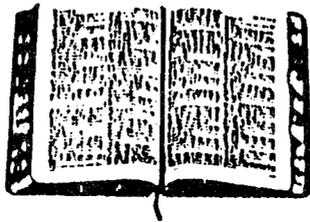


THE INSTRUCTOR



"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." (2 Timothy 3:16)

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TO AFFIRM, PROMISE? --TO SWEAR, TAKE AN OATH?

A question is raised about whether there is really a *distinction* between "affirm, promise" and "swear, oath". Two questions concern whether it really is necessary for all New Testament saints, as Christians, (1) To write in the word "affirm" in place of the word "swear" or "oath" on an annual car tag license application, for example, or. (2) To only "affirm" (rather than *swear an oath*) when giving testimony in a court of law. Please consider the following that shows God *affirming* that there is a difference.

1. **AFFIRM.**

We learn from Titus 3:8 that Paul *wanted* Titus to *affirm constantly* the faithful saying that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works.

2. **PROMISE.**

2 Peter 1:4 tells us that God has given to us "**exceedingly great and precious promises**" through which we are to partake of the divine nature.

In 2 Cor. 6:16-7:1 the "**these promises**" of 7:1 appear to refer contextually *only* to the *affirmative statements* of 6:16-18.

Read 2 Cor. 1:19-20. In the context of "Yes" and "No" (cf. Mt. 5:37) all the promises of God in Him are "Yes".

3. **SWEAR, SWORE, OATH.**

Read Heb. 6:13-18a. Per God's statement to Abraham as here referenced, He *swore* when He made His statement of

promise to him.

God chose to confirm His counsel by an *oath* (v. 17) in order to show to us more abundantly its immutability or unchangeableness. Being the *first* of "**two immutable things in which it is impossible for God to lie**" (v.18a), His *expressed* counsel was thus *one* "**immutable thing**" (v. 18a) to which He chose to add *another, additional* or *second* "**immutable thing**", namely, His "*oath*" that He "*swore*" (v. 17b, 18a, v.13).

Read James 5:12. *Christians, "above all", are not to swear "by any...oath", but let their "Yes" be yes and their "No" no, lest they "fall into judgment (condemnation)".*

Read Mt. 5:33-37. In contrast to the Law of Moses' instruction (as in Lev. 19:12; Num. 30:2; Deut. 21-23) as "they had heard it was said to those of old", that is, "**Not forswear, (or swear falsely), but perform your oath**". In *contrast* to that, *Jesus* instructs His disciples: "**Do not swear at all**", with several examples given. Then in v. 37 He instructs His disciples: "**Let your 'yes' be yes and your 'no' no**"--and His reason? "**For whatsoever is more than these is from the evil one.**" (Cf. also Jas. 5:12b).

Thus, affirmations (Titus:8), affirmative statements of promise (2 Cor. 6:16--7:1) can be distinguished from oaths, swearing (Mt. 5:33-37; Jas. 5:12). Isn't this teaching from the above Scriptures hard to miss? When testifying in courts of law or signing legal documents, it may be embarrassing and difficult to practice this teaching. However, in the Way of Christ, one is allowed and the other is forbidden.

Bob Mitchell 12/98

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Editorial...

GAMBLING IS SINFUL!

In 1952 "*about \$6 billion a year*" was "*taken away from the public by the U.S. gambling industry*" according to *Gambling in America* by Herbert L. Marx, Jr., pp. 10-12. "*The amount Americans spent on all forms of wagering in 1993 - 330 billion - has set historical precedent of its own. Never has so great a fortune been staked on an itch*" according to Gerri Hershey, contributing writer to the New York Times Magazine. NOTE: About one hundred years after Congress banned all state lotteries gambling had become nearly a one third trillion dollar business. Most of this is now "legal". The growth and size of the gambling business boggles the imagination!

WHAT IS GAMBLING?

According to Webster's Unified Dictionary and Encyclopedia, p. 1715. "*Gambling, or Gaming*" is defined as "*the risking of money, of any valuables, by mutual agreement on the results of chance; betting on games, events, numbers, endurance trials, or any other element of*

chance." Although gambling involves a risk, it involves more than a risk. Gambling differs from simple risk taking which may be essential to productive living. Gambling involves the creation of unnecessary risks that may endanger the financial security of another as well as that of the gambler. The creation of these risks undermines and may destroy productive work, and the desire to earn what one claims the right to have. It involves the desire to obtain something for nothing or for very little at the expense of others. *In gambling, when one wins another loses!*

Although the farmer, who invests money, time and labor, takes a chance on producing a bountiful harvest, *he is not gambling!* He violates no Scriptural principle but follows Scriptural principle to work that he might eat, provide for his own and have to give to others who are needy. (See 2 Thess. 3:10; 1 Tim. 5:8; Eph. 4:28).

