

Pastor's Perspective: Seek the Lord and turn from sin



Special to
Pelahatchie News

By Guest Columnist John Vaughn, Pastor, Cross Roads Baptist Church

I was listening to a talk radio station a few days ago and heard a conversation that was a bit disturbing to me. I don't know who the two men were who were having the conversation, but one was the radio host, and I assume the guest had something to do with the gambling industry in Mississippi.

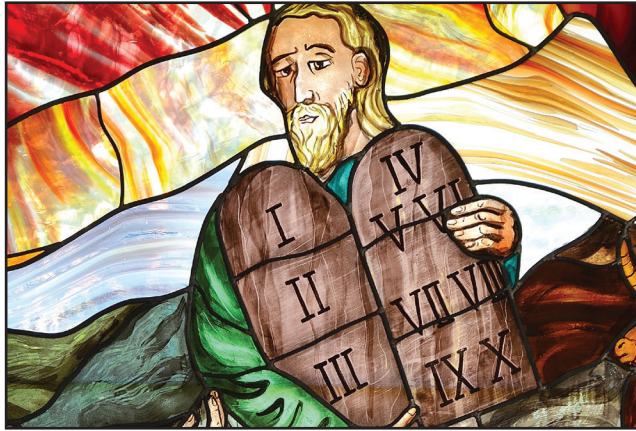
For full disclosure, let me tell you up front that I don't gamble. (Except when I try to walk on my road when people are going to work. That's a gamble!) But when I was growing up, my Pastor at the time taught me that gambling was wrong. I believed him, and I made it a practice to not gamble. In fact, I don't buy raffle tickets, because I learned from my Pastor that a raffle is gambling. After all, you are buying "a chance" to win a prize. Now, if a kid I know asks me to buy a raffle ticket, I'll give him a donation, but I just don't take the ticket.

I don't make it a practice to beat up on people who do gamble, but I have sat in my office or in someone's living room and listened to people tell me about los-

ing their paycheck at the dog track or at the casino. And yes, I've heard that story more than once. And I've helped individuals pay a bill because they lost all their money gambling. So I don't gamble. It's a personal conviction that I learned early in life, and I don't see any reason to change it late in life.

Now, that being said, back to the conversation I heard on the radio. It was about "sports betting" in Mississippi. That is, betting on which team will win ball games. Because I don't gamble, I didn't understand all of the terminology that they were using, but here is the comment that caught my attention.

The guest, who again, I believe was a State official in the gambling industry in Mississippi, was describing the practice of sports betting. His comment went something like this, "Actually, the way the betting is being done is technically against the law. But the practice is so widespread that the law is not being enforced. It will be up to the Legislature to change the law to bring it up to the



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current practice."

In other words, because nobody is following the law, it needs to be changed so that what is commonly being practiced will no longer be against the law. So, I guess, if you don't like the law and the standard it sets, just change the law!

The sad thought occurred to me that there are a lot of people, a lot of church members, a lot of professing Christians, who don't seem to like the standards that God has set in His word. And the common practice in our day seems to be, if you don't like the standard that God has set, just ignore it and do what you want to do. That attitude says to God, "Your commandments and rules are old fash-

ioned and need to be brought up to current popular standards and practice."

That line of thinking can be applied to any number of things. Just read the Ten Commandments and think about how many of them are honored (or dishonored) today:

- Don't let anything take the place of God in your life.
- Don't have idols in your life.
- Don't misuse the name of the Lord.
- The Lord's Day is Holy, respect it.
- Honor your parents.
- Don't murder (think "abortion").
- Don't commit adultery.
- Don't steal.
- Don't tell lies about other people.
- Don't wish you had things that belong to others.

Wow, what a bunch of outdated rules and regulations. If we follow the logic of the gambling industry, we need to bring those up to date, so that God's Word reflects the common practice of our day! Or, maybe we need to humble ourselves and pray and seek the Lord's face and turn from our sin, so that the Lord will hear us from heaven and forgive our sin and heal our land.

Be sure to take your family to church on Sunday!

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