

In the World . . .

“And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world . . .” (John 17:11).

Use this news story from recent days to help your students see the relevance of this week’s Sunday school lesson from the Standard Lesson Commentary®/Standard Lesson Quarterly.

CHARACTER IN DOUBT

Francesco Schettino, the captain of the ill-fated Italian cruise ship *Costa Concordia*, was arrested a few days ago. He is suspected of having piloted his ship recklessly, without regard for the lives entrusted to him. The result was a capsized vessel, which he is accused of having abandoned before all the passengers had gotten off. If these allegations prove to be true, it means that the captain not only was criminally negligent, he also violated a time-honored custom of seamanship that the captain is the last one off a doomed ship. Several people have died in this tragedy so far, and the death toll may rise.

CHARACTER NOT IN DOUBT

Joseph’s character, by contrast, was unimpeachable. Throughout his time in Egypt, he demonstrated integrity and faithfulness in situation after situation. Although his brothers’ actions had resulted in his “abandonment” in Egypt, he did not abandon them when they needed his help. Joseph acted with compassion instead of exacting vengeance. The promise of his continuing care for his brothers and their families was further evidence of Joseph’s character.

1. What kind of screening process, if any, could be used to determine a person’s character before placing him or her in a leadership position?
2. Are any of Joseph’s interactions with his brothers in Genesis 42–46 a blemish on his character? Why, or why not?
3. How was Joseph able to reach the point in his spiritual growth that he could affirm God’s bigger plan within his brothers intent to harm him?
4. Why do Christians sometimes fail to show the kind of leadership characteristics Joseph did? How do we improve in this regard?
5. What was a time when God took something bad or evil that happened to you and turned it into something for the good?

—Charles R. Boatman

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