

## What's Wrong with Lotteries and Gambling?

Should we have, or support, lotteries or gambling? Some people may very well think that this is a strange question to ask in today's society. Gambling is so much part of the Australian life style. Gold Lotto, Powerball, Instant Scratch-it Cards, and poker machines are all too common today. But it wasn't all that long ago that there was a general consensus in our society that any form of gambling was wrong.

The argument against lotteries and gambling is sometimes hard to understand, so let's take a look at it from two perspectives: winning and losing.

Suppose I win \$1,000,000 in a lottery or a considerable amount playing the pokies. What have I done? I have received money from many different people to whom I have given nothing in return. The money I received was not for payment of goods, services or labour. I did not receive it as a gift or an inheritance. They did not want to give it to me, but were each hoping to win it themselves. How can that be anything but ill-gotten gain?

Suppose I go out and buy an instant scratch-it card, or pay some money into the gold lotto. Suppose I lose a dollar or two, even five or ten. What have I done? I have wasted a God-given resource. It was God who enabled me to earn that money, so I should have used it in a way that would be pleasing to Him. I should have used that money to buy something necessary or beneficial for my family or myself. Or I should have given it to someone who needed it. Buying an instant scratch-it or paying into lotto is simply throwing it away.

You often hear that money that is lost in lotteries or spent through pokies goes to a good purpose. The government usually forwards the money on to certain charities. But the government can raise money in ways that do not promote greed. And "charity" means "love." But "charities" that raise money by lotteries are capitalising on greed, not love.

No lotteries are necessary. The money could simply be given to the organisations that would then use it to help people. That would save the expense of running the lottery and paying out the winners.

We may think that such things as gold lotto or Powerball do not seem as bad as other forms of gambling. We do not perceive them being connected with other vices. We do not picture a person who bets compulsively losing the rent or the grocery money on a lottery. But that could very well be happening.

Some farmers say that planting a crop is a gamble; others say everything in life is a gamble. Every time that you get into a car and drive down the street, there is danger. But careful driving and reckless driving are two different things. An honest business transaction is not trying to beat the odds and get something for nothing. Some people trust in "luck." Others trust in the one true God.

There is a treasure greater than all money won by lotteries and gambling combined. Jesus Christ has already purchased it for every one of us. He bought it with His own blood and death. It is eternal life and salvation through the forgiveness of sins. It is available in the Word of God, to be received only by faith in Christ, and this is no gamble, but a sure thing.