



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

Use this recent news story to help your students see the relevance
of this week’s lesson from the Standard Lesson Commentary®
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PRIORITIES NEGLECTED

Eric Shinseki, Secretary of Veterans Affairs, resigned from his post a few days ago as public attention continued to focus on the scandal in his organization. Systemic, nationwide problems at VA centers have resulted in delayed medical care for veterans and falsified records to hide the delays. “Looking good” on patient-care metrics seems to have taken priority over actually providing the care. President Obama, faced with the need for the country to keep its promises to its veterans, called for hiring more health-care providers and modernizing VA systems.

PRIORITIES REEMPHASIZED

In Haggai’s time, a scandal of neglected priorities also came to light: the Jews who had returned from exile were content to ignore the sad state of God’s house—the temple. They chose to focus instead on their own houses. But the prophet reminded the people that the nation’s discouragement and disillusionment could be overcome by trusting God’s wonderful promises as they made his priorities their own. God’s covenant people could be blessed anew!

1. Why does it so often seem that it takes a scandal to get corrective action regarding problems in government agencies, corporations, or churches?
2. Under what circumstances does a situation call for a change in leadership? (Compare Nehemiah 5:14-19.)
3. In what ways are Christians today like the Jews of Haggai’s time in failing to adopt God’s priorities as their own?
4. When was a time you changed your priorities to match God’s? How did things turn out?
5. When was a time you saw a church change its priorities to match God’s? How did things turn out?
6. Which Scripture passages help you keep God’s priorities as your own?

—Charles R. Boatman

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