

What Saith the Scripture?

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from the series

What the Bible Says About...

What the Bible Says About Luck and Gambling

"Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of The Judgment"

(Matthew 5:21).

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Preface

For the Christian, winning and losing have a different meaning than the world, when dealing with the reality of Jesus Christ. "7 But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. 8 Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my LORD: for Whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, 9 and be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the Law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God **by faith**" (Philippians 3:7-9). Because Christians are to separate themselves from the world by their conduct, i.e., "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the LORD, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you" (2Corinthians 6:17), it is imperative that the Saints have an understanding of the meaning of such worldly concepts as luck and gambling, that go beyond a *mere* legalistic listing of things to be avoided, i.e., "Touch not; taste not; handle not" (Colossians 2:21). Instead, our heartfelt obedience in avoiding luck and gambling must be soundly founded upon a proper understanding of "What saith the Scripture?" (Romans 4:3).

Luck

Who needs luck? Certainly not the Christian! Just look at all the "riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19) the Saints have been given! "2 Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our LORD, 3 According as His divine power hath given unto us **all things** that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue" (2Peter 1:2-3). Though luck may have the connotation of prosperity or success in the world's vocabulary, it involves the element of *chance*; and, *uncertainty* is **not** part of the success guaranteed by the LORD. Instead, the Saints can find in the Scriptures, Promise after *definite* Promise to make *certain* their prosperity and success. "This Book of the Law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest **observe to do** according to **all** that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success" (Joshua 1:8). "But whoso looketh into the Perfect Law of Liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man **shall be blessed** in his deed" (James 1:25). [To explore more about the "Exceeding Great and Precious Promises" (2Peter 1:4), see the Promises section of our website.] It may sound unfair to vilify luck, when it seems to have been such a good friend in days gone by, but we no

longer ought to knowingly take credit away from the LORD Jesus Christ for our success by attributing our prosperity to luck. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things [i.e., luck] are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2Corinthians 5:17).

The Providence of God is more than able to match and exceed the luck of the world. "Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us" (Ephesians 3:20). God's Providence is His benevolent and wise forethought and provision for His children. "But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19). "They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of Thy house; and Thou shalt make them drink of the river of Thy pleasures" (Psalm 36:8). And, instead of wishing luck to another Christian, the Saints should say, "God bless you", e.g. "24 The LORD bless thee, and keep thee: 25 The LORD make His face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: 26 The LORD lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace" (Numbers 6:24-26). When addressing someone who may, or may not, be a Christian (but, has benefited you, or you desire their good), our Spanish friends have a pleasing expression: "Vaya con dios" (meaning: "Go with God"); or, simply say, "God be with you", e.g., "And, behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said unto the reapers, The LORD be with you. And they answered him, The LORD bless thee" (Ruth 2:4). And, of course, it is understood in our sentiments and greetings, "The LORD is with you, while ye be with Him; and if ye seek Him, He will be found of you; but if ye forsake Him, He will forsake you" (2Chronicles 15:2).

The Spirit of Gambling

Luck and gambling go together, because chance inhabits both. "The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites" (Isaiah 33:14). With the world, the uncertainty of ill or loss is mixed with the chance of benefit or advantage. "13 Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: 14 Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. 15 For that ye ought to say, If the LORD will, we shall live, and do this, or that" (James 4:13-15). Sadly, the spirit of gambling can be seen in all parts of human endeavor, because gambling is a fundamental violation of the Law of Love, which Jesus taught. "36 Master, which is the great commandment in the Law? 37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. 38 This is the First and Great Commandment. 39 And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. 40 On these two Commandments hang all the Law and the prophets" (Matthew 22:36-40). Since the Law of Christ (Galatians 6:2) mandates a supreme love for God and a love for our neighbour that is equal to the consideration that we ought to give to ourselves, then *gambling violates the Law of Love because it only allows or enables the gain of one party at the expense of another*. "We shall find all precious substance, we shall fill our houses with spoil" (Proverbs 1:13). And, "for the **love** of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows" (1Timothy 6:10). [For a fuller explanation of the Law of Love, read Charles G. Finney's "[The Law of God, No. 1](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Oberlin_1839/OE1839.Law.of.God.1.html)" --- http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Oberlin_1839/OE1839.Law.of.God.1.html -- and "[The Law of God, No. 2](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Oberlin_1839/OE1839.Law.of.God.2.html)" --- http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Oberlin_1839/OE1839.Law.of.God.2.html -- of "[The Oberlin Evangelist](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Finney.Oberlin.Evangelist.html)" --- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Finney.Oberlin.Evangelist.html> -- , 1839.]

