



“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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SELFLESS CONCERN?

President Obama is battling with Congressional leaders in his own party. The controversy concerns presidential power to negotiate “fast track” trade deals—agreements not subject to Congressional veto. Ironically, Republican leadership in Congress is working *with* the president on the issue. A coalition of activists including organized labor, environmentalists and other special interest groups are involved in the conflict. All participants in the debate claim their stance is rooted in selfless concern for the good of the country. But if all have the same concerns in mind, why is the debate so polarized?

SELFISH EXCESS

In the time of Amos, there appears to have been no effort either to conceal selfishness or to rationalize it in any way. Significant numbers of Israelites were flaunting their wealth in orgies of pleasure with little evidence of concern for the well-being of those less fortunate. This is the attitude that provoked God’s wrath upon the nation.

1. What do you know about this current trade controversy? In what ways does this debate reflect either selfishness or selflessness? Be specific.
2. Amos describes the selfishness of his culture and follows it with a promise of God’s judgment. Why do you think selfishness often leads to the downfall of people and nations?
3. In what ways have you found Christians to be tempted by power, greed, or a general attitude of selfishness? Give some examples from our culture that reflect selfish excess in lifestyle.
4. In your own life, how do you keep selfishness from leading to your downfall? How do you distinguish between a necessity and an unwarranted luxury?

—Charles R. Boatman

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