

# Impact

Living  
Your Values  
Out Loud

**“The one who profits dishonestly troubles his household....”  
Proverbs 15:27**



## GAMBLING IMPACTS PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES

**Scripture makes a powerful case against gambling and shows how it violates right relationships with God, our families, and our communities.**

The San Jose (Ca.) *Mercury News* reported on August 22, 2008, that several residents of Washoe County, Nevada, have been convicted in recent months for crimes related to gambling. They include an attorney who embezzled \$3.1 million from the casino he represented, medical clinic administrators, a television personality, and a county engineer who admits to stealing at least \$2.2 million from his office. Each blames the crime on a gripping and uncontrollable gambling addiction.

Unfortunately, Washoe County does not have a monopoly on residents with gambling problems. Governments have convinced millions of Americans that gambling is a win-win situation for the players and the people running the game (in the case of the lottery, state government), and the gambling industry has done a remarkable job of transforming the public opinion of a “vice” into harmless “recreation.” (Note the subtle public relations campaign that has transformed their product from “gambling” into “gaming.”)

The National Council on Problem Gambling estimates that 85 percent of U.S. adults have gambled at least once in their lives, and 60 percent have gambled in the past year. Unfortunately, Christians are included in that number, in spite of the obvious dangers of gambling to individuals, families, and communities.

Although Scripture does not say “Do not gamble,” gambling clearly violates biblical principles. In addition to doing personal damage to the gambler, it encourages a love of money, legalizes taking from your neighbor, victimizes the poor, corrupts government, produces the wrong attitude toward work, hurts legitimate business, increases violence and crime, and jeopardizes the well-being of families.





Scripture gives Christians principles for living in a proper relationship with God and with each other. Gambling and its promotion violate these principles. It is my prayer that Christians will run from gambling in every form, for there is scarcely no greater act of disobedience and faithlessness than to cast your lot at the feet of a false idol, in this case, the gambling industry.



Richard L. Ladd

## Lotto Winner Goes to Prison

Eighteen years ago, Rhoda Toth and her late husband won \$13 million from the Florida Lotto. After spending it all, declaring bankruptcy and admitting tax evasion, she begged to be spared jail. The judge ignored her pleas and sentenced her to two years in prison. Toth will also have to pay \$1.1 million in restitution to the IRS. When the Toths bought the winning ticket, they had \$24.76 to their names. But somehow, that windfall wasn't enough to last them more than a decade. They filed for Chapter 13 bankruptcy protection in 2001 and 2002 and, at the time of their indictment, were said to have owed the IRS a combined \$2.5 million. Her husband, Alex, died in April at age 60 before he could stand trial.

*St. Petersburg Times, August 8, 2008*

## 10 Questions About Gambling Behavior

1. You have often gambled longer than you had planned.
2. You have often gambled until your last dollar was gone.
3. Thoughts of gambling have caused you to lose sleep.
4. You have used your income or savings to gamble while letting bills go unpaid.
5. You have made repeated, unsuccessful attempts to stop gambling.
6. You have broken the law or considered breaking the law to finance your gambling.
7. You have borrowed money to finance your gambling.
8. You have felt depressed or suicidal because of your gambling losses.
9. You have been remorseful after gambling.
10. You have gambled to get money to meet your financial obligations.

If you or someone you know answers "Yes" to any of these questions, consider calling the National Problem Gambling HelpLine Network (800-522-4700).

## WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- 1. PRAY.** Ask God for the emotional and spiritual strength to resist any temptation to gamble (Matt. 6:13). Pray for your church's leadership, that they would be vocal opponents of gambling.
- 2. ACT.** Contact your local newspaper and your elected representatives. State your opposition to all forms of gambling in your area. If gambling is already legal in your area, work against its expansion.
- 3. SERVE.** If you know any problem gamblers, encourage them to seek help (1 Thess. 5:14). Consider asking your church to begin a counseling ministry for problem gamblers.

