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Biblical Convictions Of Citizen Of Heaven -- On Earth



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If I were to apply the Scriptures as far as they relate to the current climate in American society, I would say that God has revealed Himself in His Word as:

- **GOD is Pro-Life**— God is opposed to Abortion and Euthanasia.
- **GOD is Pro-Marriage**— God is opposed to Gay Unions, as well as divorce, adultery, fornication, pornography, and any other form of immorality.
- **GOD is Pro-Justice**— God is opposed to murder, violence, discrimination, prejudice, and abuse of the weak, poor, and unborn; He invented capital punishment, and commands societies to have a just legal system.
- **GOD is Pro-Work**— God is against indolence, sloth, entitlements, oppression of the poor by the rich, and ever form of false hope produced by gambling and lotteries.

Point One— Biblical Convictions start with the Bible

Open with me to our starting place for Biblical Convictions, Romans 13.

As Paul sat to write perhaps the clearest words to frame the Biblical convictions of a Citizen of Heaven, living on earth—he was sitting in Corinth. Looking down across the city must have grieved his soul. Paul lived around gymnasiums filled with nude men were wrestling, boxing, and sprinting. In the distance seeing the men and women going into the bath houses, brothels, and heading up the trail to the shrine prostitutes up on the acro-corinthus must have even more grieved his Spirit filled heart. Just as it grieved the Lord He served.

Just a couple of days by ship from Corinth was the center of the Earth in Paul's day—Rome. Swarming with soldiers, citizens, slaves, and commercialism, Rome reigned over nearly all of the known world of Paul's day. How were Christians to live in the world of the New Testament? Especially in the capitol city of Rome--rife with homosexuality, abortions, gambling, infanticide, slavery, oppression of the poor, egalitarianism, and every form of the occult?

Paul sits down to write to that very city where saints had to live, work, and vote. He writes to them seven verses that summarize their responsibilities of citizenship on earth. We often forget that the Roman World had much citizen involvement. There was a long history in Rome of elected bodies that variously guided, counseled, and at times legislated the Roman World. Although there was an Emperor who ruled, there was still much about daily life that was determined by a very advanced and regulated representative government. Some of the arenas of power during various eras of Roman life were: 1 The Centuriate Committee; 2 The Committee of the Tribal Peoples; 3 The Council of the People; 4 And the most enduring, known, and powerful - The Roman Senate.

So into this advanced and thriving world of nearly worldwide power—what were Paul's instructions? Look with me to Romans 13. This passage has long been regarded as the ultimate statement of the Biblical Responsibilities for a Christian and their relationship to whatever government they are under.

Now for the shocker. Paul, the voice for God, writing God's Word down on paper for us the first of our Biblical responsibilities as citizens, he said **be subject** to the leader of your land in which you live, whenever it is in the future, where ever you live on the planet. That was quite a sweeping Word from God Paul gives us. But even more shocking is to step back and look at the man whose shadow fell across Paul's world—it was Nero's.

Nero was a public sodomite who paraded his male slave Florus around in public as his wife. He was debased, depraved, defiled, and deliberately an outspoken advocate of the homosexual lifestyle. And Paul said to be subject to him? Yes, and he says the same to us whatever administration comes to wherever you live, whenever you live.

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Does that mean fatalism, ininvolvement and withdrawal from society? Not at all.

No one was more involved than Paul. He preached, prayed, wrote, and lived against sin in every form, at every level. As a citizen you can be sure he voted in any manner he was allowed because that is just the type of believer he was—INVOLVED. Paul was involved in his culture, in his country, and in the lives of all who would let him in. But he had no delusions that he could ever change society. His only hope was to change individuals one at a time.

Now turn with me to [Ephesians 5: 11](#). Paul most likely wrote this letter from Rome where he sat in prison. What does a citizen of Heaven do while being subject (even to the point of being in prison) to the powers that be? In Ephesians Paul adds the second element of our responsibility as believers—**expose sin**.

So--the responsibility of a Biblical Christian is to **be subject** to government and to **expose evil**.

Of all people on earth we should have the most consistent, loving advice—**abstain from everything that is evil**. We should have the most compelling reason—**it doesn't please God**. That is why we should engage our culture and point out that there are absolutes. Let me repeat again some current issues that touch upon our Biblical convictions, we will look at briefly this morning.