By far, it is more important that we seek the blessing of the LORD, than we seek by gambling and chance the luck of the world. "3 For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the

wicked... 5 They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men... 7 Their eyes stand out with fatness: they have more than heart could wish. 8 They are corrupt, and speak wickedly concerning oppression: they speak loftily. 9 They set their mouth against the Heavens, and their tongue walketh through the Earth... 12 Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase in riches... 16 When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me; 17 Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end. 18 Surely Thou didst set them in slippery places: Thou castedst them down into destruction. 19 How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors... 23 Nevertheless I am continually with Thee: Thou hast holden me by my right hand. 24 Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory" (Psalm 73: 3, 5, 7-9, 12, 16-19, 23-24).

Addiction

Christians are devoted to the LORD and "have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints" (1Corinthians 16:15). However, America's addictions are shameful disgraces against God. "Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people" (Proverbs 14:34). Even the world realizes that gambling is tearing apart the fabric of our society. Just listen to the facts they have gathered against gambling.

"America is addicted to gambling and doesn't even know it. Americans are familiar with our nation's other major addictions: narcotics, alcohol, tobacco... But today, the fastest growing addiction in America is unchecked and almost unrecognized. It is gambling." Our country now has multiple millions of adult gamblers, "and, more ominous, millions of teenagers addicted to gambling. But individuals are not the only gambling addicts. State governments themselves have become addicted to the revenues derived from casinos, slot machines, keno and lotto. Thus, instead of warning citizens, many governments are exploiting them. They ignore the social costs brought by state-authorized gambling because they need the cash to balance their budgets or so they believe. They're hooked... Twenty years ago, commercial gambling casinos were prohibited in every state except Nevada. Only 13 states had lotteries. There was no such thing as a Native American casino. Altogether, Americans wagered about \$17 billion on legal commercial gambling. Between 1976 and 1988, casinos were legalized in Atlantic City and the number of state lotteries more than doubled. Then, between 1989 and 1994, gambling casinos were legalized in 21 new states and slot or video poker machines were authorized at racetracks and bars in 10 states. All told, Americans wagered nearly \$550 billion on legal gambling in 1995 an astonishing 3,200 percent increase in just twenty years... legalized gambling destroys individuals, wrecks families, increases crime, and ultimately costs society far more than the government makes... It is important to understand that gambling addiction is just as real, and its consequences just as tragic, as alcohol or drug addiction." Compulsive gamblers potentially, "lose all the money they have. Then they run up credit card debt. They sell or pawn possessions and plead for loans from family and friends. More than half end up stealing money, often from their employers. The average Gamblers Anonymous patient will have lost all their money and accumulated debts from \$35,000 to \$92,000 before seeking treatment. Thousands file bankruptcy. Many addicts can't be helped [and] they commit suicide. And when

[compulsive] gambling strikes, it rarely affects just one person. Family savings are lost, college education or retirement funds disappear, home mortgages are foreclosed. And under the stress of losing everything, many problem gamblers commit domestic violence and child abuse. Since casinos came to the Mississippi Gulf Coast, domestic violence has increased 69 percent and an estimated 37 percent of all [habitual] gamblers have abused their children.

Researchers now call gambling the fastest growing teenage addiction, with the rate of [compulsive] gambling among high school and college-aged youth about twice that of adults. According to Dr. Howard J. Shaffer, Director of the Harvard Medical School Center for Addiction Studies, "Today, there are more children experiencing adverse symptoms from gambling than from drugs...and the problem is growing." --from "[AMERICA'S GAMBLING ADDICTION](http://www.ncalg.org/pages/bkgrnd.htm)" --- <http://www.ncalg.org/pages/bkgrnd.htm> -- by Bernard P. Horn, NCALG Political Director, 1996

Conclusion

Since luck does **not** give the LORD Jesus Christ the credit for our prosperity and success, all True Saints should avoid any such expression as "Good luck" from slipping from our mouths, that would give those around us the impression that they should seek something or someone other than the LORD Jesus for True Prosperity and True Success. "I am the Vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without Me ye can do nothing" (John 15:5). Rather, we, of all people, should say, "God bless you" or "God be with you". "Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man" (Colossians 4:6). And, since the spirit of gambling is found in any activity that would allow us to be profited **only** at the expense of our neighbour, let us avoid all "appearance of evil" (1Thessalonians 5:22) by separating ourselves from this antithesis of love. "20 If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God Whom he hath not seen? 21 And this Commandment have we from Him, that he who loveth God love his brother also" (1John 4:20-21). May we seek to demonstrate by our lives the *reality* and *certainty* of the "More Sure Word of Prophecy" (2Peter 1:19) of the LORD Jesus Christ.