

Messenger Of Truth

"Holding forth the Word of Life" (Phil. 2:16).

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Gambling

"He who gambles picks his own pocket." – Anonymous

"Gambling is the son of avarice and the father of despair." – French Proverb

"The safest way to double your money is to fold it over once and put it in your pocket." – Kim Hubbard (1868-1930)

"Gambling: The sure way of getting nothing from something." – Wilson Mizner (1876-1933)

The cost of gambling addiction in the United States annually goes into the billions of dollars, and yet only 26 states have councils to address the addiction. But the ones that profit big by far are the casinos, who take in over \$26 billion every year; lotteries pull in \$17.2 billion, and even Indian owned Casinos \$10.4 billion. Gross revenue from "the Vegas strip" pulls in \$4.2 billion.

What is sad is that one in five problem gamblers will try to kill themselves, to which some have come to call it the most dangerous addiction of them all. AlterNet reports that the average gambling debt in the U.S. to be \$43,800, which helps to explain the high suicide rate.

In 2010, Hong Kong reported 233 gambling related suicides. Las Vegas has been dubbed the suicide capital of America. The rate is double there, with some 600,000 suicides in the last 30 years.

The odds of winning the Powerball jackpot are 1/750,000,000. The odds of being struck by lightning are 1/750,000 to 1/150,000. Does that deter people from trying? Not at all.

Despite all of these statistics, and dangers of addiction, some have been duped into gambling as a way to fund projects and schools. Even Christians have been lured with the hope of winning big. It is a gigantic problem that is not going away.

The problem with gambling is that one pays in the hopes of getting something for virtually nothing. And then they are locked in with the idea of trying just one more time. Bank accounts become drained, and some some have gone deeply into debt and even have resorted to theft.

There is no specific verse saying you are not to gamble, but there are plenty of things said about money and our attitudes related to it. "He who loves silver will not be satisfied with silver, nor he who loves abundance, with increase..." (Eccl. 5:10). "For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows" (1 Tim. 6:10). And for those who would like a fast bypass around work, "He who has a slack hand becomes poor, but the hand of the diligent makes rich" (Prov. 10:4).