

Grace to You :: esp *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Oh, and One More Thing...

Scripture: Proverbs 22:16; Proverbs 28:22

Code: B110601

The following is adapted from comments I originally posted in other forums, but since what I have to say below is germane to the large subject under discussion, I've distilled it here and am posting it so that it will be permanently attached to this thread. Like my remarks in the immediately preceding post, this one answers several e-mails that have been sent to me directly, and a few posts that have appeared other forums:

The distinctions I made in the ["definitions"](#) post are not ideas I made up. And they are not as ambiguous as a few argumentative souls seem to want to pretend. What I have attempted to give is essentially a simple summary of the *legal* definition of gambling.

Please allow me first of all to try to cut through a lot of niggling questions that have been put to me about whether investing in the stock market is *really* any different from "gambling": *The distinction I have made between gambling and investing in stocks is recognized by the laws of every state in the union. Investing in stocks is not a form of "gambling."* That's what *the law* says, not merely how I "feel" about the question. In the preceding post I gave several sources that explain in careful detail why this is a valid distinction. Notice that the articles at the links I gave all expand on pretty much the very same arguments I made in the post itself. I'm not inventing these arguments as I go.

Unfortunately, I simply can't take time to respond individually to every dissenting "well, it seems to me . . ." style argument. So if someone wants to try to make a cogent argument that investing in stocks is really exactly the same thing as gambling after all, ***please list a credible source where someone who is knowledgeable about economics and the law agrees with and supports that position.***

As John Calvin would say, Good luck.

Incidentally, the argument (made by more than one person who e-mailed me) that there are always losers whose losses correspond to the gains of every winner in the stock market is essentially a jejune argument based on the long-discredited dogma of popular socialism. *It simply is not true*, and the economic growth in the United States since World War II seems rather convincing proof that the socialist argument holds no water whatsoever.

The comments in my in-box today make it clear that there are a lot of people who have never really thought through the issue of gambling but have strong feelings about "legalism" and whatnot. In many cases, it seems, they are prepared to offer a kneejerk denial to *any* suggestion that this or that questionable vice or popular "leisure" activity is inherently sinful. One of my more prolific critics basically admitted that he was making up arguments on the fly, but he wanted me to help him think out loud. Sorry. That's not what we are doing here.

My plea is simple: If you're just spoiling for a fight about some argument you think I am going to make—or if you have already made up your mind (no matter what) that gambling is OK and you are

going to try to deconstruct any and every argument against it—please at least let me finish my *whole* argument first. I would also encourage you to read carefully and seriously think through what I'm saying before you react.

Finally, (for those who predictably demand that every argument START with biblical proof-texts) please notice that I'm making a rather systematic argument, and it's not nearly finished yet.

I'm sorry there is no easy biblical proof-text about gambling. Often the question of whether something is sinful or not has to be thoroughly considered as a matter of *biblical principle* rather than instantly dismissed with a Scripture reference. In such cases, it is usually necessary to be even *more* careful in defining and thinking through the foundational questions step by step.

But I acknowledged all of that *at the very outset*, and I have already said where I am going in the discussion (i.e., "Each of the essential characteristics of gambling violates one or more biblical principles. In the next post in this series, we'll begin to see why"). So comments e-mailed to me from lurkers who say things like "You haven't really given us anything *biblical* yet"—frankly are not particularly helpful.

[The definitions I have given](#) are essential groundwork for showing *why* gambling violates certain biblical principles. I actually said so in the post itself.

*After* I'm done, you can scold me if you think my argument isn't biblical. But to throw out that objection when I've barely finished defining terms isn't really a helpful approach to an issue like this one.

While I'm at it, here's a **special note for some particularly mischievous first-time commenters**: Please try to be serious if you comment. I'm really not looking for off-the-cuff arguments from every penny-ante poker aficionado who might be lurking. These are meant to be serious posts about a serious problem with serious ramifications in our society, and the feedback I'm most interested in is from church leaders who are serious about considering a tough subject carefully.

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