



“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 PAIN OF PAYING TAXES**

On April 15, our 2018 income tax returns and payments will be due. Does anyone actually love paying taxes? We all use and appreciate the public services and other benefits our taxes pay for, but we know there’s much waste and we hate to see our tax dollars going to causes we don’t agree with. Every April, the call arises for a reduction to taxation, an end to taxation, or serious amendments to the tax system. In the end, most of us will grumble about it all . . . and then pay up.

### **A TAX-COLLECTOR'S CHANGE OF HEART**

We don’t know whether Jesus said anything to Zacchaeus regarding the sinful way he went about his job. However, it is clear from Zacchaeus’s response that Jesus’ words or actions pricked the chief tax collector’s conscience regarding his conduct. From what we know about the way Rome collected its taxes, we are safe in saying that Zacchaeus’s approach to his job was to enrich himself, regardless of how it affected the poor and powerless.

1. Do you think the American system of taxation is more fair than Rome’s was? Why or why not?
2. On one occasion, Jesus answered a question about paying taxes to Caesar by saying we should give to “Caesar” what is due (Mark 12:17). How does this apply to Christians today—in the realm of taxation and beyond?
3. What does Zacchaeus’s extravagant example of repentance say about how we should show repentance? Can repentance be real without a tangible demonstration of it? Explain your response.

—Charles R. Boatman

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