A Renewed Mind About **Sports Betting**

Ephesians 4 explains that our relationship with Jesus changes the way we think about our life and circumstances. There is a way of thinking that is godless and self-absorbed—this kind of thinking is a temptation for every person, although it looks different from person to person. But in Christ we learn a new way of thinking and living:

> But ye have not so learned Christ; If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: That ye **put off** concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be **renewed** in the spirit of your mind; And that ye **put on** the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. (Ephesians 4:20–24, emphasis mine)

Don't be fooled—the world is not passive. Rather, the world around us is actively discipling people to follow its thoughts, values, and actions. Add your own fleshly nature to the mix and you begin to better understand why the pull to bet on sports is so strong. This is the way it has been ever since the first I-want-my-own-way decision in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:1-7). But there is hope—because God has overcome the world through Jesus Christ (John 16:33; 1 John 4:4). Christ is not passive. He actively disciples those who are in Him in an entirely different way from the world's way of doing things. And because you are in Christ, you have His Spirit powerfully working in you to change the way you think, what you value and desire, and how you live. This is good news when it comes to our personal struggle with sports betting.

Not only does God promise that in Christ we "overcome the world," He also tells us that "our faith" has a part to play in overcoming (1 John 4:4; 5:4). In other words, God invites us to cooperate with what He is doing in us. We cooperate by hearing His Words (listening), and then doing what He has said (obedience). This is discipleship according to Jesus: *hearing* and *doing* (Luke 6:46-49; 8:21; James 1:22).

How to do this study:

Use the following guide to cooperate with God as He disciples you in this area. How will you demonstrate your love for God through your obedience to His words and ways? Start with prayer—asking the Lord to enable you to be an *obedient listener*. Then think through each question and write down your answers. This process will be especially helpful if you can discuss it with a godly, trusted adult.

Renewing My Mind About Sports Betting

Put Off (Ephesians 4:22)

Renewing your mind about what you value begins with hearing God's Word. Your time spent reading *Help! Why Is Sports Betting a Big Deal?* helped start this process. As you heard what God says about gambling, what did the Lord show you needs to change in your life? What do you need to *stop doing* to better conform to God's words and ways?

In Ephesians 4, the apostle Paul is reminding us of this wonderful reality: in Christ, the old way of life in Adam (the way we thought, what we desired and valued, and the choices of our will) has been put off. We are dead to sin, which means we are not slaves to sin anymore (Romans 6:6-7)! We do not have to

© 2026 by LifeLine for Teens. All rights reserved.

believe lies. We do not have to obey our wrong desires. Because of what Christ has done for us, we can live like who we are in Christ: dead to sin and alive to God (Romans 6:11)! Take the time to confess and forsake any sin God has revealed in your life (Proverbs 28:13; 1 John 1:9).

- **Confess to God:** What has God shown you about your personal motivation to bet on sports? In what ways have your thoughts and values contradicted what God says is true and valuable? In what ways have you been justifying your actions?_____

- **Ask Forgiveness:** Are there specific ways that you have sinned against God or others for which you need to seek forgiveness? In what ways do you need to make restitution? Use the space below to write out your plan for seeking forgiveness from those whom you have sinned against or with. _

- **Make it hard to sin:** What are you allowing into your mind and heart (through movies and shows, music, video games, reading material, ungodly friendships, social media / Internet use) that's making it easier to give into the temptation to bet on sports? How can you radically remove those things? _____

Renew (Ephesians 4:23)

After taking steps to *put off* the wrong things, you need to spend extra time *putting in* God's truth. You put in truth by meditating on God's Word—especially on God's character and promises. You could really describe the entire *put off* and *put on* process of change described in Ephesians 4 as the act of *renewing*. As God opens your eyes to truth, you respond by putting off what is not like Christ, and by putting on what is like Christ. This is the life of "faith" God calls all believers to continue walking throughout their lives. Each step is taken in loving obedience to the Lord—not in your own strength or wisdom, but in reliance on the strength and wisdom He provides through His Word and your relationship with Jesus Christ.

- **Read**, **study**, and **memorize** God's Word. Take time to prayerfully **meditate** (think about) the passage of Scripture you are reading.[1] Make a journal of what the passage teaches about God (Who God is) and what commands or promises He gives (What God says). As you study God's Word, apply it to your own life. Include in your journal how knowing God changes your thoughts and responses regarding your specific situation. Consider: how does knowing this truth change what you believe, what you value and desire, and how you act? Some ideas from the mini-book are included below. Pick one; then create a plan for how you will put God's truth into your heart and mind. Remember, the renewal process is key to lasting change in the life of the believer.

[1] If you need help knowing how to do read, study, memorize, and apply Scripture see *Keys to Your Own God & I Time* (https://lifelineforteens.com/resource/keys), or ask a trusted, godly adult for help.

© 2026 by LifeLine for Teens. All rights reserved.

