

CHRISTIAN LIFE REPORT

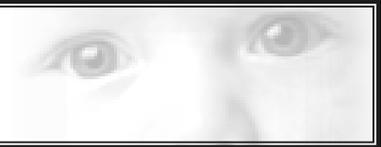
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Inviting God's Judgment

by
Kenny Hatcher



Prayer banned from public schools. Christmas changed into a totally pagan holiday. Christmas carols and Nativity plays no longer allowed in a public forum. Easter turned into a holiday that heralds the arrival of spring. Churches urged to preach a social gospel.

Thanks to the tireless efforts of liberal social planners and the ACLU, this has become a picture of the United States of America. Their idea is to stamp out any state sponsored observance of Christianity. You will note that I did not say state sponsored observance of religion; godless religions seem to get a free pass.

The first paragraph, however, is not a depiction of what is happening in America, but a picture of Germany in 1935. What Hitler achieved by edict during his rise to ultimate power, the United States has done by passing laws. Laws are simply a reflection of a nation's priorities, agenda, and values. Rausas Rushdoony put it well when he said, "Behind every system of law there is a god. To find the god in any system, locate the source of law in the system. When you choose your authority, you choose your god, and where you look for your law, there is your god."

The Nuremberg laws of September 15, 1935, deprived the Jews of German citizenship. There were a total of thirteen specific laws against the Jews that were designed to outlaw them completely. Similar laws were passed to deal in the same way with other "undesirables." The passage of these laws made way for the atrocity we now call the Holocaust.

Most of us would be quick to condemn Hitler from removing the Jews from the category of personhood, and some will be offended at any comparison of Nazi Germany and the United States. But before we assume a smug, self-righteous attitude, we need to look at our own history.

Dred Scott was a black slave who served an army surgeon named John Emerson during the Civil War. While serving in an area where slavery was prohibited, Scott sued for freedom. To its shame, the Supreme Court ruled that blacks were not intended to be included as citizens of the United States. They were described as "beings of an inferior order," and as slaves they could be "bought and sold, and treated as an ordinary article of merchandise and traffic whenever a profit could be made by it."

Following the Civil War, the United States Congress approved a constitutional amendment that guaranteed rights to "all persons." We should all applaud that decision, recognizing that each individual is a precious creation of God. Yet in 1973, our Supreme Court passed a law that denied another class of human beings legal protection under the law. With the stroke

of a pen, the Roe v. Wade decision became law, and sentenced to death millions of unborn babies.

The abortionists of today can and have sued for slander those who dare call them murderers. Their plea is, "We have broken no laws." That is the same plea used by Hitler's henchmen during the Nuremberg Trials. Behind this lies the assumption that whatever is legal is moral.

When a nation does not protect the most innocent of its population, all are in danger. Our road toward destruction began when prayer was removed from public schools. We went farther down that road when abortion on demand became the law of the land. We have seen how media can shape the values of our culture, and with the help of groups like the ACLU, can wage war against the values of the past. Hitler understood that propaganda had to precede any radical changes, and he promoted his agenda among the most impressionable group (youth). We have seen the fruit of this type of campaign of lies throughout our once, Christian land. Political correctness threatens our right of free speech. Abortion and special homosexual rights have changed our culture into one that is no longer Christian friendly.

When God's word was taken out of our public educational system we should have realized that we were going to reap what we had sown. And when life at any stage is devalued, then life in all stages loses value. Any person under thirty five lives with the knowledge that their mother could have legally ended their life if she had chosen to do so.

One side of the abortion issues that gets very little attention is the strain on our economy. Every aborted child is one less future taxpayer. With over 50 million abortions, that amounts to a lot of tax dollars. Is it any wonder that our Social Security system is predicted to be bankrupt within the next few years?

The souls of the innocent cry out to God. Where is the outrage? Have we as Christians come to the conclusion that there is nothing we can do? Today it is the unborn that is targeted. Tomorrow it may well be the elderly or disabled that become the targets. If you think that this could never happen in the United States, history has proven you wrong.