- **GOD is Pro-Life**— God is opposed to Abortion and Euthanasia.
- **GOD is Pro-Marriage**— God is opposed to Gay Unions, as well as divorce, adultery, fornication, pornography, and any other form of immorality.
- **GOD is Pro-Justice**— God is opposed to murder, violence, discrimination, prejudice, and abuse of the weak, poor, and unborn; He invented capital punishment, and commands societies to have a just legal system.
- **GOD is Pro-Work**— God is against indolence, sloth, entitlements, oppression of the poor by the rich, and ever form of false hope produced by gambling and lotteries.

But what if we do not see the culture heading the right way as is the case even this morning? That takes us to our second point—

Point Two—Biblical Convictions start with the Bible, because—We are Citizens of Heaven

The clearest word for us as we face on election day in the USA is when God's Word speaks to us.

- **This world is only my temporary home.** [Philippians 3:20](#) *For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,*
- **God rules over every part of this world.** [Daniel 2:20-22](#) *Daniel answered and said: "Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, For wisdom and might are His. 21 And He changes the times and the seasons; He removes kings and raises up kings; He gives wisdom to the wise And knowledge to those who have understanding. 22 He reveals deep and secret things; He knows what is in the darkness, And light dwells with Him.*
- **God selects the rulers of this world.** [Daniel 4:17](#), 25, 32, 34-35-35 -- 17 *'This decision is by the decree of the watchers, And the sentence by the word of the holy ones, In order that the living may know That the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, Gives it to whomever He will, And sets over it the lowest of men.'* 25 *They shall drive you from men, your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make you eat grass like oxen. They shall wet you with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over you, till you know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses. 32 And they shall drive you from men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field. They shall make you eat grass like oxen; and seven times shall pass over you, until you know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses."* 34 *And at the end of the time I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my understanding returned to me; and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever: For His dominion is an everlasting dominion, And His kingdom is from generation to generation. 35 All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: He does according to His will in the army of heaven And among the inhabitants of the earth. No one can restrain His hand Or say to Him, "What have You done?"*
- **God allows the rulers of this world to continue in power.** [Daniel 5:18-23](#) *O king, the Most High God gave Nebuchadnezzar your father a kingdom and majesty, glory and honor. 19 And because of the majesty that He gave him, all peoples, nations, and languages trembled and feared before him. Whomever he wished, he executed; whomever he wished, he kept alive; whomever he wished, he set up; and whomever he wished, he put down. 20 But when his heart was lifted up, and his spirit was hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him. 21 Then he was driven from the sons of men, his heart was made like the beasts, and his dwelling was with the wild donkeys. They fed him with grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till he knew that the Most High God rules in the kingdom of men, and appoints over it whomever He chooses. 22 "But you his son, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, although you knew all this. 23 And you have lifted yourself up against the Lord of heaven. They have brought the vessels of His house before you, and you and your lords, your wives and your concubines, have drunk wine from them. And you have praised the gods of silver and gold, bronze and iron, wood and stone, which do not see or hear or know; and the God who holds your breath in His hand and owns all your ways, you have not glorified.*
- **God gives them any temporary success rulers may have for a purpose within His plan.** [Psalm 75:6-7](#) *For exaltation comes neither from the east Nor from the west nor from the south. 7 But God is the Judge: He puts down one, And exalts another.*
- **God picks the rulers by His standards.** [Jeremiah 27:5](#), 8 *'I have made the earth, the man and the beast that are on the ground, by My great power and by My outstretched arm, and have given it to whom it seemed proper to Me. 8 And it shall be, that the nation and kingdom which will not serve Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, and which will not put its neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, that nation I will punish," says the Lord, "with the sword, the famine, and the pestilence, until I have consumed them by his hand.*
- **God allows rulers to do what is perceived by us as evil (crucifying Jesus) to accomplish the larger purposes of God (the redemption of sinners).** [John 19:11](#) *Jesus answered, "You could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above. Therefore the one who delivered Me to you has the*

greater sin.”

