



An initiative of WISCONSIN FAMILY COUNCIL

Tuesday, August 29, 2023

Football Season Is Here!

Dear Pastor,

Fall is one of the most exciting times of the year around our office. Between the Packers, Badgers, and high school football, we always have something to talk about. Last weekend, we saw the conclusion of the Packers pre-season. The Wisconsin Badgers launch the Fickell era with the college football season opener this Saturday. High school football is already in week three of action.

Sadly, the start of football season has become synonymous with sports gambling. Sports gambling continues to grow in our culture and unfortunately in our churches. According to Pew Research 19% of U.S. adults say they have bet money on sports in the past year. With statistics this high, it is likely we all have at least one person in our church struggling with sports gambling.

Since the U.S. Supreme Court legalized sports betting in 2018, Americans have spent over \$235 billion on this addictive activity. During this period, sportsbooks have profited around \$18.9 billion. Unfortunately, this trend is growing each year and is likely to reach over \$100 billion in 2023.

Surveys show that the average sports gambler is a male under 45 years old. One study found that 57.1% of sports gamblers did so on a credit card and that 50.7% went into debt to bet. This often-unseen addiction is harming young families in our communities.



What can pastors do to help?

1. Inform your congregation about the growing issue. You can have great influence in helping your congregation say no to gambling as you preach and teach on biblical stewardship, etc..
2. Highlight the importance of the family by counseling and discipling young men to be husbands and fathers that place their family above gambling.
3. If the God calls your church to create a ministry addressing gambling, follow Him in that call. One ministry to consider partnering with is Chance to Change. Click **HERE** to learn more about the need for gambling addiction ministries.
4. Pray that gambling will not expand in Wisconsin and that those struggling with gambling would experience freedom in Christ.

If our society is to see a reduction in sports gambling or gambling in general, it will be due to the gospel ministry of churches like yours. Thank you for your ministry!

In Christ,



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P.S. This week, we encourage you to join us by praying for Representative Karen Hurd (Fall Creek), Representative Robin Vos (Rochester), and Senator Lena Taylor (Milwaukee).