It is too late for the millions of aborted unborn. When will it be too late for the elderly, the infirm, or a particular class or race? When will it be too late for Christians?

Our fear should not be so much that God is going to bring judgment upon our land (even though it is greatly deserved), but that He will remove His hand of protection from us.

(Hatcher is a member of the Christian Life Commission and pastor of Northside Baptist Church, Selma)

*The articles in this issue were gathered from various sources
The opinions in the Christian Life Report are not necessarily the opinions of the Christian Life Commission*

What About Gambling?

Three Questions

by Derek Allen and Sam Day



Question One: What is Gambling?

It is important to understand gambling.

Gambling:

- Is more than just playing a game or taking a chance.
- Can be defined as risking personal possessions in an attempt to multiply those possessions on something that is against the odds.
- Always involves risking money.
- Always involves an attempt to multiply money.
- Is always against the odds.
- Always leaves the results up to chance.

Gambling is not:

- Taking everyday risks such as driving a car or flying in an airplane. Although people are injured and killed in everyday activities, the results are left up to safety measures, skill and acts of God rather than mere chance. Most people who drive in a car or fly in a plane do not suffer serious injury or die as a result so the safety is not against the odds.
- Making a wise investment. Wise investments are those which provide investors with reliable reasons that they will be successful. The results of an investment are not left to chance; they are left to the success or failure of a company.
- Paying an entry fee to participate in a sporting tournament in which the winner receives a portion of the entry fees. Again, the result is determined by skill and hard work rather than chance.

- Randomly drawing a winner for door prizes. The participants do not risk money to purchase a chance to win.
- Playing games such as bingo or cards without risking money or predicting outcomes such as sports winners, times, birth weights, etc. Even if a prize is given to the winner, no money is risked so it is not gambling.

Question Two: Is Gambling a Sin?

It is important to understand what the Bible says about gambling.

- The Bible does not specifically mention gambling, although it condones making important decisions by divine directed chance. Casting lots is an exercise of chance similar to casting die or drawing names.
- Casting lots is used in Leviticus to choose between the sacrificial goat and the scapegoat.
- Joshua cast lots to determine the allotment of land to the various tribes. Nehemiah cast lots to determine who would live inside the walls of Jerusalem and who wouldn't.
- The apostles cast lots to determine the replacement for Judas.
- Proverbs 16:33 says, "The lot is cast in the lap, but its every decision is from the Lord."
- Nowhere in scripture is casting lots used by God's people to risk possessions.
- Nowhere in scripture is gambling used for entertainment or presented as an acceptable practice for followers of God.

There are many principles in scripture that contradict the principles promoted by gambling.

The Scriptural principles can be labeled as the laws of work, stewardship, love, faith and life.

The Principles of Gambling Verses the Principles of Scripture:

Gambling Principles	Scriptural Principles	Scripture References
Gambling is a chance to earn something for nothing.	The Law of Work: There are three scriptural ways to gain material and possessions: work, gifts and inheritance. The Bible clearly promotes hard work and speaks against laziness and trying to gain something for nothing.	Acts 20:35, Ephesians 4:28, Proverbs 6:6-11, 13:11, 21:25-26, 23:4-5, 2 Thess. 3:6-12
Gambling is a high-risk investment with no long-term chance of reward.	The Law of Stewardship: We are stewards of the resources God has provided for us. We must make wise investments and not waste money that could be used to further God's kingdom.	Matthew 25:14-30
Gambling allows you to win only when someone else loses. Even if you play against the house, the house knows the odds and organizes winnings to make sure they win enough from other people to make money when they have to pay you.	The Law of Love: As a Christian, our concern is to have the best interests of others at heart. God's people are commanded throughout scripture to love others, not to take advantage of them. We are also commanded to look out for the weakest in society.	Exodus 22:21-27, Psalm 72:4, Proverbs 19:18, 22:9, Zechariah 7:10, Matthew 25:31-46, Mark 12:30-31, Acts 20:35, 1 Corinthians 10:23-24 (note: "everything is permissible" is most likely a quote of pagan philosophy that Paul is responding to)
Gambling provides a small chance to win a large amount of money. Gambling can make you rich.	The Law of Faith: Greed and materialism are sins, and we are to have faith that God will provide us with what we need.	Proverbs 28:22, Matthew 6:19-21, 6:24, 6:33, Luke 12:15, Ephesians 5:5, 1 Timothy 6:9-10, Hebrews 13:5
Gambling is fun.	The Law of Life: Sin is often fun, but it is still sin and will eventually lead to death and destruction. Abundant life is only found through a relationship with Jesus Christ.	Proverbs 14:12, John 10:10, Hebrews 11:25

