

WHAT IS (AND IS NOT): GAMBLING?

Strictly defined gambling is the act or practice of betting. It is "the act of playing a game and consciously risking money or other stakes on its outcome." Some say that all of life is a gamble and everything we do involves risk and is no different from casino gambling or wagering in any form. Gambling, however, involves the creation of unnecessary risks.

In life we make judgments consistent with the natural laws relating to the various parts of life. In gambling one risks everything on blind luck, the scratch of a card, a roll of the dice, a spin of the wheel, or a flip of a coin. The farmer does not gamble when he invests his time, money and assets to plant his yearly crop (cf. Jas. 5:7). The factory owner does not gamble when he designs a new style of product for the market he sees (Jas. 4:14-17). One who invests in stocks does not take inordinate chances with his resources when he invests in legitimate enterprises (cf Mt. 25:14-30). Gambling is trying to get something for nothing -- without rendering a service, exchanging goods or providing any other remuneration for the benefit received.

"Not slothful in business... distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality... Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men... Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." Romans 12: 11, 13, 17, 21.

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Be Safe—Not Sorry

There are innumerable uncertainties in life, but there is one thing we cannot afford to be unsure of —our salvation. The apostle Peter admonished people of faith, "Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to make your calling and election sure" (2 Peter 1:10a, ESV). He was writing these words, not to alien sinners, but to those who had once been "cleansed from (their) former sins" (v. 9). They were baptized believers, washed in the blood of Christ. Were some of those he addressed becoming assured that because they had once accepted Christ, they could now relax in their commitment to godliness and still be granted "entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (v. 11)? Evidently so.

At least Peter saw the need to "remind" them of the spiritual qualities that are to characterize those called of the Lord to share "His glory and excellence" (vs. 12, 3b). These qualities are described as supplements to their initial faith: virtue, knowledge, self-control, steadfastness, godliness, brotherly affection and love (vs. 5-8). He further describes any who ignore these qualities as being "so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins" (v. 9). He later compares those who continue in their former vices to the dog who "returns to its own vomit, and the sow, after washing herself, returns to wallow in the mire" (2:22). In these verses, Peter is evidently saying that such are not making their "calling and election sure." He would that they would be safe—not sorry in the day they would face the Lord in judgment.

There is one way, and one way only, in which we can be assured of our standing with the Lord. It is through a personal knowledge of Christ as both Savior and Lord in our lives. Peter's warning to believers was, in effect, saying that while they may had once taken seriously their need for Christ as Savior, they had not been as serious in making Him Lord. Jesus had said, "Not everyone that says to me, 'Lord, Lord' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 7:21). He went on to explain, in the parable of the building of two houses—one on solid rock, and another on sand—that simply hearing Jesus' teachings, without submission to them, would result in the soul's destruction. It's not safe to build a life on the sands of this world—not even the sands of humanly devised religion. Some build on the sand of emotion and feeling, without regard for a "thus says the Lord." Such are not given assurance from God.

Peter was not expecting, nor demanding, perfection. In no way can we live our lives so perfectly that we could, in any sense, merit salvation. But, while it is true that "by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing: it is the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:9), v. 10 is equally true: "we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." We can be safe—not sorry only when our works manifest the reality of our faith. With Jesus as the sure foundation for our lives, and guided by His word as revealed in Scripture (the Bible), we can be truly safe—not sorry.

- Ronald Bartanen preaches for Arthur Church of Christ, Arthur, IL.

Leadership

Elders Hayward Blanton, Jerry Casey

Deacons Clint Smith Sr, Clint Smith Jr,
Robby Stocksdale, Joe Sweeney

Pulpit Minister Eric Welch

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Schedule of Services

Sunday

Bible Class 10:00 AM
Morning Worship 11:00 AM
Evening Worship 6:00 PM

Wednesday

Bible Class 7:00 PM

Sermon Titles

Sunday Morning: To Be Announced

Sunday Evening: Singing Emphasis

Those Privileged to Serve

AM Service

Song Leader Michael Hawkins
Opening Prayer Doug McArthur
Scripture Clint Smith Sr
Sermon Eric Welch
Lord's Supper
Message Irvin Williams
Attendant Jeremy Montgomery
Attendant Rudy Ayala
Closing Prayer Clint Smith Jr

