



"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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JUDGING OTHERS

We have recently seen political figures, show business and sports personalities, and media figures fall under charges of sexual immorality. Last week, it happened in another venue—Washington's National Gallery of Art. The museum announced it would postpone indefinitely an exhibition of paintings by Chuck Close, one of the 20th century's most honored portrait artists, because of charges that he harassed his models. Other museums in New York, London, and Paris are questioning what to do with his portraits. The problem for museums is that many great artists are reputed to have been harassers, rapists, even murderers. Should art be judged by the morality of the artist?

JUDGING OURSELVES

The current glut of charges being leveled against people who once held the public trust can make us smug. We say, "Look how bad they are," implying that we are virtuous by comparison. James, however, wants us to turn the spotlight on ourselves. We must ask, "Does my public identity as a Christian align with my faith as I actually practice it?"

1. One museum curator said, "If we removed the paintings done by immoral people, the walls would be bare." Does an artist's immorality invalidate his or her artistic gifts? Why or why not?
2. There have been times when someone who has won many people to Christ is caught in immorality. Would a person who became a Christian because of that person's preaching have a valid reason to question his or her own salvation? Why or why not?
3. What are some ways that a Christian's character flaws inhibit his or her effectiveness in presenting the gospel?
4. What safeguards do you have in place to ensure that your actions do not contradict your profession of faith?

—Charles R. Boatman

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