



THE ADDICTION CONNECTION

The Heart of a Gambler

- Start with Scripture because God gives us the remedy to gambling
- Often a sinful heart desire of SELF-focused anticipation of SELF-centered glory

I. Start with Scripture Because God Gives us the Remedy¹

A. **1 Timothy 6:1-12: Let all who are under a yoke as bondservants regard their own masters as worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and the teaching may not be reviled. ² Those who have believing masters must not be disrespectful on the ground that they are brothers; rather they must serve all the better since those who benefit by their good service are believers and beloved. Teach and urge these things. ³ If anyone teaches a different doctrine and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching that accords with godliness, ⁴ he is puffed up with conceit and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy craving for controversy and for quarrels about words, which produce envy, dissension, slander, evil suspicions, ⁵ and constant friction among people who are depraved in mind and deprived of the truth, imagining that godliness is a means of gain. ⁶ But godliness with contentment is great gain, ⁷ for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. ⁸ But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content. ⁹ But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. ¹⁰ For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs. ¹¹ But as for you, O man of God, flee these things. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness. ¹² Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.**

1. Verses 1-2: Those whose position in life is low must still be _____ to their masters.
2. Verses 3-4: Christ took on the form of a _____ (Phil. 2:5-11) so those who oppose this doctrine are opposing Jesus Himself.
3. Verse 5: When godliness is viewed as a means for financial gain, a person will never come to know the _____.
4. Verses 6-8: Essential in one's thinking is to have the right _____ - godliness with contentment. We must be content with food and clothing only.
5. Verse 9: Discontentment and Covetousness breed a desire to be rich leading to being trapped in a "snare" of "senseless and harmful desires" that "plunge" a person into "ruin and destruction." Sounds like the HEART of _____!
6. Verse 10: Not _____, but the "love of money" is a root of all sorts of evil. Word "love" here in Greek is *philarguria* = avarice. Note: People have even left the faith for the love of money.

¹ Special Thanks: Dr. Andy Wisner at <http://nlbc-harvest.org/> for his faithful work on this topic.

7. Verse 11: "Man of God" is a humbling statement (also used in 2 Tim. 3:17) to be used by God for ministry. "FLEE" is _____ "to sit and consider" so the lust of money must be 'run from' by Christians.
8. Verse 11: If the put-off is to "flee" the lust of money, then the put-on is to "pursue" these 6 marks of a transforming gambler:
9. Righteousness – not imputed but _____ righteousness of standing before man as an out-flow of our Christian life before mankind to glorify God (sanctification not a salvation issue)
10. Godliness – being "holy" or set apart by _____ in Christ (actions)
11. Faith – sustaining faith for needs in life despite life's status and lowly position
12. Love – "agape" _____ of the Holy Spirit not produced by fleshly living
13. Steadfastness – patience, constancy not to _____ during trials; right responses to life
14. Gentleness – not enough to endure but to have a _____ attitude through the trials

***These are the six marks/characteristics to look for in a transforming gambler.

- B. Verse 12: "Fighting the good fight of faith" is to do battle with the flesh by yielding to the Holy Spirit and obeying God's Word. Not giving in or up, but looking to Christ alone and finding confidence in Him.
- C. A heavenly mindset Col. 3:2-4 **Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.** ³ **For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.** ⁴ **When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.**

II. Some Statistics in 2010

III. Americans have a positive perception of gambling (www.americangaming.org):

- A. Casino gambling helps "education, local government, general fund, problem gambling programs."
- B. 82% view gaming as "acceptable" (15% not acceptable for anyone)

IV. Since many believers also view Gambling as "Entertainment" and "Fun," we must confront this mindset:

- A. Many casinos are "far from monolithic" meaning casinos are offering diverse "entertainment options" (fine dining, shows, childcare, etc.)
- B. Amusement mentality; a (without) + muse (to think) = without thinking!
- C. John 19:23-24 demonstrates the ugliness of gambling: **When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his garments and divided them into four parts, one part for each soldier; also his tunic. But the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom,** ²⁴ **so they said to one another, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see whose it shall be." This was to fulfill the Scripture which says, "They divided my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots." So the soldiers did these things.**
- D. God is sovereign over all things. Proverbs 16:33 **The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the Lord.**

V. What is Gambling?

- A. A person is gambling whenever he or she takes the chance of losing _____ or belongings, and winning or losing is _____ mostly by chance. www.problemgambling.com
- B. What is problem or addicted gambling? *Problem gambling* is any gambling behavior that disrupts your life. If you're preoccupied with gambling, spending more and more time and money on it, chasing losses, or gambling despite serious consequences, feel the need to be secretive about your gambling, gamble even when you don't have the money – YOU have a gambling problem. (http://www.helpguide.org/mental/gambling_addiction.htm)
- C. Uniqueness of Gambling Addiction
1. There is no observable outward addiction: No dependency on alcohol Therefore no drink can satisfy
 2. No hormonal addiction as in pornography Therefore no sexual encounter can satisfy
 3. *So how do people become addicted to gambling?*
 4. Gambling is often a sinful heart desire of _____-focused anticipation of _____-centered glory.
 5. Therefore the only satisfaction is found in winning
 6. This satisfaction is intermittently reinforced: Every now and then there is a win that keeps the gambler anticipating the "big one."
 7. This reinforcement drives their selfish ambition to more and more as they anticipate the "big one."
 8. Can gambling actually lead to "obsessive" and "deviant" behavior? Yes.

