



OCTOBER 2026 GENERAL CONFERENCE · SATURDAY MORNING SESSION

O Be Wise

President D. Todd Christofferson · Second Counselor in the First Presidency

Words to remember

- *“Gambling is built on the desire to obtain something for nothing. Its structure requires that any gain comes at others’ expense.”*
- *“Remembering President Oaks’s comments about ‘opportunity cost’ and the opportunities lost when a person devotes time and money to gambling, my plea again is not only to refrain from gambling but to use the time and resources saved thereby for doing good.”*

In President D. Todd Christofferson’s own words, from the talk.

President D. Todd Christofferson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, opened by saying he felt like Jacob in the Book of Mormon, compelled by the Spirit to address a subject not particularly edifying and to use “boldness of speech” instead of feasting on the pleasing word of God (Jacob 2:7–11). “So, with a sense of duty, I turn to the subject of gambling.”

He recalled a story President Gordon B. Hinckley told more than twenty years ago about U.S. President Calvin Coolidge, famous as a man of few words. Asked by his wife what the preacher spoke about, Coolidge said, “Sin.” “Well, what did he say?” “He was against it.” President Hinckley added, “I think I could answer the question concerning gambling just that briefly. We are against it.”

Putting money or something of value at risk on an outcome has plagued mankind almost, I suppose, from the beginning of time, and time hasn’t made it any less harmful. What has changed is access. “The smartphone has transformed gambling from an occasional activity requiring a trip to a casino, racetrack, or lottery kiosk into an activity available continuously, privately, and almost anywhere.” Surveys indicate 46% of adults worldwide gambled in the past year, about 2.3 billion people, and the industry generated an estimated \$758 billion in 2025. “Of course, the industry’s revenue is the gambler’s loss. Simply put, the industry’s entire business model is built on its customers losing money.”

Three online platforms drive the growth: sports betting; casino-type games such as slots, roulette, blackjack, and poker; and prediction markets, where people bet on whether and when something will happen, tied to interest rates, elections, wildfires, or even the timing of the second coming. He wondered how anyone could ever collect on a bet like that.

Youth and young adults are disproportionately affected. Impulsivity and peer influence combine with early exposure, easy access, intense marketing, and wide social acceptance. Sports betting easily becomes consuming and “It robs time from studies, relationships, and career development. It crowds out things of value and in their place fosters greed.” In the U.S., 36% of boys aged 11 to 17 reported gambling last year, rising from 32% at age 11 to 49% at 17, and a substantial share of women 18 to 29 now gamble. People know the odds are stacked and the house always wins; they just don’t think it will win against them. The larger danger, he said, is that constant access turns occasional behavior into repeated behavior that displaces saving, increases debt, and creates far-reaching family and social costs. He agreed with George Washington, who called gambling “It is the child of avarice—the brother of inequity—and father of mischief” adding that mischief may be too mild. He also quoted a journalist in *The Atlantic* who concluded that society is betting that unlike every civilization that came before us, we can beat the house.

He drew on President Dallin H. Oaks’s counsel to ask, “Where will this lead?” and to weigh each choice’s opportunity cost: what do we give up in money, time, relationships, and worthwhile pursuits? Then he raised the matter of example. Perhaps your character and covenants feel secure enough that occasional wagers would be harmless fun. But others, especially your children and people newer or weaker in the faith, watch you. Paul taught that a believer could eat meat offered to idols without idolatry, yet should abstain: “Take heed,” Paul said, “lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak.” Through such an example, shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? (1 Corinthians 8:9–11). President Christofferson’s application: “Since your recreational gambling may lead a weaker brother or sister into temptation, just don’t do it. Every soul is precious, and Christ died for him, for her, as He did for you.”

Above all, gambling is morally wrong. It is “Gambling is built on the desire to obtain something for nothing,” and its structure “Its structure requires that any gain comes at others’ expense,” which is hard to reconcile with loving our neighbor as ourselves (Matthew 22:39). Our resources are stewardships, and the question is not merely whether something is legal, but whether it builds anything in us, in our families, or in those around us. He quoted President Oaks: taking from others to enhance our own position leads us away from the giving path of Christ toward the taking path of the adversary, and taking without giving value in return is destructive of spiritual sensitivities.

His plea was to live life on a higher plane. God has given us life and agency, and we are accountable for how we use them. A well-lived life contributes to others’ well-being; “It is being and doing better without others doing worse.” It supports and rewards work rather than idle pursuits, and work leads to prosperous, just societies. He warned, “Gambling, even for fun, leads in the opposite direction.” He asked not only that we refrain from gambling but that we use the time and resources saved for doing good, being anxiously engaged in a good cause (D&C 58:27). Those who hunger and thirst after righteousness will be filled (3 Nephi 12:6), and will put out of their lives what is incompatible with righteousness. He closed with Jacob once more: “O be wise; what can I say more?” (Jacob 6:12).

Let's talk about it

What did this talk teach us about the Savior? What is one small thing our family can do this week?

Kid-friendly summary in our own words · Read or watch the full talk: [churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2026/10/19christofferson](https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2026/10/19christofferson)