

THE WORLD'S BIBLE #8

By Keith Greer

“CAN WE GAMBLE?” PART 3

A few years ago, while preaching in a meeting in California, some Christians were trying to "justify" gambling to me. Their reasoning went something like this: "Living is a gamble. Buying life insurance is a gamble. Driving a car or flying in an airplane is a gamble. Are you going to condemn those who also do these things?"

First of all, we need to be careful about confusing "CHANCE" with "RISK". If we make an investment, we are taking a risk that our investment may not payoff like we hope, but we are not profiting at the misfortune of another. The difference is seen in the element of chance. If we gamble, and we win, then we have won at the loss of another. When we have the desire to gain something - for nothing - then we have the element that makes it so exciting and titillating for those who want to gamble.

Why, then, is gambling wrong?

(1). "For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat." (2 Thessalonians 3: 10)

God did not give us work for the punishment for sin. The hard, back -breaking toil was part of the punishment for sin (Genesis 3: 17-19), but from the time that Adam was first placed in the garden of Eden, he was to "dress it and to keep it". (Genesis 2:15) God intended - from the beginning - that man was to work. There is no work in gambling. One is seeking to get something for nothing or gain at the misfortune of another.

(2). "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortionist, shall inherit the kingdom of God." (1 Corinthians 6:10)

To covet, is simply, "to feel envious desire for that which is another's; to wish for excessively and longingly." For those who try to justify gambling as "entertainment", is it possible to gamble and not be covetous? If you win, and you say you are not covetous, are you going to give the money back? By the way, I asked a person in California, a brother in the church there seeking to justify gambling, would he give the money back if he won. He said NO – he had "earned it."

(3). Gambling has, and always will be, an "appearance of evil" (1 Thessalonians 5:22). While we may have convinced ourselves that we have "self-control", we also sin when we encourage others to participate in activities that may be a stumbling block for them. "Let us not therefore judge one another anymore: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way. (Romans 14:13) When Jesus said "ye are the light of the

world", He placed a grave responsibility on each and everyone of us to set a good example. We cannot avoid that responsibility in our daily lives.

Sadly, how a Christian would seek to justify such conduct that is certainly destructive to individuals, homes and society in general is perplexing to say the least. One of the character traits God calls upon us to possess is one of "self-control." How can one claim to have this trait if he is seeking to take away from another his money by a game of chance? Gambling is covetousness and that clearly is a sin. Dear reader, have we forgotten who we are? ***