

# “THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

## Should Christians Gamble?

By R. J. Evans

In 1931, the state of Nevada legalized most forms of gambling. The city of Las Vegas, in particular, became the center of gambling in the U.S. Over the course of time, it has been referred to as “Sin City”, which is not surprising. Now, the city has developed a marketing catchphrase— “What happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas.” Need I say more?

Since 1931, many forms of gambling have become a thriving “vice” in America, especially casinos. At present, Nevada and Louisiana are the only states where casino-style gambling is legal statewide. In other states, casino-style gambling is restricted to certain small geographic areas like Atlantic City, NJ, the Mississippi gulf coast, or the American Indian reservations.

I have never been to a casino (and have no desire to go), but I have seen enough TV commercials to get an idea of what they are like. I find it interesting what they use to lure people in—bright lights, glitter, entertainment, prizes, and especially the food. The buffet-style food is a big draw.

The commercials displaying colorful scenes of appealing foods gives evidence that they know they can get to people’s wallets through their stomachs. In these establishments, it is as if the average person is playing against a “stacked deck”. The “odds” are always in the casino’s favor.

Games of chance are like that—if that were not so, casinos would lose so much money they would have to go out of business. The gambling patrons win just enough to whet their appetite to keep coming back—it is always “wait till the next time—I’m going to hit it big!” The sad part is that a good percentage of these folks are already having financial difficulties.

At this point, we raise the question of our title: Should a Christian gamble? To gamble is “to play games of chance for money or some other stake; to bet on an uncertain outcome.” Some reason that since the word gamble is not specifically mentioned in the Bible, then it must be okay. Of course, there are other terms not specifically mentioned in Scripture, but are still in violation of what the Bible teaches. Words such as “rape”, “abortion,” or “suicide” would come under the category of what is considered wrong, based upon Bible teachings and principles.

In this article, let us observe some biblical principles that are violated when someone gambles, what it can lead to, and why it is a sinful vice. Consider the following:

1. Gambling destroys the incentive to work (Gen. 2:15; 3:19; Eph. 4:20; 2 Thess. 3:10; Acts 20:34-35).
2. Gambling is unjust gain (Prov. 28:6-8; Ezek. 22:12-13).
3. Gambling is a form of covetousness (Eph. 5:3; Jer. 22:13; Hab. 2:6).
4. A gambler is greedy and becomes a lover of money (1 Tim. 6:5-10; Col. 3:5).
5. Gambling breaks the second greatest commandment (Matt. 22:37-40; Rom. 13:10).
6. Gambling violates the “golden rule” (Matt. 7:12).
7. A gambler robs his family (Eph. 4:28; 1 Tim. 5:8).
8. A gambler destroys his influence for good (Matt. 5:13-16).
9. Gambling is a form of evil (1 Thess. 5:22).
10. Gambling is addictive (1 Cor. 6:12-13).

Based upon the biblical teachings mentioned above, Christians need to stand firmly against all forms of gambling. ■

## THOSE WHO WON'T BE SAVED BY BAPTISM

By Jerral Kay (Adapted)

If someone diligently follows the Bible, they will no doubt learn that baptism will wash away their sins, thereby saving them (Acts 22:16; Rom. 6:3-4; Gal. 3:27; 1 Pet. 3:21). However, men and women have many ideas about baptism now. Because of this, baptism is practiced but it's not effective. Digging into scripture can show that there are those who can't be saved by baptism.

**Baptism won't save babies.** Why? Jesus explained that babies are pure and without sin; the kingdom belongs to individuals like them (Matt. 18:3-4). Ezek. 18:20 says, *"The soul who sins shall die."* A baby can't sin so they shouldn't be baptized. Jesus was born into this world as a human baby and not born with sin (Gal. 4:4). Everyone is born into a world of sin, but not sinners — this was David's point in Psalm 51:5.

**Baptism won't save those baptized for the wrong reason.** I ask people if they would be baptized for a \$1,000. I've never been turned down! But I use this to illustrate that sinners will be baptized if it profits their pocketbook. A man once admitted to me that he was baptized because it pleased his wife. When people are baptized for the wrong reasons, having believed error, those baptisms are invalid. Someone may say, *"I was already saved before baptism;"* *"One church is as good as another;"* and, *"Baptism is not necessary in order to be saved."* Unscriptural statements prove unscriptural baptism.

**Baptism won't save those baptized by the wrong mode (sprinkling or pouring).** The correct mode of baptism is a burial in water (Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12; cp. Jn. 3:23; Acts 8:38-39). Does it make a difference to God? Did it matter to Nadab and Abihu what kind of fire they offered before the Lord (Num. 3:4)? Did it matter to Uzzah that he listened to the specific requirements of God (2 Sam. 6:3-7)?

**Baptism won't save those without true devotion.** After being baptized you have to be faithful to Jesus (Rev. 2:10). You are asked by Jesus to put God and His kingdom first (Matt. 6:33). Unless you are willing to *"walk worthy of the calling with which you were called"* (Eph. 4:1), you shouldn't be baptized until you're ready. Jesus taught about the foolishness of doing something without counting the cost first (Lk. 14:28-33).

God loves the humble who are willing to follow His plan. Jesus provides safety and salvation (Matt. 11:28-30), but it's only available to people who obey the real truth about baptism (Lk. 11:28). ■

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### *"Beware Of False Prophets"*

By Joe R. Price

*"15 Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. 16 You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles"* (Matt. 7:15-16, NKJV)?

Where have all the false teachers gone? They still exist despite those who say false doctrine is not sinful and does not risk one's fellowship and future with God. Jesus warns us to be on guard for those who falsely claim to speak for God. They appear innocent as their deceitful message soothes the ear (Rom. 16:17-18). But we must test their fruit (their message) and not be fooled by appearances (Jn. 7:24). When the teacher's doctrine contradicts revealed truth, it is not sound doctrine (1 Tim. 6:3; 2 Tim. 1:13; Titus 2:1). Jesus said we would know false prophets (false teachers) by their fruit (v. 16). False teachers are identifiable by their *"destructive heresies," "destructive ways,"* and *"deceptive words"* (2 Pet. 2:1-3). We know the false prophet by his false message. The false teacher's bad fruit (false teaching) is not God's word. It is fit for destruction (Matt. 7:17-20). We must test the teacher's fruit (teaching) against *"the will of My Father in heaven"* (Matt. 7:21; Gal. 1:8-9; Jude 3-4; 1 John 4:1, 6; 2 Jn. 9). The Lord is not telling us to judge the teacher's sincerity but the accuracy of what he teaches. Does it accord with the will of the Father (the Scriptures, 2 Tim. 3:16-17) or the wisdom and will of men? Indeed, we will know them by their fruits (1 Thess. 5:21-22). — *Sword Tips, October 8, 2021.* ■

Service Times - Sunday: 9:00 & 10:00 AM; 6:00 PM - Wednesday: 7:00 PM

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