



"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®.

### **LACK OF SENSITIVITY?**

On Monday, the University of Missouri's president resigned under pressure. A few hours later the university's chancellor was reassigned. Protesters were demonstrating over what they perceived as a failure to respond in a timely and sensitive fashion to racial grievances. Two factors were key to forcing the changes: one student leader went on a hunger strike, and thirty members of the football team refused to participate in upcoming games, potentially costing the university \$1 million for forfeiting Saturday's game.

### **APPROPRIATE SENSITIVITY**

Race also caused tension in the early church. Jewish Christians had a high regard for the Law of Moses. However, Paul also had to be sensitive to the church's recent decision that Gentiles were not bound by the law.

As Paul travelled even deeper into Gentile territory, it was imperative that he meet situation after situation with a Spirit-led sensitivity.

1. Compare and contrast the situation at the University of Missouri to other racially charged incidents in the news over the past year. Why is a one-size-fits-all strategy unrealistic when it comes to racial conflict?
2. While the decisions made in Acts 15 addressed the Jew/Gentile tensions in general terms, what were some limitations of those decisions? Look at the related questions Paul soon faced: Should a Jewish man with a Greek father be circumcised? How far into Greek territory should the gospel be taken? Should the gospel be offered to Jewish women before Gentile men? How did Paul rely on the Holy Spirit to ensure he acted with sensitivity?
3. Tell how your church has had to handle a potentially explosive situation that believers a century ago could not have imagined. What was the result?

—Charles R. Boatman

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