

WHAT WILL YOUR POWERBALL TICKET BUY YOU?

The buzz you have been hearing lately is the frenzy created by the latest Powerball Lottery and bingo parlor. The news is filled with images of long lines at every place that sells lottery tickets. Each person in line thinks he/she will hit it big, strike it rich, and so they fork over their last dollar to buy the slimmest of slim chances at a quick fortune (you stand a greater chance of being struck by lightning than winning the lottery). It seems that everywhere we look, gambling is becoming more and more pervasive. There are horse tracks, dog tracks, casinos, bingo halls, electronic gaming devices, state lotteries, multi-state lotteries, and the list goes on and on. Billions of dollars are thrown away in the hopes of winning big. We are constantly being pressured to give in to the gambling that is going on around us. The thought is that since it is here, we might as well learn to use it to our benefit. Such thinking is fundamentally flawed. We must stand opposed to gambling in every form, whether it be in the lotteries, the casinos, or the school chances that we are enticed to buy. We oppose it because gambling is a sin!

Gambling is sinful because it is greed pure and simple. People will throw away the last dollar they have for a shot at the impossible. Gambling in every form preys on man's sinful desire to obtain something for almost nothing. It is the living embodiment of what Paul told Timothy, "For the love of money is the root of all evil" (1 Tim.6:10). So many covet the material things of this world, and gambling only serves to fuel such foolish and ungodly lusts. It keeps man's heart anchored in this world, which ultimately will be destroyed, as will all of those who have tied themselves to it (Matt.6:19-21).

Gambling is sinful because it is not loving one's neighbor as he is commanded to do. In order for someone to "win" at gambling, many, many more have to lose. Gambling serves, then, to wish misfortune upon others so that one might be successful. Certainly this is not living according to the golden rule (Matt.7:12).

Gambling is sinful because it violates the Biblical work ethic. God has from the very beginning expected man to work for a living. So many look upon work as a necessary evil. When asked what they would do with their lottery winnings, almost everyone replies by saying they would quit work. The child of God should count it a privilege to have the health and the aptitude to provide for his family, as well as for those who are less fortunate (Eph.4:28). Gambling only fuels man's disdain for honest toil.

Gambling is sinful even if it is under the guise of being for a good cause. So many are feeding us the line that state lotteries will bring in more money for education; that casinos help generate more tax revenue, etc. To such thoughts we ask, "Shall we do evil that good may come" (Rom.3:8)? Why not just donate more money to schools if we really want to help? The same line of reasoning could be used concerning alcohol, legalized pornography, etc. The end does not justify the means!

What will your Powerball ticket buy you? It will buy you much misery with all of the money that is needlessly thrown away. It will buy you much heartache when your mistaken hopes are dashed. Ultimately, it will buy you eternal damnation. Gambling is anti-Biblical, anti-Christian, anti-God. All who fall prey to it will be lost, unless they repent. *Patrick Morrison*