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Thinking Cap # 15 - The Question: Is There a Problem With Dabbling in The Lottery?

If you live in Florida, you've heard the line, "It won't change your life, just how you live it." The lottery, the source of happiness and joy. Humanist heaven. For the Christian, is there a problem with dabbling in the lottery? It's just a game and a little R&R. Besides, a Christian would surely tithe on his winnings and I'm sure the church could put that money to good use. What do you say? Is there a Biblical position on playing the lottery? Should you care to respond, your thots are due by midnight, Friday, June 23.

I got interesting feedback from Brian, Martin, Mary, Ruth, Ron and Rey. Here for what it is worth, is how I would deal with this issue.

A general overview on the topic is:

- God's resources outstrip those of the lottery.
 - There are riches in heaven (Eph. 3:16 and Phil. 4:19)
 - God can do more for us than we can possibly imagine (Eph. 3:20)
 - God owns this world and this universe (Ps. 24:1 and Dt. 10:14)
- So why should I depend on the lottery? God can supply me with as much money as the lottery offers, should He choose to give it to me (1 Tim. 6:17 and 1 Cor.2:9)
- But money doesn't inherently satisfy. The flesh cannot be satisfied. Therefore one million or ten billion will not suffice. Wasn't it J. Rockefeller (or some other very rich man) who when asked on his death-bed, "What would it take to make you happy?" responded, "Just a little bit more!"

As to specifics, consider the following principles from the Bible.

- Partaking in games of chance for profit violate several Scriptural patterns of behavior.
 - Gambling encourages greed (Lu. 12:15; Heb. 13:5; 1 Tim. 6:10)
 - Gambling encourages materialism and discontentment (Ps. 62:10; Phil.4:11 and 1 Tim. 6:6-9)
 - Gambling discourages honest labor (Prov. 28:19; 13:11; 2 Thes. 3:10)
 - Gambling encourages get-rich-quick thinking (Prov. 28:20)
 - Gambling encourages reckless investment of God-given resources (Mt.25:14-30)
- Gambling is a vice that is spawned by the violation of God's tenth commandment (Ex. 20:17). The urge to gamble involves an uncontrolled appetite and covertousness (1 Thes.4:5; Col. 3:4-5; Ps. 119:36; Prov. 21:25-26 and Eph. 5:5).

- James teaches us that it is Satan who suggests the sin and tempts the sinner. As the great deceiver, Satan takes a cause that appears credible and uses deception to trick us into participating in such an activity (ie, the state needs to raise money for education). Thus the state that condones, promotes, and profits from sin is an instrument of the prince of darkness. Does that then make those who support gambling and the lottery Satan's pawns (or fools)?
- They who play the lottery often brag that they would give some percentage of their winnings to the church if God should let them win. Read Dt. 23:18. God warned the priests of old not to accept the "giving" that was the profit from a whore, a homosexual act (referred to as dogs also in Rev. 22:15) or from those who promote such acts (pimps). Such money was considered an abomination to the Lord (Prov.15:8). What does that say about the giving of money resulting from immoral activities such as gambling?
- God wants everyone to have a part, to share in the ministry together (2 Cor.8:14-15). This is an aspect of fellowship within the church. When each person has a part in giving, they are together in the ministry of the church. One person supplying a great portion of the need (budget) will make the others unnecessary (1 Cor. 12:14-27).
- Having much, tends to cause people to turn their eyes and hearts away from God (Lu.18:18-25 and Prov. 30:8-9).
- Read Ex. 20:3. We are taught to acknowledge God's total sovereignty. Read Mt. 22:37-38, 6:24. How does the believer short-circuit God's work in his life by putting his trust in games of chance?

I sure hope that I didn't ruin your weekend or your trip to the local convenience store.....

Pleasant Thinking,
Kent Haralson



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