

Is Investing In The Stock Market Gambling, And Is It Sinful?

By Ted Gatz

Being financially responsible is the goal of most people, and understanding the importance of providing for ourselves in old age is a good and necessary concern. Christians generally recognize this responsibility and seek to manage their finances wisely throughout their lives while avoiding unnecessary loss. This often raises an important question: *Is investing in the stock market a form of gambling, and should Christians engage in it?*

Does The Bible Explicitly Mention “gambling” Or “stock Markets”?

Scripture never uses the word “*gambling*,” nor do we find examples of God’s people engaging in gambling. However, the Bible clearly condemns the principles that underlie sinful gambling. Consider the following:

Covetousness (Col. 3:5; Eph. 5:3)

Covetousness is a form of idolatry. It is the desire for something we do not possess to such an extent that it becomes self-consuming. This sinful practice will keep a person from inheriting the kingdom of heaven. Coveting financial wealth beyond reason is a temptation all must avoid, because covetousness leads to greed.

Greed (Luke 12:15)

Jesus warned against greed in the parable of the rich man. In this parable, the man’s prosperity grew to the point that he loved his wealth and placed his confidence in it, believing that his possessions defined his life. Yet Jesus taught, “*A man’s life does not consist in the abundance of the things which he possesses.*” When life ends, possessions cannot grant eternal life.

Love Of Money (1 Tim. 6:9–10)

Paul spoke plainly about the love of money, calling it a root of all kinds of evil. A man who greedily desires more and more will soon sacrifice his faith in pursuit of wealth. Many have fallen into this trap, believing riches would provide security and honor. Judas serves as a tragic example of the destructive power of loving money (Acts 1:17–19).

Unjust Gain (Prov. 28:20–22)

Solomon understood how the pursuit of riches can corrupt a person. One who hastens to be rich is often not innocent in his dealings. His eyes are fixed on quick gain, even to the point of harming others, while he convinces himself no wrongdoing has occurred.

Idleness Or Get-Rich-Quick Schemes (Prov. 13:11)

Those who seek to get rich quickly and easily do so in vain and will suffer loss—spiritually, morally, and financially. Solomon wisely teaches that wealth gathered gradually and honestly will increase.

How a person acquires wealth reveals much about their integrity and character. Those who rely on worldly methods will find them soul-consuming and destructive to themselves and others.

What Makes Gambling Sinful?

Gambling is the desire to gain something without providing productive labor or creating value. It seeks profit where no real good or service is produced. While gambling requires placing a wager, the gain is not earned through honest work but depends entirely on chance. For one person to win, another must lose. This stands in direct opposition to honest labor (Eph. 4:28).

Gambling emphasizes chance rather than stewardship. It relies on probability and luck, not careful planning or responsible management (Luke 12:42–44). Because someone must lose for another to gain, gambling is neither principled investing nor good stewardship. Those who hope to provide for retirement through gambling will inevitably fail. In short, gambling is a negative-sum activity, where the group as a whole ends up with less than it started with. Though gambling is not named explicitly in Scripture, it violates clear biblical principles.

Is Gambling Different From Casting Lots?

The Bible frequently mentions the casting of lots. Roman soldiers cast lots for Jesus' clothing (Matt. 27:35). Lots were used to determine Judas' replacement (Acts 1:23–26). In the Old Testament, lots were cast to divide the Promised Land (Josh. 14:2; 18:6, 8–10), to identify Achan's sin (Josh. 7:14–18), and to assign priestly duties (1 Chron. 24:5; Neh. 10:34; 11:1).

In each case, casting lots served as a method of decision-making, not a means of profit. No wager was involved, and no one lost property or wealth. Therefore, casting lots is not gambling.

Does Stock Market Investing Fit The Same Characteristics As Gambling?

This leads us to the central question: *Does investing in the stock market follow these sinful principles?* Generally, the answer is no. Prudent investing is not gambling because it does not share gambling's essential moral failures.

Investing Is Based On Ownership, Not Chance

Purchasing stock means acquiring ownership in a real business that produces goods or services. This is not “getting something for nothing.” It is equity ownership, which includes voting rights and a share in the company's profits.

Investing Can Be An Act Of Stewardship

Scripture teaches wise use of God's blessings. In the parable of the talents (Matt. 25:14–30), Jesus commended responsible management and growth of resources. While not an endorsement of modern financial markets, the parable illustrates the principle of careful stewardship.

Others Do Not Need To Lose For You To Gain

Stock values increase as companies grow, innovate, and produce profit. This growth can benefit employees, consumers, and investors alike. Such mutual benefit stands in contrast to the exploitative nature of gambling.

When Can Investing Become Gambling?

Investing becomes sinful when it adopts the spirit of gambling. This occurs when speculation replaces stewardship—such as engaging in high-risk day trading, penny stocks, or impulsive trades that treat the market like a casino. Scripture condemns reckless financial behavior: “*The plans of the diligent lead surely to abundance, but everyone who is hasty comes only to poverty*” (Prov. 21:5).

Investing also becomes sinful when motivated by greed rather than wisdom. If the love of money drives the activity, it is sinful regardless of the method used (1 Tim. 6:9–10).

Finally, investing becomes sinful when it risks money needed to provide for one’s family, thereby neglecting God-given responsibilities (1 Tim. 5:8).

Conclusion

Investing in the stock market is not inherently gambling when done properly. The investor should be prudent, well-informed, and free from greed and reckless speculation. Responsible investing can reflect faithful stewardship of God’s blessings. However, investing becomes gambling when it involves excessive risk, greed, get-rich-quick attitudes, or neglect of family responsibilities.

Good stewardship may involve various investment vehicles, such as stocks, mutual funds, annuities, and certificates of deposit. Wise counsel from a competent financial advisor can help preserve capital while allowing for reasonable growth.

As Christians, we may take advantage of the opportunities within our financial system, provided we do so with the proper heart, wise judgment, and gratitude for the blessings God has given us.