

Why Is Gambling Wrong?

by Bill Crews

The Bible authorizes men to acquire material things (food, clothing, shelter — the necessities of life, plus comforts and conveniences beyond these) (1) by honest labor by which you earn money or produce goods and services you can sell or exchange (Titus 3:14; Eph. 4 :28; 1 Thess. 4: 11-12; 2 Thess. 3:10-12), (2) by purchasing with money that is legally and morally yours (John 4:8; Matthew 14:15; 2 Samuel 24:21-24), (3) by exchanging other things for them (if mutually agreeable to both parties (Luke 19:15; Genesis 34:10; James 4:13), and (4) by being given them by someone who rightfully owns them but wants you to have them (Acts 2:45; 9:39; 20:35; Luke 15:22). Number (1) has been called “the law of labor”; numbers (2) and (3) have been called “the law of exchange”; and number (4) has been called ‘the law of love (or benevolence).’ Receiving pay for work that you have not done, deceptively exchanging very little for very much, taking things without permission or by force or deception or fraud, putting undue pressure on someone to “give” you something are all wrong. But so is gambling! — foolishly losing something to others, or acquiring what others have lost. You cannot “hope” that you win without “hoping” that other lose so that you can win. The Bible warns against “the love of money” and “being minded to be rich” in strong terms (1 Tim. 6:9-10); yet, these are the very elements that make gambling such an attraction to so many people.

Various Forms Of Gambling

When you play marbles “for keeps” (the winner of the game or games gets to keep all the marbles, both his own and those of his opponent), that is gambling. When you pay to punch out a number on a punch card (perhaps every punch is rewarded with a token prize worth only a fraction of what it cost, but you are hoping to win a grand prize worth the cost of many punches), that is gambling. When you buy one or more tickets in a “raffle” (or a drawing, for some grand prize — a turkey, a ham, a boat, a car, etc.), that is gambling. When you put

[continued on page 293102](#)

293101