Question Three:

Should Christians Fight Against Legalized Gambling?

Gambling is a sin, and the church must stand against sin. 2 Timothy 4:2-4 - Satan uses gambling to destroy families and societies and the church must stand against him. Ephesians 6:10-13

The gambling lobby wants us to believe that video gambling will solve all of Etowah County's problems.

Alabama, like the rest of the country is currently facing hard economic times as *The Gadsden Times* recently reported. Larry Foster, manager of the Gadsden Employment Security Office, said the county's unemployment rate was 4.5% in May, 4.5% up from the revised April unemployment rate of 3.8%. Unemployment rates are climbing in Alabama, up to 5.1% in July, **the highest in four years.**

Etowah County has a solution, a new development which will provide growth opportunities for our community making it a better place to work and live.

☑ **Research has revealed that, at best, gambling is economically neutral. In other words, an economy does not always benefit from gambling and often negatively affected.**

☑ **Consider these quotes from economists and researchers who have studied gambling:**

"(Gambling) involves simply sterile transfers of money or goods between individuals, creating no new money or goods. Although it creates no output, gambling does nevertheless absorb time and resources. When pursued beyond the limits of recreation, where the main purpose after all is to kill time, gambling subtracts from the national income." Paul Samuelson (1970 Nobel Prize in Economics)

"The field research indicates that nationwide you stand to lose 1.5 jobs for every job the casinos create. For every dollar legalized gambling interests indicate is contributed in taxes, it really costs the taxpayer \$3.00 to address the increased socio-economic costs to society." John Kindt, Professor of Economics at the University of Illinois

☑ **While the impact on the entire economy is difficult to assess, gambling's impact on the most vulnerable segments of society is clear.**

A November 2002 report to the National Bureau of Economics, stated that the introduction of state lotteries leads to a substantial increase in gambling, matched by a decline in spending on food and housing. Additionally, the poor and poorly educated are the most likely to gamble.

One study showed that the California state lottery was in effect a \$711 million anti-rural development program. This figure was arrived at by totaling the amount of money taken

out of rural areas through lottery ticket sales, minus the funds that come back into the schools in those areas.

☑ **Gambling also leads to addiction and destructive behavior.**

- *These are some stories that have been pulled from press clippings:*
- *An Asian man fatally shot two friends and later committed suicide. He was despondent over his gambling debts and owed as much as \$200,000.*
- *A bank robbery occurred in San Jose. The robber was found within a couple of hours waiting for a seat at the gaming table inside a club.*
- *40 year old Illinois woman gambled away her family's savings and her wedding ring on a riverboat casino. When she found out that the sheriff was on his way to evict her and her family for missing 17 consecutive mortgage payments, she drove to a mall parking lot and shot herself. She left a husband who did not even know that his wife gambled, let alone had a gambling problem.*
- *Jason Berg killed himself after running up a huge gambling loss. He left a suicide note which simply read, "I'm out of control." He was 19 years old.*

☑ **Gambling establishments promote other sins such as alcoholism, illegal lending and white-collar crime such as tax evasion and fraud. They also pressure politicians for relaxed rules.**

In Iowa, riverboat casinos pressured the government to relax rules by threatening to move to neighboring states with relaxed rules. The government had to give in because the economies of the riverboat cities had reorganized completely around the casinos.