VI. What Does the Bible Teach?

- A. Is there an 11th Commandment: "Thou shalt not gamble."? No!
- B. Although the Bible does not address gambling directly, the Bible addresses the intentions of the heart enslaved to sin, a gambling idol, or "addiction."
- C. **Heb. 4:12: For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.**
- D. MOTIVES: Why do people gamble?
1. Idolatry: Living to please oneself not God (2 Cor. 5:9) "This is 'me-time' and I'm not hurting anybody." "It is my money."
 - a. Ex. 20:3; I Cor. 10:14;
 - b. I Jn 5:21
 3. Entertainment, fun, amusement (2 Tim. 3:4)
 - a. Escape from real world pressures, control (false Savior) (Ps. 55:6)
 - b. Stress relief (self deception)
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- c. "This is my escape." "I know how to beat the house (or system)."
4. Addiction/Enslavement; serving under the Lordship of something other than the one true God
 - a. I Cor. 6:12 – an adrenaline rush (anticipation of it is fun, too!)
 - b. "Just one more; then I will stop!" "I just know I will hit it big this time!" "I can't help it. It is my disease. I can't stop."
5. Boredom, Laziness, Lack of serving others mindset (Prov. 13:4; 2 Thess. 3:10) "When I hit the big one I will never work again."
6. Covetousness, Greed (Ex. 20:17; I Tim. 6:10) – to "solve" money problems rather than working "When I hit it rich!" Heb. 13:5
7. Self-glory (James 3:16) "I'll be famous!" "I'll be happy!" "Everyone will envy me!"
8. Meets a social desire (pride and self-focus of taking, not giving relationally-speaking) Prov. 14:20; "These are my friends."

VII. PRACTICAL HELP FOR THE GAMBLER

- A. Is this issue too challenging for the local church or a biblical counselor? No!
- B. *TIME, TREASURE, TALENTS*
 1. The gambler is living like a "thief"
 2. **Eph. 4:28: Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need.**
 3. Put-on is twofold: Honest Work and Sharing and Giving to Those in Real Need
- C. You are not seeking merely a solution of one problem, but a total restructuring of a life over the period of time. **New godly habits are built over time. Be patient.**
- D. Gambling is a life dominating sin. Do not lose sight of the fundamentals:
 1. Gain Involvement.
 2. Pray for your counselee.
 3. Be available and sensitive to needs.
 4. Be transparent yourself. Galatians 6:1
 5. Be solution-oriented. Ephesians 4:29
 6. GIVE HOPE!!!! Hebrews 12:2
 7. Investigate (Proverbs 18:13)
 8. Learn to ask good questions and to listen. Who, when, what, how, where, in what ways?
 - a. Take the counselee seriously. Proverbs 20:5
 - b. Find out what the counselee is thinking.
 - c. Find out what the counselee's goals are.

- d. Why do they want to change their way of living? (What is their motivation?)
Unless their motivation is the glory of God and their own sanctification toward Christ likeness there will be great struggles and expect many setbacks. 1 Corinthians 10:31

9. Listen for these things:

- a. Blame shifting.
- b. Words like “can’t,” “unable,” “too much.”
- c. Calling sin sickness.
- d. Feeling more than facts.

10. BE ALERT FOR SERIOUS MANIPULATION, which is better termed “deceit”/“lying”!

- a. Learn to read Halo data.
- b. Observe their habits when they try to manipulate.
- c. Observe their habits when they lie to you.
- d. Listen & look for the six marks/characteristics of a transforming gambler from I Tim. 6:11.

11. Instruct

- a. Base your instruction upon the inerrant and powerful Word of God.
- b. Prepare teaching outlines.
- c. Teach them to think God’s thoughts. Teach interactively.
- d. Use biblical texts for the purpose for which God revealed them.
- e. You must deal firmly but meekly with sin. Gal. 6:1-2
- f. A gambling addiction is extensively about the way a person thinks. Romans 12:2
- g. Most of the thinking process that **MUST** change is their view of God.
- h. If God is a part of their life, that must change. Gambling is a part of their life as well. God must become their life. He must become the environment in which they exist. In order to stop worshipping gambling they must begin to worship the one true God for Who He is. This is repentance.

12. Implement change

- a. Confront the problems. 1 Thessalonians 5:14
- b. The counselee cannot expect the counselor to change him. Philippians 2:12-13
- c. Accountability
- d. The structure of the local church should be used in maintaining accountability. Sometimes church discipline may be necessary. Matthew 18:15, I Corinthians 5
- e. A word about accountability

- f. Accountability is only as effective as the counselee is willing to be accountable.
- g. There must be a plan for the accountability to be: Definable, Observable, Measurable, and Enforceable
- h. Put monitoring software on their computer.
- i. Challenge the heart by:
 - 1. Reminding them that the GOAL is to glorify Christ by working with own hands and giving to those in need. Eph. 4:28
 - 2. Getting the gambler involved in helping others in a sacrificial way.
 - 3. Asking: What are they filling their hearts with? Love of money, material things, etc. OR Christ and His Word? Psalms 119:9-12