

What's Wrong with Gambling? **Stewardship and the Wise Use of Resources**

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Gambling violates the biblical principle of stewardship with regard to property and its uses. Wealth and economic goods are not in themselves evil but may be the occasion of sin if the owner acquires them in covetousness and uses them without reference to God's intention. In the Bible, property and goods are provided in trust by a gracious God. Ultimately, all things belong to God (Psalms 24:1; 50:10-12; 1 Corinthians 10:26).

*The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it,
the world, and those who live in it (Psalm 24:1, also Psalm 50:10-12).
For "the earth and its fullness are the Lord's" (1 Corinthians 10:26).*

Stewardship begins in the surrender of self to the will of God. From that inward dedication we move to the sober and grateful handling of our economic resources (Luke 12:42-48; Matthew 25:14-46).

The Bible indicates certain uses for money or property in accord with God's intentions. Thus money may be used to provide for our basic needs (2 Thessalonians 3:10), support one's family (1 Timothy 5:8), contribute to the Lord's work (1 Corinthians 16:1-3), meet human needs (Ephesians 4:28; 2 Corinthians 9:6-15), give to the poor (John 13:29), and pay taxes (Matthew 22:21; Romans 13:7).

Such conscientious handling of one's resources precludes gambling. There is ground for wise investment of one's wealth with a hope for a sensible return (Matthew 25:14-30), but this hardly can be used to sanction gambling risks. The injunction to "store up for yourselves treasures in heaven" invites the most careful attitude toward expenditures of any kind (Matthew 6:19-21). Also, the Bible condemns the accumulation of wealth through the exploitation of others (James 5:1-4). Honest work and honest wages go together, for "the laborer is worthy of his hire" (Luke 10:7). The Lord of the harvest will deal sharply with those who deviate from this norm.

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