

American Council of Christian Churches  
82<sup>nd</sup> Annual Convention, October 24-26, 2023  
Faith Baptist Church, Kittery, ME  
Resolution on Gambling

Gambling has been a popular enterprise for much of human history. In modern-day America, gambling has grown exponentially with the rise of casinos and online betting, with estimated revenues approaching \$55 billion in 2022. Additionally, ticket sales from state and local lotteries have grown from \$47 billion to \$82 billion since 2005.<sup>1</sup> The Associated Press reports: “In ten states, lotteries generate more revenue than corporate income taxes.”<sup>2</sup> Even Christians have engaged in online betting and state lotteries either as a form of “harmless” amusement or to help fund education.

The problems associated with gambling are well documented. The National Council on Problem Gambling estimates that two million adults in the United States (1%) “meet the criteria for severe gambling problems in a given year. Another four to six million (2-3%) would be considered to have mild or moderate gambling problems; that is, they do not meet the full diagnostic criteria for gambling addiction, but meet one or more of the criteria and are experiencing problems due to their gambling behavior.”<sup>3</sup> Ironically, online gaming sites include warnings that encourage bettors to “gamble responsibly.”<sup>4</sup>

In spite of the culture’s acceptance of this activity, several scriptural principles direct Christians to avoid the practice of gambling in all forms. First, God commands people to love Him supremely and to seek first His kingdom and His righteousness (Mark 12:30; Matt. 6:33). Gambling appeals to a covetous, greedy, and idolatrous heart fixated on the material things of this life (1 John 2:15-17; Col. 3:1-2). Second, gambling is predicated on the loss and suffering of others.<sup>5</sup> It is not, as many suppose, an innocent and harmless activity. There is evidence that “gambling disproportionately affects the poor, who face particular temptations because of their strained financial circumstances.”<sup>6</sup> The Scriptures admonish Christians to avoid any activity that causes others to sin (I Cor. 8:13).

Third, the Bible specifically exhorts Christians to work with their hands “the thing which is good,” that they might have “to give to him that needeth” (Eph. 4:28). God has ordained that people engage in honest labor, not reckless pursuits undertaken at great risk, to provide for their own needs as well as the needs of others. Fourth, gambling has historically been associated with deception and organized crime. The Bible warns God’s people to avoid associations with those who engage in nefarious activities (Prov. 1:10-19). Finally, God invites Christians to trust Him and be thankful for what He has given them (I Thess. 5:18). The Scriptures instruct, “Be content with such things as ye have” (Heb. 13:5), and rest in God’s sufficient provisions (Phil. 4:19).

Therefore, the American Council of Christian Churches at its 82<sup>nd</sup> annual convention, October 24-26, 2023, at Faith Baptist Church of Kittery, Maine, resolves to admonish Christians to avoid all gambling activities. We charge fellow Christians to engage in honorable and fruitful labor to the glory of God and to use what He has given them to take care of their families, further His work through ministries at home and abroad, and to provide for the needs of others—especially those who are of the household of faith (Gal. 6:10).



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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.forbes.com/sites/willyakowicz/2023/01/13/us-set-gambling-record-in-2022-with-more-than-549-billi-on-in-revenue/?sh=38ae268867cc>.

<sup>2</sup> <https://apnews.com/article/technology-education-lotteries-journalism-893a47d6d48f08d013d9e9374ca11ea1>.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.ncpgambling.org/help-treatment/faq/#:~:text=How%20widespread%20is%20gambling%20in,gambling%20are%20Hawaii%20and%20Utah>.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.sportsbettingdime.com/responsible-gambling/>.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.focusonthefamily.com/family-qa/a-biblical-look-at-gambling/>.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.christian.org.uk/who-we-are/what-we-believe/gambling-is-wrong/>.