

# THE WORLD'S BIBLE #7

By Keith Greer

## **"CAN WE GAMBLE?" PART 2**

"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God ... Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:" (Ephesians 3: 1-5)

Many try to justify gambling by saying that they know when to stop. "I just set myself a \$20 limit for the night. When that is gone, it is gone. It is just my entertainment - It is no different than going to the movies."

Do most people know "when to stop"? Statistics would tell otherwise. There are many chapters of Gamblers Anonymous not only in Las Vegas, but throughout the United States. Many young airmen at Nellis AFB in Las Vegas, get themselves into trouble because they get started gambling, and they don't know when to stop. More than one young person has written bad checks thinking that "if I just play one more time, I'm going to win the big jackpot."

Ask any gambler who has destroyed his home and turned to crime to support his gambling. Many start something that they cannot stop. Las Vegas has many "homeless" - many as a direct result of those who came to Las Vegas thinking that they were going to be THE ONE to "strike it rich". Rather than getting rich, they do not even have enough for a bus fare home.

While I preached in Las Vegas I received many calls at the building every week from people who are in just such circumstances. Let me relate one such incident from these numerous calls:

A business man had won a three day trip and brought his wife and family with him. He was a Christian from Texas who never previously gambled in his life. He thought he would just try one hand of black jack. One hand turned into another and another till he lost control of the time or the money he was losing. Even though his wife and children had pleaded with him to stop, he had spent two days "at the tables" and lost all of his money. He was just about to cash in his return plane tickets when one of his children said – "daddy can we please go home now." He was crying and asked me to pray with him, not only for God to forgive him, but for the terrible example he had set for his family. We prayed over the phone and I think it helped. He asked me if there was anything he could do for me. Yes, go home and tell people what happened and the dangers of ever starting to gamble! He promised me he would.

If you don't care about yourself, think about this. "Just as teenagers are beginning to show signs of curtailing risky sex, illicit drug use and drunk driving, another potentially destructive behavior - gambling - is threatening to become the teen vice of the '90's ... The most popular forms of gambling among teenagers include betting on sports, card playing, lotteries and slot machines ... For teen and other problem gamblers, betting fever may lead to serious crimes as

well as self-destruction ... The social and personal factors that cause compulsive gambling, such as widespread materialism and unstable families, continue unabated ... " (U.S. News & World Report, June 18, 1990, p. 51)

Gambling is one of those sins that can turn into an addiction. It is no different than the drunk, the drug addict, or one addicted to pornography who will stop at nothing to get the money to make "one more wager so they can break even or make it back all back with one more bet." In Las Vegas they call it "gold fever" – I've seen it with my own eyes – not a very pretty sight.

"But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control: against such there is no law." (Galatians 5:22-23) \*\*\*