- **God tells us our primary responsibility is to PRAY, that is how we influence the outcome of any current political situation.** 1 [Timothy 2:1-3](#) *Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, 2 for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. 3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior,*
- **God tells us the outcome in advance.** [Revelation 1:5](#) *and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood,*

Point Three—Biblical Convictions start with the Bible, because we are Citizens of Heaven—Living on Earth

How do we live out those Biblical Convictions about God’s revelation of what is right and wrong? How do we reconcile living on earth with all this evil and all of the sin that surrounds us? To answer that let me just address three areas of current controversy. There are countless other areas I could address from the Scriptures, but this morning let me limit this to just these three:

- **GOD is Pro-Life—** God is opposed to Abortion and Euthanasia. He is the Creator of Life, the One who grants conception.
- **GOD is Pro-Marriage—** God is opposed to Gay Unions, as well as divorce, adultery, fornication, pornography, and any other form of immorality.
- **GOD is Pro-Work—** God is against indolence, sloth, entitlements, oppression of the poor by the rich, and ever form of false hope produced by gambling and lotteries.

Remember the responsibility we have to expose evil? Here is how we do so, using God’s Word!

We should be Exposing The Dark World of Abortion

Open with me to [Ephesians 5:11](#) *“And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them”.*

Paul tells us that we have a personal responsibility to “*have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness*”. That means ‘avoid, stay away from, have no contact with’ evil. But that doesn’t mean isolation, it means a personal commitment to consecration. But the verse goes on to say that we have a public responsibility, one that we often have forgotten—we are to expose evil.

The Greek word ‘reprove or expose’ means to point out in a public way those things that are in opposition to God’s Word. Here is the dictionary definitions of **elengcho**: “to convict, refute, confute; generally with a suggestion of shame of the person convicted; by conviction to bring to the light, to expose; to admonish, reprove, to call to account, show one his fault, demand an explanation.”

So how should we respond to abortion since **GOD is Pro-Life—**God is opposed to Abortion and Euthanasia. He is the Creator of Life, the One who grants conception. All human life is His personal act of power as the God of this Universe allowing another human in His image to be conceived.

“Abortion is one of the darkest works of the human race – it is child sacrifice. And the only way it can survive is for darkness to survive. Wherever the light of truth and love comes, darkness flies away. Therefore it is one of the great callings of the followers of Jesus to let their light shine in both ways: to live a holy life and to expose darkness. The aim is partly negative: reveal the error hidden in the darkness, and mainly positive: to bring people to love the light and be made light in the Lord Jesus.”

So what do we, as Christ’s children, need to expose in our world as His salt and His light to those around us?

Since then about forty million abortions have been performed in America. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention:

- We need to expose the fact that there are nearly 1.5 million children murdered by abortions each year in America. That means we have hidden the remains of over 40 million murdered bodies since the Supreme Court overturned the right to life of babies 21 years ago.
- We need to expose the fact that 70% of abortions are performed between the seventh and tenth week when the baby is already sucking his thumb, recoiling from pricking, responding to sound. All his organs are present, the brain is functioning, the heart is pumping, the liver is making blood cells, the kidneys are cleaning fluids, and there is a fingerprint. His genetic code is uniquely and unquestionably human. And, if we are willing, he can be seen by ultrasound.
- We need to expose the fact that 50% of all abortions are performed on women who have had at least one abortion already.
- We need to expose the fact that 43% of all American women will have at least one abortion by the age 45.
- We need to expose the fact that 33% of all babies conceived and viable in this country are killed by abortion.
- We need to expose the fact that 31% of all abortions are done on women who say they are Catholic.
- We need to expose the fact that 20% of these are performed on teenagers.
- We need to expose the fact that 16% are done on women identifying themselves as “born again” Christians. Ensor concludes, “Indeed, the abortion industry could not survive financially without paying customers drawn from the church (pp. 21).”

Remember that modern day abortion is as hideous as the horrific child sacrifice by wicked parents recorded in the Old Testament. God hates both eras of child sacrifice. He condemned and judged the worship of false gods (Molech and Baal) in the Old Testament, and the child sacrificing gods today--convenience and materialism.

We need to expose the World to

Christ’s Powerful Gospel Hope

To anyone who has had one or more than one abortion, here or somewhere else—Christ's words are for you. If 43% of all women in America have a child they are carrying killed by abortion, then doubtlessly some here this morning have felt that horror to their soul. If you know the pain and guilt of being a murderer of your very own child, listen to these

"great climactic words of the apostle Paul, heralded to sinners in Antioch of Pisidia in Acts 13:38-39: "Let it be known to you therefore, brothers, that through this man [Jesus Christ] forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, and in him everyone who believes is justified from everything from which you could not be justified in the law of Moses" (my translation).