PM Service

Song Leader Rick Martin
Bible Reading Ryan Irwin
Selection 26
Prayer Robby Stocksdale
Sermon *Singing Emphasis*
Closing Prayer Bill Cravens
If you are unable to serve, please call Art Patrick 502-819-9481 or Harold Tincher 502-409-3511

AM & PM Services

Announcements Jerry Casey
Lord's Supper Brandon Slotman
Offering Harold Tincher
Usher Marc Owens
Count Offering Robby Stocksdale
Assist Count Marc Owens

Last Sunday

Offering \$2,767
Attendance 75

Just a Bunch of Hypocrites

How many times have you heard someone say that? How many times have you thought it yourself? I am going to share a huge secret with you, "Christians are not perfect"! I know that is not a shock to some of you but for others it is the most controversial thing you could say. How dare you contend that Christians are not perfect? I can say that because I am a Christian, because I know a lot of other Christians, and because the Bible says so (Rom. 3:23).

You see Christians still sin and when they do, they hurt themselves, they hurt others, and just as importantly they hurt God. The church is definitely the place to go if you want to find people struggling with sins.

The Christian having sin in their life does not make them a hypocrite. The word "hypocrite" comes from a Greek word meaning "a play actor" or "someone who is pretending to be something they are not." I am sure there are some Christians who want you to think they are sinless and I am sure there are some who strive to convince you of their holiness and purity. Truthfully, there is a reason why Jesus called some people "whitewashed tombs" full of all kinds of filth (Matthew 23:27-28). They were more concerned about what people thought of them than what God thought of them and that has not changed much. Yet, having sin in your life does not make you a hypocrite, it makes you human and in need of a Savior.

I think there are primarily two reasons why unbelievers usually hurl that accusation at Christians. First, although they don't know much about God, Jesus, or the church; they know enough to expect that Christians will be different from them. They expect us to be somewhat Christ-like, somewhat loving, and somewhat understanding of others failures. What they usually get is anything but loving, caring, or understanding. Most scary is what they get is anything but Christ-like. Secondly, they have been in contact with some Christian/Christians in the past and they made them feel inferior; like they were somehow less human because they were sinners when the Christian who made them feel like that way was no better than them. They walked away from their encounter feeling worse about themselves and about the church.

Church, you cannot control how someone feels about Christians or the church but you can work hard to ensure that they don't feel that way about you. Jesus was a man who made people feel comfortable. People felt like they could talk to Him and He was a person they thought they could spend time with. He was a person that others could enjoy a meal with (Luke 5:29-30; 7:34, 36). So they invited Him and He went. He surrounded Himself with sinners and those in need and they felt well about it. He didn't cause people to run in the other direction when they saw Him walking toward them.

Church; let's make sure that when unbelievers encounter us it is a beneficial and meaningful encounter. Let's make sure they see Christ living in us instead of our sins shining brightly. We cannot be perfect but we can make sure that they walk away with a good view of the church and Christianity.

- Jeff Arnette preaches for the Central Haywood church of Christ, Clyde, NC.

• Hamburg Pike Happenings

- Attention Teens: The E-Town church of Christ will host a Youth Rally on Friday August 26th and Saturday August 27th. Please let Michael Hawkins know if you plan to attend.
- The ladies' Bible class will meet Saturday morning, August 27th, at 10:00 A.M.
- A Singing Emphasis service is scheduled for Sunday evening August 28th. Men and young men of the congregation who would like to lead a song or read scripture, please sign the sheet in the foyer.
- The Monday Night for the Master group will begin meeting September 12th at the new time of 6:30 pm. Please create a list of those individuals you are trying to influence for the Lord and we will help to influence them by sending cards, making a phone call or a personal visit if appropriate. Provide the names, address, phone number and the type of contact (card, visit or call) to Harold or Debbie Tincher. The meal for this meeting will be Pizza. Please keep this good work in your prayers and plan to participate; the Lord's work requires workers.
- A congregational fellowship meal is scheduled for Sunday September 18th after the morning service. Chicken will be provided; signup sheet is on the table in the foyer.
- Attention Youth: There are worship note sheets in the foyer next to the Youth Bulletin board for ages Preschool to 12th Grade. Please take one and fill them out each Sunday morning and Sunday evening during worship service. There will be recognition and prizes awarded to those youth members who regularly and actively participate in this program. Information is available on the Youth Bulletin board or if you have further questions, see Ashley Smith.