

Sermon & Bible Study Guide

Gambling

September 2006

Sermon Outline

Gambling with One's Life

Emphasis Passage: 1 Timothy 6:10 (Click 1)

Context

In 1 Timothy 6:3-10, Paul points out the sharp contrast between two types of people—one who lives for Christ and one who lives for self. The one who lives for Christ is focused on His teachings, which lead to sound doctrine and promote godliness. This godliness, coupled with a deep sense of contentment, is of great benefit. On the other hand, the one who lives for self denies the teachings of Christ. That person becomes characterized by conceit, lack of understanding, envy, strife, endless quarreling and disputes, etc. His life is ruined by the love of money and he eventually turns his back on God. The difference is evident: Know Christ—Know peace; No Christ—No peace.

Introduction

Linda Selymes started gambling two years before her retirement as an executive at Boeing Aircraft. But after retirement, she began gambling more often. She went through \$500,000 in retirement savings, fell behind on house payments, and hated the person she had become.

At the height of her addiction, she would draw out \$500 from her credit union account and head for the casino. After losing that money, she would use her debit card to get another \$500, then add \$300 more to credit cards. On one occasion, she had in her purse \$14,000 that she had won, but it was all gone in three days.

At first Linda's husband did not know what she was doing since she managed the household finances. But after an all-nighter at a casino, her husband threatened to leave her—though never did. Finally, her husband, her son, and her doctor convinced her to get help. It took several months to eventually gain control and completely stop gambling. She now says she will never stop going to her support group meetings because she knows that if she gambles again, she will be on the fast-track to being back where she was. She says there is one thing she keeps telling herself: "At least for today I won't give in to this urge. I don't have to deal with my whole life all at once." (See OS1.)

What a tragedy! Linda Selymes had been a successful businesswoman. She had amassed a large amount of money that would have provided her with more than enough for the rest of her life. But she wasted it all on gambling—an addiction that hooked her before she even knew it. Gambling not only did that to Linda Selymes; it will do it to anyone who thinks he or she can play around with it and remain immune from its lure.

- I. The root of gambling (Click 2-3)**
- A. “Love of money” is the root of gambling. (WS1, WS2, CC1, CC3, CC5, CC6) (Click 4)
 - B. The love of money is one aspect of the “lust of the flesh” (1 John 2:16). (WS3, WS4) (Click 5)
 - C. The word used by John is one that means an inordinate desire for something. It is desire that goes beyond normal. (WS5, WS6, CC1, CC3) (Click 6)
 - D. The desire to get more and more is often caused by a lack of faith concerning the future (Matt. 6:25-34). (CC2) (Click 7)
 - E. Jesus asked, “What does it benefit a man to gain the whole world yet lose his life?” (Mark 8:36) (Clicks 8-9)
 - F. Rather than gaining more, the one who gambles usually loses what he already has—many times much more. (CC2, CC4) (Click 10)
- II. The ravages of gambling—gambling’s love of money leads to evil outcomes. (OS2) (Clicks 11-12)**
- A. The word “evil” used here by John certainly applies to the ravages of gambling. (WS3, WS4) (Click 13)
 - B. Examples of the ravages of gambling are numerous. (Click 14)
 - 1. Gambling creates no new wealth. (Clicks 15-16)
 - i. Redistributes wealth on an inequitable basis.
 - ii. Enriches the few and impoverishes the many.
 - iii. Non-productive—performs no useful or necessary services.
 - iv. Parasitic.
 - 2. Gambling depresses legitimate business, siphoning off money from the regular business community. (Click 17)
 - i. Dislocates the purchasing dollar.
 - ii. Business leaders are reluctant to invest money in areas that sustain large gambling enterprises because of the ensuing bad debts, delinquent time payments, and bankruptcy.
 - iii. Gambling disrupts the normal checks and balances of a well-ordered community.
 - iv. Gambling restricts business.
 - 3. Gambling increases welfare costs. (Click 18)
 - i. Gambling weakens the stability of family life.
 - ii. Gambling lowers the standard of living and necessitates a larger welfare burden, thus raising taxes.
 - iii. Increased revenue from gambling means larger claims for welfare.
 - 4. Gambling increases crime. (Click 19)
 - i. Gambling always attracts racketeers and mobsters.
 - ii. Gambling increases the number of murders, assaults, robberies, crimes of violence of all kinds, etc.
 - iii. The underworld thrives on gambling.
 - iv. Police costs increase.

