



“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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FINDING NEW LIFE

Every spring for more than three-quarters of a century, March Madness has struck America. College-basketball fever infects the nation for a few weeks, as 68 teams enter into a single-elimination tournament. Last year the University of North Carolina lost the championship game to Villanova. Ever since then the Tar Heels talked about “redemption.” Monday night North Carolina found new life, beating Gonzaga for the 2017 crown. It was only the fourth time a team has won the national championship after losing the title game the previous year.

GIVEN NEW LIFE

Sports fans live for “next year,” hoping their team will experience a championship “rebirth.” Sometimes the difference is found in a team’s spirit. However, winning such a prize comes to only one team each year. The glory of the gospel is that the number of “winners” is limited only by the unwillingness of individuals to accept God’s gift of new life. Nicodemus, focusing on the flesh, had difficulty understanding this. Jesus redirected his attention to the realm of the Spirit.

1. Can the church learn anything from March Madness in regard to creating excitement about the gospel? Explain.
2. What dangers do you see in trying to learn from the secular world?
3. Do you get as excited about your faith as you do about your other interests in life? If so, explain your passion.
4. If not, how might Jesus’ teaching about the new birth be the remedy?
5. What does “being born of the Spirit” mean in your life?

—Charles R. Boatman

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