



When I was a child, we played a game called Monopoly. The object of the game was to take all the other players' money. When the "winner" had all the money and all the other players were broke, the game was over. Monopoly was just a game and the money was play money. If our elected leadership in Mississippi institutes a state lottery, it will not be a game and there will be no winners.

I believe in capitalism and am not a redistributionist, but I also believe it is unwise to balance the state budget on the backs of those citizens who can least afford to waste spendable income — often needed for milk, bread, and blue jeans. If a rich person or even blue collar person wants to waste his money on a lottery ticket, that's one thing but too

Don't Gamble on a Lottery

high a percentage of those who gamble on a long-shot lottery jackpot cannot afford to waste hard-earned money needed by their families.

I know buying a lottery ticket is voluntary, but a state lottery makes gambling more available, not less available, and gambling is a growing problem in our nation and state. It is a form of addiction for some which can devastate their marriage, family, and home. We should not enable more and more to suffer from this life-controlling problem.

A lottery is bad for business. Millions of dollars that would have been spent in businesses, restaurants, stores, etc., are

taken out of the economy. A dollar spent on the lottery is a dollar that cannot be spent in the local economy. Just as casinos shut down many family-owned small businesses on the Mississippi Gulf Coast and throughout our state, a lottery will do the same. Legitimate tax revenue will decline.

If 100% of the lottery money went to a good cause, I would still be against it for the above reasons. Too much of the lottery money is middle-money, and too little of the money gets to the problems. Many profit from the business side of a lottery. "Administrative" costs are too high. If you charge \$5 to enter a state park, too much of

the \$5 goes to the gate keeper. It is the same with a lottery.

In the early seventies, I was in a lottery— for the military draft. We were told the first 120 birthdates would be drafted, the last 120 would be safe, and the middle 120 would be up for grabs. My birthdate was drawn number 52 in that lottery, but U.S. President Richard Nixon shut down the Vietnam War. At least in that lottery there were more winners than losers. Not so in a state lottery.

If our state economy is supposedly doing so great, why is there such a need for additional gambling revenue? If gambling revenue is the cure-all

for the financial problems of our state, why haven't the casinos solved all our problems? After a few years of the lottery, what's next to raise revenue?

If all fifty states put all their rainy-day fund money in one pot and drew out one winner, how would the other forty-nine states feel about a lottery? The answer for any revenue problems for our state is not to play Monopoly or the lottery. This is not a game; we're talking real life. If I cannot balance my personal budget, I will not buy a lottery ticket. I will cut my expenses and look for additional work.

If your outgo exceeds your income, then your upkeep will be your downfall.

Please pray for our elected officials that they will have the courage and wisdom to do the right thing, but also let them know how you feel. Voters rule the day.

If I can be of help to you, your church, or association, contact me at the Christian Action Commission. We want to be available.

Digby is executive director-treasurer of the Christian Action Commission. He can be reached at (601) 292-3329/office, (662) 284-9163/cell, or by e-mail at kdigby@christianaction.com.

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Truth is not relative.

Find it in the One who is the way, truth, and life.

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you.
(I have sinned.)

2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death.
(I repent.)

3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you.
(I believe in Jesus.)

4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life.
From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Christ today, contact a local Southern Baptist church for spiritual guidance.