



"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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ARE YOU A CHRISTIAN?

Early reports from the recent shootings at Oregon's Umpqua Community College are chilling. Purportedly, the gunman questioned his victims about their religion before shooting them. To some he directly asked, "Are you a Christian?"

The gunman's own social media profiles indicated that he was angry at organized religion in general. Many wonder if his anger reflects an anti-religious attitude that is growing in our society.

YES, I'M A CHRISTIAN!

Saul's audacious testimony put him in a perilous position. Those with whom he once allied in persecuting the church began plotting to murder *him*! Christians, on the other hand, wondered whether Saul's profession was only a ruse to entrap them. At that point, Barnabas stepped in and vouched for the validity of Saul's conversion.

1. Following Jesus caused Saul to lose friends and make dangerous enemies. How have the Oregon shootings influenced your perception of how safe it is to stand for Christ? If the Oregon gunman had questioned you about your faith, what would have been your thought process and response?
2. If you had been a Christian in Jerusalem when Saul proclaimed his faith in Christ, would you have believed him? Why or why not? What risks did Barnabas take in defending Saul to other Christians?
3. Have you ever thought of Barnabas as a role model? Under what circumstances? What situations in the church today might call for Barnabas-like actions on your part?

—Charles R. Boatman

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