Ideas for Renewing my Mind about Sports Betting:

- Read through the book of **Proverbs**, looking for verses that apply to your particular motivation behind sports betting. For example, if you are tempted to bet on sports because you love the idea of getting rich quick, look for what God says about the value of working hard. If your temptation stems from wanting to fit in with friends, look for what God says about godly and ungodly friendships. If your temptation is fed by thinking you know more than others or the hubris that you can beat "the system," focus on the warnings Proverbs gives concerning the proud man. Keep a notebook or journal, jotting down the reference, what it says in your own words, and how you can apply it in your life.
- Read, study, memorize, meditate on, and personally apply **Romans 6:6-14**.[2]
- Study the account of a person in the Bible who struggled with pride. Some ideas: Absalom (2 Samuel 13-18), Haaman (Esther 3-7), Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 2-4), Peter (Matthew 14:22-33; 26:30-75; John 21; Acts 2; 1 Peter 5:5-11), Herod (Acts 12), or most of the Old Testament kings. How did they give into pride? If they overcame their struggle with pride how did God enable them to do so? If not, what was the outcome? Journal your findings along with lessons you can apply to your own struggle with pride.
- Nurture your relationship with the Lord by beholding Him in His Word.[3] Choose a **Gospel** (Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John) to read through. Read one chapter or a small section of a chapter each day. Look for one specific truth about Christ as you read (several ideas are listed below that relate to various motivations for sports betting). Keep a notebook of everything you learn about Christ in that specific area. As you study the life of Jesus, consider how you can be more like Christ—applying what you learn to your personal life. Pray that God will grow your love for and likeness to Christ. Every day, finish by journaling a prayer to the Lord.
    - How did Jesus spend His time?
    - How did Jesus treat others?
    - What did Jesus teach that He wants me to do in my life?
    - What did Jesus teach about money and possessions?
    - What does Jesus love? What does Jesus hate?
    - What did Jesus say about relationships (with Him and others)?
    - How did Jesus confront pride and demonstrate humility?
- After identifying your motivation for sports betting (engagement, peer pressure, greed, pride, the buzz/thrill), find one or two passages of Scripture that speak directly to your motivation. Get a few note cards. On one side write: "Put Off" and describe one thing (belief, thought, attitude, desire, or action) you know you need to put off. Turn the card over and write "Put On," followed by a description of the righteous alternative (in belief, thought, attitude, desire, or action). For example, Put Off: Pleasing Friends; Put On: Pleasing God (2 Corinthians 5:9). Add one Scripture reference to each side to help you renew your mind (the reference may be different for the put off / put on). Ask a mature adult if you need help finding appropriate Scriptures. Choose one notecard at a time to

[2] See also, *A Plan for Killing Sin* available at https://lifelineforteens.com/resources.

[3] Jim Newheiser observes, ""A key to overcoming addiction is the recognition that Christ is superior to the sins which formerly enslaved us. …As you grow closer to Christ, your former sins lose their appeal" (p.35).

© 2026 by LifeLine for Teens. All rights reserved.

pray through, asking the Lord to help you obey. Memorize the verses on each side of the card. Add a new card when you are ready.

My Plan:

- When and where will you spend time in God's Word? _____
  _____
- What will you prayerfully read, study, meditate on, and personally apply from God's Word? _____
  _____
- Choose a verse from the passage you are currently studying to commit to memory. What specific verse(s) will you memorize? _____

Put On (Ephesians 4:24)

You don't have to wait to begin moving forward in obedience until you have mastered the other aspects of the renewing process. In fact, *putting off* and *putting on* should happen simultaneously. The pursuit of Christlikeness is actually essential to keeping the wrong things out of your life. And keep in mind that the pursuit of Christlikeness is really the pursuit of a Person. Just as Jesus demonstrated in His earthly life, your obedience is an expression of love for God.

God, through His Word and by His Spirit, is committed to making you more like His Son. He wants you to grow and change and invites you to be a part of this process! Obedience isn't always easy—but because of your union with Christ, it is possible. But God doesn't expect you to do it alone. He has provided His Word, His Spirit, and His people. We grow best in community with other believers who walk beside us on our journey to Christlikeness.

- **Replacement:** What positive steps of obedience does God want you to take in response to what He has shown you in His Word? Consider obedience in the way you think, what you value and desire, and how you act. _____
  _____
  _____
  _____
- **Accountability**: Who in your life can you trust as a mentor to help you? _____
  _____
- **Opportunities:** How might learning to say "no" to the temptation to bet on sports enable you to serve others in new ways? (Perhaps in your own family.) How can you be an example of following Jesus, even around others who struggle with gambling? Since this temptation is common in our culture, how can you encourage those who feel stuck in their own sin with the things you're learning? _____
  _____
  _____

You may find it helpful to revisit this worksheet multiple times over the next several weeks. Your thinking and responses may change as you face new circumstances and new opportunities. You may see significant improvement in some areas or increased challenges in others. But overtime, as you cooperate with God's process of change in your life, He will give you the grace to grow in your relationship with Christ and see His character more fully developed in your life.

© 2026 by LifeLine for Teens. All rights reserved.