

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.

NEGATIVE CAMPAIGNING . . .

Between next Tuesday and March 6, there are 13 Republican primaries and caucuses that will put up for grabs 518 of the 1,144 delegates needed to win that party’s presidential nomination. Chances are that we will continue to see the four remaining candidates flailing away at each other while boasting of his own qualifications to challenge President Obama in November. As in most political campaigns—whether between the two major political parties or within each party—it seems that attack ads, playing loose with the facts, and name-calling characterize the discourse. However, voters themselves are not guiltless, since polls show that attack ads really do work, even as many voters decry them.

. . . VERSUS POSITIVE LIVING

The fruit of the Spirit that we read about in today’s text seems to be largely absent in political contests. We may not find that surprising from candidates who seem bent on getting elected at any and all cost, but what about the Christians who are working in those political campaigns? Even after an election is over, Christians have been known to join the chorus of relentless negative attacks on elected officials. For Christians who participate in the political process this way, we may wonder how it is possible for them to “honor the king” (1 Peter 2:17)!

1. How can we account for the fact that negative, attack ads really do work, even as many voters claim to dislike them?
2. Given what seems to be required to get elected, is it possible for a Christian to be successful and effective in politics while exhibiting the fruit of the Spirit? Why, or why not?
3. How can Christians use their influence to contribute “light” rather than “heat” to the dialogue of a political campaign?
4. How has manifesting the fruit of the Spirit helped you “reap what you sow” in a positive sense?
5. What have you found to be a key for developing the fruit of the Spirit in your life?

—*Charles R. Boatman*

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