

THE WORLD'S BIBLE #6

By Keith Greer

“CAN WE GAMBLE?” PART 1

After living in Las Vegas for thirteen years, where gambling is not only legal but a very lucrative industry for the city. I soon realized that numerous temptations are placed before folks to be participants. Even if one stays completely away from "The Strip", there are slot machines in virtually every grocery store in town. One has to only stand in a grocery store line and watch a child begging his mother to go home – while she just keeps putting one quarter after another in the machine – to realize that gambling is not the "fun little pastime" that many would have us to believe.

Gambling is one of the most difficult sins to recognize. There are those who want to gamble and want to prove that it is correct in the sight of God. As we go through our study, I would like you to consider some questions that you should ask deep within yourself - and answer according to the scriptures.

- (1). What is good about gambling?
- (2). What is attractive about gambling that entices so many to want to participate?
- (3). Does gambling damage your example and influence as a Christian?

Gambling, by definition, is "to play a game for money or other stake ... Hence: to take money or any other thing of value upon an uncertain event; to hazard; wager" (Webster's New Dictionary) There are two essential elements involved in gambling.

- (1). The "stake"; (One must win at the expense of another.)
- (2). The element of "chance"; (If you play, then you have the chance to win or lose.)

One of the reasons that many have trouble seeing anything wrong with gambling is the fact that it is accepted, in some form, in virtually every part of our society.

Many denominational, or even secular groups, not only approve, but arrange gambling operations to raise money for some "worthy cause". Such events as bingo and "Monte Carlo nights" bring funds to various organizations who hide behind the "good" that this money does. Even in Las Vegas, much is made publicly about the contributions that the gambling industry has made to the schools in the form of revenues.

Presently adopted by two-thirds of our states, lotteries have become an "acceptable" means for governments to raise much needed revenues without calling for a tax hike. All this tends to give gambling some kind of legitimacy that hides what it's true colors

really are. Unfortunately, all of this has lulled men into sleep to really see the grave dangers involved in gambling. Do you realize that today in many communities across this country that people are gambling on pee wee football games and offering parents money to have their children play on certain teams. In our society today you can bet on anything. During the royal wedding wagers were being taken on how long the prince would kiss his bride on the balcony overlooking the square!

Regardless of what others are doing, as Christians we are to "abstain from all appearance of evil. And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Thessalonians 5: 22-23) Satan is a master at deception and making evil seem fun. Ever hiding the real cost involved for ungodly conduct and the grave dangers such actions places before those who play his game. More later.***