



"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®.

CELEBRATED, BUT EMPTY

Michael Phelps' performance in the Rio Olympics makes him the current hero among America's Olympic athletes, with a career total of 28 medals—23 of them gold. But two years ago, partying and heavy drinking led to a DUI arrest and thoughts of suicide. Then Ray Lewis, a friend and former Baltimore Ravens linebacker, gave Phelps a copy of *The Purpose Driven Life*. Phelps now says that Rick Warren's book "turned me into believing that there is a power greater than myself and there is a purpose for me on this planet."

UNWORTHY, BUT ACCEPTED

The gospel tells people who have no right to consider themselves worthy that God has a place for them in his heart, in spite of who they are or what they have done. The apostle Paul reminded the Gentile Christians in Rome that even though they were a "wild olive shoot," they had been grafted into the true olive tree of God's people.

1. With the world bowing at his feet, what do you think made Michael Phelps feel so unworthy?
2. If you are comfortable sharing with the group, tell them what makes you feel less than worthy of God's love.
3. Do you have "successful" acquaintances whose lives are empty of meaning? How would you approach them to give them purpose and hope?
4. In terms of your own relationship with God, how does what Paul says about being "grafted in" give you comfort?
5. Since "grafting" is a term not understood by all, what idiom might Paul have used in writing to a technological society such as ours? Explain.

—Charles R. Boatman

<http://www.standardlesson.com/downloads>

Copyright © 2016 by Standard Publishing, Part of the David C. Cook Family. All rights reserved.
Each download is for the use of one church only.