

“One More Card Please”

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Frank Sinatra used to sing the song, “Luck Be a Lady”, and Kenny Rogers sang about ‘knowing when to hold ‘em, and knowing when to fold ‘em, in the song, “The Gambler”. Although both songs refer to gambling, both are really about things that happen in life. It’s funny how many times we use card game terms when it comes to personal situations. For example, when someone is ‘all out of aces’, it means they have nothing left to run on, or no more answers to their many questions. If we say, “He must have drawn the Ace of Spades”, it means he is doomed to having bad luck. And sometimes, we all just have to accept ‘the hand we’ve been dealt with’. Sometimes the odds are ‘stacked against us’, and there are other times when the ‘Joker’s wild’.

I’ve also heard, “Round and round and round she goes, where she stops, nobody knows!” One may think of a roulette wheel or a wheel of chance, but we also think about the cycle of life, or the way the ‘world goes round and round’. Life can also be a ‘crap-shoot’, complete with box cars or snake eyes. I think you get my meaning.

Like many others, from time to time, I enjoy watching game shows on television. There aren’t nearly as many now as there used to be. I loved the original “Let’s Make a Deal” and “The Price is Right”. Both games may have given the contestant some small chance of winning based on their knowledge, but usually everything was left up to chance. A person may have accumulated large sums of money, only to lose it all because of the enticement of what was behind ‘door number 3’ or they over-bid on a wonderful vacation, only to lose to their competition who bet with just one dollar.

The highs and lows of gambling, and of life, are exhilarating one moment, only to be crushed in the next. The ‘high’ we get from winning is short-lived, but so addicting that we try it again, and again. We’re certain that if we could just play ‘one more time,’ we would finally win the jackpot, and all will be well in our world. Even as I write this, it amazes me how much we live our lives as gamblers, taking chances with our children, with our jobs, with life-altering decisions. And oh, do we gamble with our souls.

Have you ever heard the term, “I’d rather live this life in a way that honors the belief that everything Jesus did and said were true, only to find out I was wrong, vs. my behaving like the world, doing whatever I want to, only to find out I had been right in the first place?” I will take certain risks while I live this life, knowing full well that I will lose at times, and I will glory in those times I win. But when we talk about those final days when our earthly life is over, what will we put our faith in then? This is not a wager I’m willing to make. When it comes to your eternal life, the final payoff, where will you have placed your chips?

God bless you.