

How Christians view gambling

Christians generally do not gamble because they all know it is wrong. Therefore, Christians generally do not buy Mark Six lottery tickets, go to horse racing tracks, nor to gambling dens.

But in this capitalistic society, it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between investment and speculation. For example, if you buy a house during a real estate downturn and wait for the price to rise, is this an investment transaction or a speculative gamble? Is stock trading gambling? Is foreign exchange trading gambling?

What is the difference between investment trading and speculative gambling? Some Christians say that there is nothing wrong with gambling because it is a monetary transaction. One invests money in the hope of making a profit, and it is a voluntary exchange. No one forces himself to gamble.

To measure whether an action is ethical, we need to look at three aspects: motivation – means – consequences. Let us analyze the act of gambling from these perspectives.

1. Motivation

What is the motivation for people to gamble? In the end, it all comes down to one word – greed! Covet other people's property, hoping to gain it without any effort, and to make a huge profit with a small investment.

This motivation is very different from trading. Trading involves exchanging commensurate labor for rewards, while gambling does not. If the labor is commensurate with the pay, people would not gamble and would rather go to work and earn money. So gambling is just because of greed!

2. Means

Gambling is a non-violent way to steal money, which is not actually consensual. People who lose money will not say, "Thank God!" Losers will not feel satisfied and will not benefit. This is different from a transaction. In a transaction, I pay money and buy the goods I want, which is mutually beneficial.

Gambling is not a win-win situation; there will always be losers. The mentality of gambling is to put the other party to death in order to survive. I must defeat you before I can win. This is a non-violent robbery. Would you be willing to be robbed? Will people who lose money be happy? No. Those who win money build their happiness on the suffering of others.

3. Consequences

Gambling can have devastating effects on individuals, families, and even society.

- a. Nurture a careless attitude toward wealth – easy come, easy go. When you win money, you spend it lavishly on lavish food and fish, and do not know how to cherish it. This is not in line with the principle of frugality and contentment, nor is it the way to be a good steward of money.
- b. Make people lose interest in work – People who gamble often think about how to gain benefits from gambling, which will make them feel uneasy about their duties, dissatisfied with hard work, and lose enthusiasm for work.
- c. Develop a mentality of “grabbing” rather than “giving” – Gambling is about trying to win over the other person, which is contrary to the basic attitude of love. People who like to gamble will not develop the sentiments of love and giving.
- d. Gambling brings economic crisis, family breakdown, separation of spouses and children, and even leads to taking risks, engaging in illegal activities, and even suicide.
- e. Gambling can easily lead to addiction. Gambling is about the thrill of luck, which controls people and builds a stronghold in their hearts which allows Satan to occupy it.

Will investing become speculative gambling?

This cannot be determined from external behavior, but must be considered from the motivation and consequences. Similarly, buying and selling a property may be an investment for one person but a gambling for another, depending on the individual's motivations and the consequences involved.

1. Motivation considerations

Does this action seek to contribute to society and serve the needs of others? Or is it out of greed for money that they legally rob other people's money? Is the mentality to achieve a win-win situation, so that both the buyer and the seller can benefit, or is it to exploit the other party and try to embezzle their property? Is the purpose of buying a house to preserve its value for personal use, or is it to exploit others and sell it for profit in a short period of time? Do you buy stocks to contribute to society or out of greed for money? If you make a reasonable profit from it for the purpose of contributing to society, it is an investment; if you make it out of greed, it is gambling. You have to ask yourself about this motivation.

2. Consequences considerations

Does this action bring about any adverse effects?

- a. Will this help you be a good steward of your money, or will it encourage you to spend money profligately?
- b. Will this distract you from your work?
- c. Will this cause your emotions to fluctuate and make you anxious and worried?
- d. Does this pose any financial risk to you?
- e. Is this addictive?
- f. Can you account for this action to God in prayer? Is there peace in God's presence?