big prizes, it has been found that 90% are in a worse position within two years of their winning!
3. Gambling involves getting gain by chance. That is in conflict with the scriptures which teach us that the just are to live by faith - Heb 10:38

God's Word tells us that what is not of faith is sin - Rom 14:23

Here are some comments we hear - 'Someone has to win!' 'God could guide the results!' - He doesn't work contrary to His Word!

The following is a quote from the book *How Mumbo Jumbo conquered the World* by Francis Wheen - it highlights the foolishness of gambling!

"Where was this rational world? It was clearly not the place inhabited by the editor of *The Times*, or by millions of other people of Britain. As if to prove the point, the same edition carried a leading article in praise of the National Lottery, that monument to irrationalism and imbecility, whose first winner was to be chosen that evening. 'The British puritanical heritage persists in finding a cloud before every silver lining,' it sighed, 'But for most of the nation tonight, a man is seldom as harmlessly employed as in fantasy about the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow.' It described the inaugural draw as 'the greatest national collective experience' since the end of the Second World War; adding proudly that 'nearly every adult in the land - 40 million - has bought a ticket'. Echoing *The Times*, the minister responsible for the lottery scolded those few heretics who declined to participate for their 'prudish' and 'sanctimonious' refusal to enjoy (here comes that word again) the 'fun' of having a flutter. ....p127

The objection to the National Lottery was not that it encouraged people to gamble but that it encouraged them to bet at such hopeless odds, heedless of Paulos's timely warning that there was an ominous and widening gap 'between scientists' assessment of various risks and the popular perception of those risks, a gap that threatens eventually to lead ... to unfounded and crippling anxieties'. ....p128

One didn't have to be a pro-faced puritan to find it rather depressing that 40 million British adults were innumerate enough to succumb to odds of *13 million to one*. It may have been true, as *The Times* insisted, that 'of course, you are adult and mathematically unchallenged, and know you are not going to win'. But most punters still cherished, however secretly and shamefacedly, a tingling hope which had been encouraged by TV commercials showing a huge finger of fate descending from the stars to point at a random, anonymous citizen: 'It could be you....' The official 'expert' recruited to advise the public on the chances of winning the jackpot was not a professor of statistics but Mystic Meg, a tabloid astrologer. Britain's bestselling paper, the *Sun*,

invited readers to rub their lottery tickets 'on our psychically charged red dot' to shorten the odds. ..p128,129

Casinos have the odds stacked 80-90% in their favour; poker machines are programmed to pay out certain dividends

4. Gambling violates the work principle Proverbs 13:11 ; Eph 4:28 ; II Thes 3:10

5. Gamblers are guilty of the sin of covetousness Col 3:5 'If I won I would.....'

6. Gamblers are guilty of being discontented I Tim 6:6-11

CONCLUSION: *ALL GAMBLING IS A SIN!*