



"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®.

### **CAN THE TESTIMONY BE TRUSTED?**

O. J. Simpson was recently granted parole. He was convicted of armed robbery and kidnapping nine years ago. Prior to that he gained notoriety for his alleged role in the 1994 murders of his ex-wife, Nicole Brown Simpson, and her friend Ron Goldman—and his acquittal in the subsequent high-profile trial. Simpson was found culpable in a later civil suit, resulting in a \$33.5 million judgment against him. In all of these trials, the testimony was mixed and seemingly contradictory.

### **YES, THE TESTIMONY CAN BE TRUSTED**

The first church in Jerusalem had a different kind of testimony problem, yet the question was the same: Can the church be believed in its claim to be a new kind of society—caring for all, with Christ's love evident to every observer? One way to answer the question is to look at how an individual, organization, or society treats those who are least able to care for themselves. Mixed and contradictory testimony is not acceptable.

1. What factors made O. J. Simpson's trials so polarizing to the public?
2. To what extent do you think contradictory testimony affected people's opinion of the verdicts?
3. How big of a problem does the church have in regard to its testimony to the world? What are the causes of this problem?
4. Who are "the least" in our society whom the church should care for?
5. What is the testimony of your church in this regard? What would you do to improve it?

—Charles R. Boatman

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