



“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®.

### **THE POWER OF PEOPLE’S WORDS**

The year just completed provided numerous examples of the power of words. In 2016, political campaigns from local to national demonstrated how words can stir people to support a candidate they dislike (or perhaps vote for a different candidate whom they dislike less). In some states, words persuaded the electorate to legalize the use of marijuana, either recreationally or for medicinal purposes. Across the nation, words incited violence against various ethnic groups and against law enforcement officers. In short, we saw how words can be used to divide and destroy.

### **THE POWER OF GOD’S WORDS**

On the other hand, as we read in Psalm 33, God demonstrated the positive, creative power of words when he spoke the universe into being. From the stars that fill the highest heavens to the creatures in the deepest seas, God spoke, and they came into existence. What is more, he has given to us the privilege—and the command—to speak his praise and create good with the words we speak!

1. From all the reports you saw and heard in 2016, what words demonstrated the greatest power to divide our nation? . . . to unite us?
2. From your personal experience last year, give examples of words that either hurt or healed. What were the circumstances, and what were the results?
3. How would you compare the creative power of God’s words with the power of our words to either create or destroy?
4. How can Christians “speak peace” to a divided and warring world?
5. What changes in your speech will you be making in 2017? Have you made resolutions to that effect?

—Charles R. Boatman

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