Others who invest money, time and labor in legitimate businesses take a chance on making a profit, but *they are not gambling!*

The person who invests in legitimate stocks and bonds is not gambling although there are risks involved. He buys partial ownership in products, productive facilities, factories, industrial plants, services, etc. These investments serve a good purpose in our system of free enterprise. He does not necessarily gain at the expense of someone else who loses. Or the investor himself may lose.

The giving of prizes for advertisement or for achievement is *not gambling*. No risk is created, and no risk is taken. Those who give away products or money for advertising receive a just return in advertising value. (Continued on page 3)

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The following is a list of *some things that, obviously, are gambling!*

1. **Bingo**, where you pay so much to play in hope of winning a great deal more *is gambling!* Nothing of value is produced and risk that did not exist has been created. Whether one wins or loses is dependent on *chance. One wins at the loss of another.*

2. **Poker** is a card game in which a player bets that the value of his hand is greater than the hands of the other poker players. At the end of the game, the player holding the highest hand wins. *This is gambling!*

3. **Betting (or wagering)** on horse racing, dog racing, car racing or other sporting events (or anything else) *is gambling!*

4. **Craps** is a gambling game played with two dice. It is sometimes called "Rolling dice" or "Shooting craps".

5. **Punchboards, slot machines, etc.** are devices used in gambling schemes or games. *Those who play such are gambling!*

6. **Matching for cokes, coin tossing schemes, etc.** are also ways in which a person may gamble.

7. **Lotteries and raffles** are *gambling schemes!* As commonly practiced, the lottery is "a method of selling numbered tickets and awarding prizes to the holders of certain numbers drawn by lot" according to The New American Webster's Dictionary, page 207. Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary defines **lottery** as "A scheme for the distribution of prizes by lot; esp., such a scheme in which lots, or chances, are sold." (Page 448). The **raffle** is "A form of lottery, in which a number of persons pay, in shares, the value or assumed value of something, and then determine by chance which one shall have it."

(ibid., p. 648). NOTE: **Buying a chance on a shotgun, bird dog, TV, automobile, etc. is gambling** because it comes under **raffling**. Cakewalks come under the same principle.

GAMBLING IS SINFUL

Here are some of the reasons why gambling is sinful.

1. **GAMBLING PRODUCES EVIL FRUIT!** Jesus said: "Ye shall know them by their fruits...a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit...Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them." (Mt. 7:16-21; also see Mt. 3:10; Gal. 5:19-21).

In 1810 Judge Rush, an American barrister, wrote that gambling was "an evil of growing magnitude, which threatens our country with very calamitous results." Continuing he said, "When the heart is once thoroughly possessed of this passion, everything else is sacrificed to its gratification..." (Gaming, It's Pernicious Tendency and Effects, pages 3-5).

In 1954, Frank G. Clement, Governor of Tenn., stated that "Shame, sorrow, and human degradation inevitably surrounds centers of organized gambling...The gangster element inevitably promotes and thrives upon professional gambling," (20th Century Christian, 1954, p.11).

"Gambling increases political corruption and crime, and is a strikingly repressive means of raising revenue." (Legalized Gambling, p. 86).

Gambling produces pathological gamblers. Here are some of the problems produced by gambling. (1). Higher rates of stress related diseases and serious psychiatric problems including suicide, which is three times the national average. (2). Depression. (3). Higher rate of alcohol use and drug abuse. (4). Higher rates of bankruptcy. (5) High-

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er risk of child abuse. (6). Higher rate of family exploitation, finances, lies, distrust, arguments, separation and divorce, and, (7). Higher rate of incarceration.

"Legalized gambling creates problem gambling." (GAMBLING, page. 83).

"Ultimately, pathological gambling results in crime...check forgery, embezzlement, theft, larceny, armed robbery, bookmaking, hustling, running con games, and fencing stolen goods." (GAMBLING, pages 161-162).

The evidence is overwhelming! The verdict is clear! *Gambling produces evil fruit!*

In Eph. 5:11 Paul said: **"And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them."**

II. IT VIOLATES THE LAW (OR PRINCIPLE) OF LABOR!

We learn from Gen. 2:15 that God put man **"into the garden of Eden to dress and to keep it."** NOTE: Even before man sinned he was to *dress and keep the garden.* This involved work. (Also read Gen. 3:17-19; Exo. 20:8).

In 1 Thess. 4:11-12 Paul said: **"...and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you; That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing."**

In 2 Thess. 3:10-12 Paul said: **"...this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat..."** NOTE: If any person is not willing to work, he does not deserve to eat. (Also read and study Eph. 4:28; Mt. 10:10; Titus 3:8, 14; 1 Timothy 5:8, 18). (To be continued)

SENTENCE SERMONS

There is never a right way to do wrong..

* * * * *

Life is like a ladder; every step we take is either up or down.

* * * * *

No one finds life worth living; he must make it worth living.

* * * * *

To have a good life one must not only have a good aim, but must also pull the trigger.

* * * * *

You should never allow a financial interest to crush a moral principle.

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