



"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®.

### **A QUESTION OF VALUE**

Jean-Michel Basquiat was once a graffiti painter. Now his work is celebrated by art collectors. On May 18, Basquiat's graffiti-like painting of a skull, titled "Untitled," brought \$110.5 million at auction. The purchaser, Japanese billionaire Yusaku Maezawa, beat out three other bidders. Last year Maezawa paid \$57.3 million for another Basquiat work, also titled "Untitled," in which the artist portrayed himself as a horned devil. About last week's auction, one art collector gushed, "It's a really historical moment." However, many people outside the rarified air of the art connoisseur's world find Basquiat's work less remarkable.

### **A QUESTION OF VALUES**

Jonah's anger about God's refusal to destroy Nineveh reflects a self-centeredness that prevented him from rejoicing in the work God was doing. He placed greater value on his own desire to see his message of divine retribution come true than he did on the 120,000 citizens of Nineveh whom God wanted to save.

1. How might a person rationalize spending \$110.5 million on a painting when there are so many worthy and needy causes in the world?
2. Assuming you had the money, how would you spend \$110.5 million?
3. At a much lower level of expenditure, what questions come to your mind about the values we Christians express by our purchases?
4. God questioned Jonah's values on the basis of compassionate concern for others. How does that speak to our values?
5. Does our response to current social issues ever mirror Jonah's expression of self-centeredness? Explain and give examples.

—Charles R. Boatman

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