

Chains Of Our Own Choosing

(Anti-Social Media) All Things Are Lawful
by Jason Sage

This year, our annual February series focuses on problems facing Christians brought on by social media, Isolation, and a world where gambling and drugs are legal.

February 4th	The Epidemic Of Loneliness (Future Shock, Again)
February 11th	What Is Done In The Heart (The problem of pornography)
February 18th	FOMO (It's not a curse word, at least not yet)
February 25th	All Things Are Lawful (Gambling and Weed; Stumbling stoned and broke into the 21st century.)

Gambling and Weed; Stumbling stoned and broke into the 21st century

Did you know it is legal to bet on sporting events in all 50-states?
Did you know it is legal to possess and smoke marijuana in all but ten states and some form of cannabis product is legal in nearly all 50.
Did you know the NFL not only allows its players to gamble, the Super Bowl was just held in Las Vegas.

Because Something is Legal, Does not mean it is not sin.

I Corinthians 6:12–13

¹² “All things are lawful for me,” but not all things are helpful. “All things are lawful for me,” but I will not be dominated by anything. ¹³ “Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food”—and God will destroy both one and the other. The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.

Gambling and Weed Can Be Gateways to Other Sin

There is no Bible verse that says, “Thou shalt not gamble” or “Thou shalt not smoke weed.” There are plenty of verses about self-control, sober-mindedness, and being thankful stewards of God’s gifts.

Addiction of any kind can lead to stealing, lying, and erratic behavior.

Gambling; Social Media Makes It Worse (streaming, apps, the internet)

One in four Americans placed a bet on the Super Bowl.
Is gambling a growing problem in this country?
\$16-billion dollars was spent on the big game in 2023.
In 2024? Over \$23-billion was bet on the Chiefs and Niners.
It is about to get worse.

“Genius Sports, the NFL's official data distributor, on Tuesday unveiled the latest iteration in the United States' rapidly evolving sports betting market, a platform that for the first time will allow football fans to watch and bet on NFL games on the same screen.”

Gambling will be on screen and updated play by play.

Gambling With God's Talents

Paul took great care to make sure he treated the gift of God with respect.

II Corinthians 8:20–21

²⁰ We take this course so that no one should blame us about this generous gift that is being administered by us, ²¹ for we aim at what is honorable not only in the Lord's sight but also in the sight of man.

I Peter 4:9–10

⁹ Show hospitality to one another without grumbling. ¹⁰ As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace:

Matthew 25:27–30

²⁷ Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest. ²⁸ So take the talent from him and give it to him who has the ten talents. ²⁹ For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have an abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. ³⁰ And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

Gambling and Weed Both Can Lead To Addiction

Signs and symptoms of compulsive gambling:

The need to gamble larger sums to get the same thrill.
Trying to control, cut back or stop gambling, without success.
Trying to get back lost money by gambling more (chasing losses)
Lying to family members or others about the extent of your gambling
Risking or losing important relationships, a job, or failing school.
Borrowing to cover gambling losses.
Inability to stop gambling after passing a personal limit.

Weed Not Addictive?!?!?!?

I constantly hear people telling me “marijuana” is not addictive.

In a press release from the Center for Disease Control they answer the question with no uncertain terms.

“Some people who use marijuana will develop marijuana use disorder, meaning that they are unable to stop using marijuana even though it’s causing health and social problems in their lives.”-CDC.gov

Thirty-percent of users have marijuana use disorder.
Ten-percent of people who try marijuana will become addicted.
The risk of marijuana use disorder increases with youth and frequency.
Marijuana use in pregnant women results in lower birth weight
Plus, smoking and second-hand smoke have same risks as tobacco, (cancer, COPD).

It Is A Chronic Problem

I Thessalonians 5:5–8

⁵ For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness. ⁶ So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober. ⁷ For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, are drunk at night. ⁸ But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation.

Revelation 21:8

⁸ But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.”

Sorcerers; GK-*pharmakeia* or *pharmakon* = (a drug, i.e. spell-giving potion); a druggist (“pharmacist”) or poisoner.”-Strong’s Greek/Hebrew Dictionary

I Peter 5:6–11

⁶ Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, ⁷ casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you. ⁸ Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. ⁹ Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. ¹⁰ And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. ¹¹ To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

End of Sermon

These are references to stats and press releases mentioned in the sermon. Also included is material I cut from the sermon.-JS

A state lottery pays out 60-percent of the money bet to win.
So, for every dollar I pay into the lottery, I get 60-cents back.
I lose 40-percent of every dollar I spend.
Lotteries are a tax for people who are bad at math.

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/compulsive-gambling/symptoms-causes/syc-20355178>

<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/super-bowl-betting-smash-records/>

<https://www.npr.org/2023/01/12/1148167357/lottery-money-state-by-state-mega-millions-powerball>

Weed is addictive: <https://www.cdc.gov/marijuana/health-effects/addiction.html>

Weed and pregnancy data: <https://www.cdc.gov/marijuana/health-effects/pregnancy.html>

https://www.espn.com/sports-betting/story/_/id/38496077/new-platform-betvision-lets-fans-watch-bet-nfl-same-screen