"There is forgiveness – all sins wiped away, even abortion, and there is justification, the declaration of righteousness, over against every kind of sin you have ever done. How can this be? The life and death of Jesus Christ, God's Son, pardons all debts and provides all righteousness for everyone who believes. Those who have been forgiven much, Jesus said, will love much (Luke 7:47). Oh, how sweetly the post-aborted women and men in this church should love Jesus Christ! "

We need to Learn How To Shine Our Life into the Darkness of Abortion

If God is Pro-Life, and He is, what would He have us do in light of our child sacrificing culture that lies in darkness all around us? Here are just a few suggestions that all of us should pray about today.

- Consider adoption. If you are physically and spiritually able to—you should at least be praying about helping take some unwanted children of this world into your home and raise them in the light of the Gospel and for the Glory of God.
- Consider regular support of Crisis Pregnancy Centers. Most of us can't interact with young girls (and older ones) at the point of their crisis. There is a ministry that can and does. They have the plan, they have the skill, and they have the track record—all they need is the support of God's people. Think about this—is it enough to be **against abortion** without being **for life in a tangible way**.? Serve and support pro-life ministries in Christ's Name.
- Consider direct involvement. Perhaps some of you need to start making your presence known at the abortion clinics of the Tulsa area. How about other forms of involvement, like writing or phoning or visiting and talking, if you can, with those who work there, volunteering in a Crisis Pregnancy Center, participating in some way through a Chain of Life, literature distribution, fund raisers for Life.
- Consider using your most powerful tool--always pray. If you haven't started yet, get literature about the horrors of abortion, and start to plead with the God of Heaven to deliver us from this evil. Ask for lives to be intercepted by loving believers before that babies life is taken, pray for a baby to be born and adopted, for a godly home to take it, and for a soul to come to faith in Christ's offer of salvation through your investment. Think of it as another way to take someone with you to Heaven..
- **GOD is Pro-Life**— God is opposed to Abortion and Euthanasia. He is the Creator of Life, the One who grants conception.
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Exposing the Grave Errors of Homosexuality

And you can see whom Paul is talking about in [Romans 1:28](#) (when he says, "God gave them up to a debased mind") by reading verses 26 and 27, "For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; 27 and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error." [Romans 1:28](#) says, "And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done." In verses 26 and 28 Paul says that God "gave them up" to these dishonorable passions and behaviors. He calls homosexual behavior an "exchange" of the God-ordained natural relations for the dishonorable unnatural relations."

Declare the Truth that Marriage Cannot Be Between Two Men or Two Women

"There are two biblical reasons why marriage cannot be between two men or two women. The Will of God for Marriage Was Expressed in Creation. One is that Jesus confirmed God's will in creation when he said in [Matthew 19:4-6](#), "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, 5 and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh'? 6 So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate." That's the Bible's teaching and the Bible's assumption from cover to cover. Marriage is one woman and one man becoming one flesh by covenant and sexual union.

There Is No Such Thing as Homosexual Marriage in the Eyes of God. The other biblical reason marriage cannot be between two men or two women is that, on the one hand, the Bible defines homosexual behavior as "dishonorable" and "shameless" and "contrary to nature" ([Romans 1:26-27](#)), but on the other hand the Bible says that marriage is to be "held in honor" ([Hebrews 13:4](#)). Marriage does not produce shame. And marriage is not contrary to nature. There is therefore no such thing as homosexual marriage in the eyes of God. And there should not be in the eyes of his people—no matter what the state says.

The text says, "God will judge fornicators and adulterers." Just like [1 Cor. 6:9-10](#) says that "fornicators and adulterers will not inherit the kingdom of God." But then the very next verse says, "And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were

sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God."

So there is judgment on fornicators and adulterers, but not all of them. There is escape from judgment for some. Hebrews teaches this message very clearly. In [Hebrews 9:27-28](#) it says, "Just as it is appointed for men to die once, and after that comes judgment, so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him."

