

## Gambling's False & Misleading Advertisements

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by Bill Crews

We have government agencies whose job it is to enforce certain government regulations that forbid false or misleading advertisements. These regulations are designed to protect the consumers. The Food and Drug Administration has often gone after makers and distributors whose products were promoted by false and misleading statements. We hear much about protecting consumers and about keeping sales pitches honest. We are warned about "fly-by-night" companies and various kinds of "scams." But I can think of no advertisements that are more misleading than those put out by the various promoters of gambling or "gaming" (and some of them, such as the lottery, are run by the state). They repeatedly say, "Play every day; get lucky every night." No one is able to do that because the odds are far and away against it. The truth is that if you will play every day, you may win something once in a great while, but you will lose far more than you can possibly win. For every winner there are thousands of losers.

They also continue to give out the names of the few who have won large sums (like \$100,000 or more). What they never focus on is that all the winnings, plus the overhead cost of running the gambling operation (the state lottery, the video poker machines, the gambling casinos), plus the taxes that must be paid to the governments, plus the profits that are taken out by the owners or the operators must come from the money furnished by thousands and thousands of losers who won nothing. Gambling is an **evil parasite** that fastens itself upon the people in general who gamble, upon a city or a state, or a nation, taking advantage of human weakness, building up false hope, promising far more than it delivers, creating a dependency or an addiction, hiding its far-reaching costs and concealing its unpleasant and undesirable consequences. So why are they allowed to get by with false and misleading advertisements? To get foolish people to keep throwing away their money! There are far better things that could be done with that money that would be of far better benefit to people or a city or a state or a nation.

There is also the matter of saturation, more gambling than an area can possibly support in such a way that the gambling establishments continue to thrive. River boats move to another area or close up, just as do some of the casinos. Those run by Indian tribes and others in northwest Mississippi (previously a very impoverished area economically), have been laying off employees and closing doors because competition arose nearby. Pity the states and the businesses and the schools that have counted on money from the gambling interests. Pity the people who have been impoverished by indulging. Pity all the souls that will be lost due to this foolish sinful "*pleasure*." In their advertisements they love to show the smiling faces of those who are winning and having fun, but this is far from the total picture of what goes on.

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