5. Gambling corrupts government. **(Click 20)**
 - i. Gamblers always seek to increase their offers and to buy protection.
 - ii. Gamblers are soulless in attempting to corrupt police, judges, and legislators.
 - iii. Instead of the state controlling legalized gambling, the professional gamblers often end up in control of the state.
6. Gambling victimizes the poor. **(Click 21-22)**
 - i. Gambling leads to embezzlement, bribes, extortion, treason, suicide, and corruption of college and professional athletes.
 - ii. Those who can least afford it usually gamble the most.
 - iii. Gambling exploits the weaknesses of individuals.
 - iv. Gambling and poverty go hand in hand.
 - v. Inner-city residents are hurt the most by expanded gambling.
7. Gambling is a sophisticated form of legalized stealing (Eph. 4:28). **(Click 23)**
 - i. In winning, one obtains the wages that another person has earned without giving anything in exchange.
 - ii. The larger the winnings, the more someone else had to lose.
8. Gambling produces the wrong attitudes toward work—promotes the idea that a person can live by his wits and luck without making any contribution to society. **(Click 24)**
9. Gambling contradicts social responsibilities. **(Click 25-26)**
 - i. Mature adults try to minimize the risks in life; gambling seeks to maximize risks.
 - ii. Responsible societies attempt to build security into life; gambling undermines security.
 - iii. Gambling deliberately creates artificial and unnecessary risks.
 - iv. Gambling militates against the highest values of human welfare.
 - v. History shows that a major increase in gambling has signified the decline of a nation.
10. Gambling revenues violate all the sound theories of taxation. **(Click 27)**
 - i. Gambling revenue is regressive, inequitable, variable and unpredictable.
 - ii. To make public service dependent upon erratic gambling “taxes” is irresponsible.
 - iii. Public service should be soundly financed.
11. As a source of state revenue, gambling has a consistent record of failure. **(Click 28)**
 - i. Proponents promise huge government income from legalized gambling, but only a trickle of money results.
 - ii. Even in Nevada, only about one-third of the state’s budget comes from gambling.
 - iii. Lotteries have been discredited as a source of school funds.

12. Gambling is socially disintegrating, politically corrupt and morally dangerous. (**Click 29**)
 - i. Gambling is bad business, bad politics and bad morals.
 - ii. The state cannot gamble itself rich

III. The results of gambling (Clicks 30-31)

- A. Wandering from the faith (**Click 32**)
 1. “Wandered from” means to be led astray. (**WS7, WS8, CC1, CC3, CC4, CC6**) (**Click 33**)
 2. Two possibilities: (**Click 34**)
 - a. Led astray by someone else’s influence
 - b. Led astray by the lure of gambling itself
- B. Wounding of pains (**Clicks 35-36**)
 1. “Pierced themselves” means “to put on a spit” to be roasted over an open fire. (**WS9, WS10, CC1, CC3, CC6**) (**Click 37**)
 2. This is something that results from one’s own doing. (**Click 38**)
 3. They pierce themselves through with many sorrows or griefs. (**Click 39**)
 4. They may ruin not only their emotional well-being, but their physical health as well. (**Clicks 40-41**)
 5. They may lose their self-respect, good name and standing in the community. (**OS3, OS5, OS6**) (**Click 42**)
 6. They may lose their family and their intimate fellowship with God. (**Click 43**)
 7. They may even lose their life. (**OS4**) (**Click 44**)

Conclusion

Not everyone will become addicted to gambling like Linda Selymes, Greg Hogan, Ben McCausland, Henrietta Rundell, or Fred Cappellano (see **OS3**). No one knows who will and who won’t. What may start out as only “entertainment,” as some like to call it, may become much more—an addiction that will last the rest of their life, one that will control them and control their future. When a person chooses to gamble, he truly gambles with his life.

WHAT CAN ONE PERSON DO?

1. Determine now that, if you have never gambled, you will never start.
2. Determine now that, if you have started gambling, you will do whatever it takes to stop.
3. If you have started gambling, find a support group to help you overcome the addiction.
4. Pray for anyone among your family or friends who is gambling—to whatever degree.

5. Consider leading (or asking someone else to lead) the gambling recovery program, *Chance to Change*—available through our website at <http://erlc.com>.