So you can see there WILL be a judgment. But Christ has borne the sins of many--he has taken the judgment for their fornication and their adultery upon himself. And now he is coming, not to do that again, but to save us from the final judgment.

Or look at [Hebrews 10:12-13](#), "When Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins (for fornication and adultery), he sat down at the right hand of God, then to wait until his enemies should be made a stool for his feet."

So again you see two things: Christ took sins like fornication and adultery upon himself and paid their penalty in his own death. BUT there is coming a time when his enemies will be made a footstool for his feet. There is a judgment.

So what we see is that there are two groups of people: those whose sins are covered and forgiven by Jesus (8:12: 10:17-18), and those whose sins will come down on their own heads in the judgment. The difference is in turning from sin and coming to God through Jesus for forgiveness and help. [Hebrews 7:25](#), "Jesus is able for all time to save those who draw near to God through him."

Turn from fornication. Turn from adultery. Draw near to God through Jesus, and he will save for all time. He will enable you to live out a clean and happy future from an unclean and forgiven past ."

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The Current Status of American Gambling

We have become a nation selling hope for money from people who can not afford to buy it but are offered hope that is unreal, impossible, and destructive. Lotteries like drug addiction, and drunkenness offer what only God can give freely!

America, it's fair to say, is wild about gambling. In 1962, Americans place about \$2 billion in bets. By the year 2000, that number had grown to \$866 billion. And now, the country is headed for a staggering trillion dollars a year in wagers. These bets take place in over four hundred casinos nationally. In vast lotteries embraced by state governments as revenue godsend. At horse tracks and dog tracks and sporting events. On 35,000 internet sites devoted to gambling. Imagine it. Americans spend \$22 billion a year on all movies, plays, concerts, live performances, on all sports events. And nearly a trillion dollars on gambling."

In 1998, Americans spent more money on gambling (approximately 50 billion) than on recorded music, theme parks, video games, spectator sports, and movie tickets combined (39.9 billion). 6

Lotteries have a long history in the United States. Until 1964, lotteries were banned for in the U.S. for nearly 70 years. New Hampshire was the first state to break the lottery ban, followed three years later by New York. By 1973, seven states had lotteries. Fourteen years later, there were 23 state-run lotteries (1987). Today, there are 40 states (including D.C.) with lotteries, and only Hawaii and Utah are completely free of any form of legalized gambling. States are in the business of selling hope. To a large degree, states have become dependent on lottery revenue and reckless with budgetary stewardship. All states combined, the fiscal deficit tops \$80 billion.

In 2001 Americans wagered \$57 billion dollars on lotteries, \$18 billion on horses and dogs, \$592 billion in casinos, and \$150 billion on other gambling. This is a blot on American life. Break it down to individuals. Massachusetts sells more than \$500 worth of lottery tickets each year for every man, woman, and child. Think how many do not gamble, and you will begin to imagine what thousands are throwing away to have a 1-to-135,145,920 chance for the jackpot.

The American exploitation of the poor with lotteries muddies the conscience of many legislators. Statistics abound that "the government-sponsored lottery continues its shameless exploitation of the poor" (James Dobson, April, 1999 Newsletter). This exploitation is explicit in some of the advertising bought by the \$400 million spent annually by states to promote lotteries. For example, in Chicago one sign read: "This could be your ticket out." That is shameless. Other promotions mock the virtues of hard work and serious study as a way to make a living. Plan A: Study hard, save money, get old. Plan B: Play the lottery.

The lottery is another opportunity to pierce your soul with many pangs, and lead your children into ruin. The Bible says, "Those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. . . . Some by longing for it . . . and pierced themselves with many a pang (1 Timothy 6:9-10). In other words, the desire to be rich is suicidal. And endorsing it is cruel.

It is wrong to wager with a trust fund. And all we have, as humans, is a trust fund.

Everything we have is a trust from God, to be used for his glory. "[God] himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything" (Acts 17:25). Faithful trustees may not gamble with a trust fund. They work and trade: value for value, just and fair. This is the pattern again and again in Scripture. And when you are handling the funds of another, how much more irresponsible it is to wager!"

