



"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®  
or Standard Lesson Quarterly®.

### **PUNISHMENT AHEAD?**

Oscar Pistorius, the "blade runner" who competed in the 2012 Summer Olympics, was convicted last week of culpable homicide in a South Africa court. He had pled innocence in fatally shooting his girlfriend in 2013, saying he thought she was an intruder. His handicap—a birth defect that necessitated both legs being amputated below the knee when he was 11 months old—played a part in his defense. His punishment could range from a fine and suspended sentence to 15 years in prison. Olympic officials say he is still eligible to compete in the 2016 games. Of course, taking part in that competition would be more than somewhat difficult from behind the bars of a prison cell!

### **PROSPERITY AHEAD!**

The people of Judah were already experiencing divine punishment for their sins when Jeremiah prophesied. Jerusalem was under siege and the Babylonian captivity lay ahead. But Jeremiah told of better days to come: after the punishment had run its course, the people would return to prosper in their homeland. Jeremiah showed his faith in God's word by buying a field at a time when it seemed like a foolish thing to do.

1. Should Pistorius's punishment include being incarcerated long enough so that he won't be able to anticipate competing in the 2016 Olympics? Why, or why not?
2. What part should "anticipation of a new future," the title of this week's lesson, play in rehabilitation of those being punished for wrongdoing?
3. What did Jeremiah's obedience to God in purchasing a piece of real estate reveal about himself, given the context of the prophet's situation?
4. When was a time you sensed God moving you to make a life choice that others considered unwise? How did things work out?
5. What guidelines can you suggest for determining whether it is God's desires or our own that impel us to make certain life choices?

—Charles R. Boatman

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