



“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 GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN**

The newly Democrat-controlled House of Representatives is at odds with the White House. A partial federal government shutdown is one result. The media make the stalemate appear to be all about funding the barrier the President wants to complete along America’s southern border. That’s surely a part of it, but as with most things political, the real issue is power. The ones being hurt by loss of income or government services and potential victims of an insecure border are the real pawns in the game.

### **A MORAL SHUTDOWN**

James gets to the heart of the issues that divide America politically (and in most other areas of life as well). Acting purely out of self-interest is the culprit. We quarrel with one another, each seeking what we want. According to James, when our desires run counter to what others want, a brawl can be the result. Usually the fight is metaphorical as it is currently in the government, but sometimes it becomes physical. People get hurt either way.

1. Do you agree with the premise that the basic struggle in Washington is over who has the power? Why or why not?
2. In your experience, does the description James gives explain what struggles in the church are usually about? Explain. What about conflicts at home or on the job?
3. What is your personal strategy as a Christian for seeing that pride does not become a factor in your relationships?

—Charles R. Boatman

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