Gambling Denies Love of neighbor -Jesus commanded, "Love your neighbor as yourself" (Mark 12:31). Gambling, meanwhile, is predicated on the losses, pain, and suffering of others. For one to win at gambling, others must lose. For many, the ramifications attributable to their gambling losses are profound. Families touched by a gambling addiction are at greatly increased risk for such negative outcomes as divorce, bankruptcy, child abuse, domestic violence, crime, and suicide. More than 15 million Americans already struggle with a gambling problem, and the number continues to grow as gambling expands.

- **Matthew 7:12** Therefore, **whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.**
- **Luke 6:31** And just as you want men to do to you, you also do to them likewise.
- **Romans 12:10** Be **kindly affectionate to one another** with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another;
- **Philippians 2:3-4** Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind **let each esteem others better than himself.** 4 Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

Gambling always Exploits the poor -Gambling preys on the desperation of the poor. The National Gambling Impact Study Commission found that those with incomes less than \$10,000 spend more on lottery tickets than any other income group. High school dropouts spend four times as much as college graduates. Scripture exhorts us to look out for the poor and disadvantaged, and issues strong warnings against taking advantage of their plight.

- **Proverbs 14:21** He who despises his neighbor sins; But he who has mercy on the poor, happy is he.
- **Proverbs 14:31** He who oppresses the poor reproaches his Maker, But he who honors Him has mercy on the needy. Lotteries reproach God!
- **Proverbs 22:16** He who oppresses the poor to increase his riches, And he who gives to the rich, **will surely come to poverty.** Lotteries invite the judgment of God!
- **Isaiah 3:14-15** The Lord will enter into judgment with the elders of His people And His princes: "For you have eaten up the vineyard; **The plunder of the poor is in your houses.** 15 What do you mean by **crushing** My people And **grinding the faces of the poor?**" Says the Lord God of hosts.
- **Amos 5:11-12** Therefore, because you **tread down the poor** And take grain taxes from him, Though you have built houses of hewn stone, Yet you shall not dwell in them; You have planted pleasant vineyards, But you shall not drink wine from them. 12 For I know your manifold transgressions And your mighty sins: Afflicting the just and taking bribes; Diverting the poor from justice at the gate.
- **Zechariah 7:10** **Do not oppress** the widow or the fatherless, The alien or the poor. Let none of you plan evil in his heart Against his brother.'

Gambling Destroys a Biblical Work ethic -Work has been part of God's design for mankind from the very beginning. We are to invest our time and energies into labors that supply our needs and those of our families (Proverbs 31, 2 Thessalonians 3:10, 1 Timothy 5:8) and that allow us to share with others (Ephesians 4:28). Scripture is replete with exhortations toward industriousness and admonitions against slothfulness. Gambling, meanwhile, portends something for nothing. Indeed, gambling advertising and marketing frequently belittles hard work and diligence.

- **Genesis 2:15** Then the Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to **tend and keep it.**
- **Exodus 20:9** **Six days you shall labor and do all your work,**
- **Proverbs 12:11** He who **tills his land will be satisfied with bread,** But he who follows frivolity is devoid of understanding.
- **Proverbs 13:4** The soul of a lazy man desires, and has nothing; But the soul of the **diligent shall be made rich.'**
- **Proverbs 21:25** The **desire of the lazy man kills him,** For his hands refuse to labor.
- **2 Thessalonians 3:10** For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: **If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat.**
- **1 Timothy 5:8** But if **anyone does not provide for his own,** and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

Gambling Always Promotes Greed -Gambling is founded on greed and undergirded by a "get-rich-quick" appeal. In a recent national poll, two-thirds of respondents stated that the reason they gamble is to win money.

- **Proverbs 15:27** He who is greedy for gain troubles his own house, But he who hates bribes will live.
- **Proverbs 28:20** A faithful man will abound with blessings, But **he who hastens to be rich will not go unpunished.**
- **Luke 12:15** And He said to them, "**Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses.**"
- **Colossians 3:5** Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, **and covetousness, which is idolatry.**
- **1 Timothy 6:9-10** But **those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition.** 10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

Gambling Always Promotes Covetousness -The 10th Commandment (Exodus 20:17) prohibits Christians from coveting another's possessions. Gambling is precisely the attempt to obtain the resources of others without providing anything of value in return. Some have rightly described gambling as consensual theft.

