

Pk's Perspectives ... Danger Zone

I don't "play" the lottery. Interesting how we use the word "play" when describing the process of taking money over which we are to be God's steward and gambling it on an absurdly outrageous chance of winning more money. I'm guessing we feel better about the process if we call it "playing" instead of gambling. And some of you are already soothing your conscience with the thought, "I don't play the lottery with God's money. I gamble with my money that remains after I give God His tithe." My friend, if that's your line of reasoning you need to read your Bible a bit more thoroughly. Everything you possess AFTER you tithe ultimately belongs to God!

But I digress. Back to the point at hand. I don't gamble primarily because I believe the Bible teaches us to avoid such behavior. There is not nearly enough room in this newsletter to list and discuss all the biblical references that clearly instruct Christ followers to abstain from this, and other, destructive and addictive habits. There is also a secondary reason I don't gamble: at some juncture I would win and then I would be in a very dangerous place. Let me explain.

The gym where I exercised in my previous place of ministry had a combination lock on the door; the three digit combination was changed on the first day of every month. One day I drove to the gym to workout, walked to the door, punched in the combination but the aggravating door would not open. Of course I tried a couple more times before the realization hit me — it was the first day of the month and I had yet to obtain the new combination. Duh. A friend was with me and he went to his truck to call the owner in order to find out the new combination. I, on the other hand, stood at the door, examining the lock. On a whim, I chose three numbers that I thought would make a good combination and entered them into the lock. You can probably imagine my amazement when I turned the knob and the door opened! So I just stood there all cool-like until my friend came walking back and I announced that I had already "figured" it out! No lie...for the next six or seven months, on the first day of the month, I would purposely go to the gym without obtaining the new digits, confident I could rightly guess the new combination. You guessed it, I always ended up having to call the owner.

If guessing right on the combination lock at my gym hooked me into believing AND trying to replicate my three digit magic, I can imagine my reaction if I bought a scratch ticket on a whim and won \$500. I'd probably spend the entire \$500 trying to pick the next winning ticket. In fact, I know some folks who have done that very thing. In Ecclesiastes 5:10 the Bible says, "He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves wealth with his income; this also is vanity." The Bible also states, "Like the partridge that gathers a brood that she did not hatch, so is he who gets riches but not by justice; in the midst of his days they will leave him, and at his end he will be a fool." (Jeremiah 17:11)

If you're in the habit of dropping what you consider to be inconsequential dollars on a lottery chance, I would strongly encourage you to consider God's opinion on the matter. And keep this in mind — many painful injuries have been sustained on a seemingly innocent playground; likewise, spiritual harm is often encountered where God's "Danger Zone" sign has been posted. You'll also notice I didn't have room in this article to address the "stumbling block" issue of playing the lottery which has to do with your Christian witness and influence on those who watch how you live your faith. (Romans 14) Grace & peace, love you. PK