

Should We Play The Lottery?

According to its website, the Texas Lottery has generated over \$16 billion for the state of Texas since the first ticket was sold in 1992. Prior to 1997, the proceeds were allocated to the General Revenue Fund. Since 1997, all Texas Lottery proceeds have been transferred to the Foundation School Fund to support Texas public education. The Texas Lottery has contributed more than \$11 billion to the Foundation School Fund. All of this sounds wonderfully beneficial, but the question needs to be asked, "Is playing the lottery wrong?"

The word "covet" is found (in various forms) 18 times in the Old Testament and 22 times in the New Testament. Webster says "covet" means, "To desire (passionately) [especially, something that another person has]." The Latin word that we derive "Cupid" from is "cupidity," meaning a "strong desire for wealth, greed." The Greek meaning of the word is "to fix the desire upon (syn., lust)."

The Lord states His position on covetousness in the Old Testament with such passages as Exodus 18:21 and 20:17: *"Moreover you shall select from all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them to be rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens ... 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."*

The Christian is bound by the law of Christ with such passages as Colossians 3:5, which likens covetousness to idolatry. In this realm, God is not put first, but the fleshly desire for wealth. Romans 1:29 states that covetousness "keeps company" with sexual immorality, wickedness, maliciousness, envy, murder, strife, deceit, and evil-mindedness. The apostle Paul warns Timothy that men will become covetous when they turn from the Lord (2 Timothy 3:2). To be *"lovers of money"* is the very nature of covetousness. Jesus said the heart is filled with wickedness and the heart is where the love of money originates (Mark 7:14-23). In Luke 12:16-21, Jesus teaches His disciples that life is not about what we possess.

The lottery is very popular and has caused a lot of people to spend millions of dollars trying to win an elusive prize. For the Christian, the money is not the problem but the heart that desires the riches of the world. Playing the lottery reveals the sin of covetousness and the Lord and the apostles remind us that covetousness will condemn the soul to hell (Luke 16:13-14; 1 Corin-

thians 6:9-10; Ephesians 5:5). Will you also deride the Lord Jesus Christ by playing the lottery? *"But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints"* (Ephesians 5:3).

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