- **Exodus 20:17** "**You shall not covet your neighbor's house: you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's.**"
- **Colossians 3:5** Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, **and covetousness,** which is idolatry.
- **Hebrews 13:5** **Let your conduct be without covetousness;** be content with such

things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."

Gambling Always Denies Biblical Stewardship -Christians are responsible before God for how they invest the resources entrusted to them, as the parable of the talents makes clear. In many cases, money spent on gambling is money that should have gone to provide for the well-being of one's family or the advancement of a worthy cause. In all cases, it is an unwise investment with an almost-certain negative return. More importantly, such spending propagates an immoral, predatory and exploitative industry.

- **Matthew 25:14-19, 27-30** "For the kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them. 15 And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey. 16 Then he who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and made another five talents. 17 And likewise he who had received two gained two more also. 18 But he who had received one went and dug in the ground, and hid his lord's money. 19 After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them....27 **So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest.** 28 So take the talent from him, and give it to him who has ten talents. 29 'For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away. 30 And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'
- **Romans 14:12** So then **each of us shall give account of himself to God.**
- **Colossians 3:17** And whatever you do in word or deed, **do all in the name of the Lord Jesus**, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

Gambling Promotes other temptations -Gambling establishments are often host to other corrupting vices, including prostitution and drunkenness. Christians are urged to avoid such environments (1 **Thessalonians 5:22**: "Avoid every kind of evil."). In **1 Corinthians 15:33**, Paul writes, "Do not be misled: "Bad company corrupts good character.'" Other Scriptures warn believers to flee temptation (1 **Corinthians 6:18, 2 Timothy 2:22**).

- **1 Corinthians 6:18** Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body.
- **1 Corinthians 15:33** Do not be deceived: "Evil company corrupts good habits."
- **1 Thessalonians 5:22** "Abstain from every form of evil."
- **2 Timothy 2:22** Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

Gambling Promotes a Lack of trust in God -The Bible teaches that Christians are to look to God as their provider, and that we are to be content with the material blessings we receive from His hand. To engage in gambling indicates both a lack of trust in and dissatisfaction with God's provision.

- **Matthew 6:25-34** "Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? 26 Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? 27 Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? 28 "So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; 29 and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 30 Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? 31 "Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'" 32 **For after all these things the Gentiles seek.** For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. 33 But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. 34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.
- **Philippians 4:11-12**, 19 Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: 12 I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. 19 **And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.**
- **1 Timothy 6:6** Now godliness **with contentment** is great gain.
- **Hebrews 13:5** **Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have.** For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."

Dare to be a Daniel

The challenge of our new century in which we live is to bring leaders of great moral conviction to the forefront of our nations government without the baggage of moral imposition. The greatest example of this is in the trio of great politicians from three of the greatest empires of ancient history. These men are so great they are known by their first names: Joseph of Egypt, Daniel of Babylon, and Nehemiah of Persia. Each of these men was of unwavering Biblical integrity. Each of these men had convictions they would stand for, suffer for, and even go to death for. But none of them ever imposed by way of legislation, those convictions upon those they governed.

There is a revealed civil code God laid down after the flood – human government in Genesis 9. It is basically restated in the 2 nd half of the Law of Moses (commandments 5-10) and is known in one way or another around the world. Basic laws against murder, theft, lying, and so on make up the laws for mankind's good. But these statesmen - Joseph, Daniel, and Nehemiah, did not impose all the rest of the religious laws of Israel upon society.

One of the great needs of American governance is to see men who can be trusted as men of integrity, yet who will not be seeking to impose morals upon the citizens that are not the black and white clearly written laws of God for SOCIETY. The clear laws are against murder of the born and unborn, sodomy and all other clearly described sexual perversions, and witchcraft, which is always linked to drug abuse in the Bible. The rest of the areas of society such as blue laws, alcohol, gambling, lotteries, and so on, are not part of the laws of society, they are for the individual not the society.

They are matters of personal conviction, not of government imposition.

If we can have deeply religious leaders who are not bringing their convictions to bear on other individuals through policies, laws, and legislation, then the character of government will be less partisan, the people will be more open to the persuasion of those individuals who live out their personal convictions, and government will not get confused with the church.

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Focus on the Family at:
<http://www.family.org/cforum/fosi/gambling/facts/a0028828.cfm>

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These points drawn from Focus on the Family at
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