The statement of one gambler in a Walker County video bingo parlor represents the effectiveness of the strategy of the gambling lobby: "This is the same thing as legal gambling the way I see it. And if they're going to have these, then they need to go ahead and have legal casinos like they do in Mississippi."

We must trust God to bless our society as we follow him. Psalm 33:12

- We must trust in God, and not look to the system of the world for our salvation.
- When his town was faced with a decision about gambling, one man observed:
"Ten thousand construction jobs are supposed to be created by this project. This may very well be true. However, we could create plenty of construction jobs by building brothels and opium dens."
(Allen is pastor of Riverbend Baptist Church in Gadsden, and Day is pastor of the First Baptist Church of Southside)

A Church Health Resource from LEAD Solutions

These notes address three questions about gambling: what is gambling, is gambling a sin and should Christians fight against legalized gambling? They have been compiled as the gambling lobby attempts to establish video bingo in Etowah County, Alabama.

- <http://www.nocasinoerie.org/jobques.htm>
- <http://www.library.ca.gov/crb/97/03/crb97003.html#toc>
- <http://papers.nber.org/papers/W9330>
- <http://www.cbs42.com> "Bingo Concerns" by Phillip Ohnemus



FACTS & ISSUES

Compiled by Joe Bob Mizzell, Director

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RETIREMENT QUIZ

1. If you earn \$100,000 a year, you'll need \$55,750 a year in retirement. *FALSE: You may need at least \$80,000 a year.*
2. To retire comfortably you must accumulate \$1 million by age 65. *TRUE: Actually you may need more.*
3. 80% of Americans will depend on help from family or the government in retirement. *FALSE: It's 95%.*
Kiplinger's Retirement Report, August 2008

SURVEY: FEWER ALABAMA TEENS SMOKING

More of Alabama's high school students are seeing the light: fewer of them are lighting up.

The Alabama Department of Public Health released some of the data from its 2008 Youth Tobacco Survey on August 6 showing a 17.5 percent decrease in teen smoking compared with 2006.

The survey was given in 43 public high schools earlier in the year, and the results are based on a sampling of nearly 1,400 students who turned in usable questionnaires.

An estimated 47,926 Alabama high schoolers are current smokers, with 27.5 percent of them white, 21.8 percent of them Hispanic and 13 percent of them black students, according to the report.

The state survey is taken every other year, and the full results will be released next month said Julie Hare, who oversees Alabama's Quitline. "Teens are a hard audience to reach because they don't think they have a problem, they don't think they're addicted. They're living now—today—and not thinking about the long-term effects" Hare said. We know the dangers of smoke and tobacco and some of them are getting the message now, too."

The Montgomery Advertiser, August 13, 2008

BIG TOBACCO IN COURT

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit will hear arguments from lawyers contesting *U.S. v. Phillip Morris*, a long-standing civil racketeering case brought against Phillip Morris (now Altria Group) contending that executives at the tobacco giant conspired for years to mislead the public about health risks of so-called "low-tar" and "light" cigarettes. Lawyers for the federal government will ask the court to uphold a lower-court ruling in 2006 and will seek more than \$12 billion in damages.

WORLD Magazine, October 4/11, 2008

BAN ON BETTING WOULD BOOST AILING ECONOMY

Congress should resurrect the nationwide gambling ban that existed through most of the 20th century to help soothe a fragile U.S. economy shaken by the worst credit and financial crisis in decades, a University of Illinois professor and national gambling critic says.

John W. Kindt argued that gambling is a multibillion dollar drag on the economy, not the money making boost touted by supporters. Cash merely changes hands from bettors to casino owners, he said, creating no products or anything else of value.

If the estimated \$100 billion now spent annually on gambling—mostly slot machines—went into consumer spending instead, economic models show it would generate more than \$300 billion for the nation's economy and create jobs and services, said Kindt, a professor of business and legal policy. He said Congress should also repeal more than \$40 billion in tax write-offs for slot machine owners.

The Alabama Baptist, October 2, 2008



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