



"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®.

### **SEEKING ATTENTION?**

On January 29, TV actor Jussie Smollett reported that he had been physically attacked on the streets of Chicago. Smollett claimed that two men draped him with a noose, cursed him with racial and homosexual slurs, and gave him the impression that they were supporters of President Trump. The media immediately ran with this story, often commenting that the attack illustrated an increase in intolerance during the past two years. The actor, once known to relatively few, was thrust into the spotlight.

### **RECEIVING DETENTION**

But soon the story took an unexpected turn. The Chicago Police Department thoroughly investigated the matter and arrested Smollett! Police announced that Smollett had perpetrated a hoax. Evidence surfaced that the actor paid the attackers with a personal check for \$3,500 and gave them the script for the slurs. The Department further alleged that Smollett's motive was to advance his career and to fight intolerance. If this is indeed the case, it seems that a case for tolerance would have better been made by a life of quiet service rather than by seeking fame.

1. At first, this incident was reported as evidence that the election of President Trump in 2016 encouraged those who harbored prejudices to act out with violence. As evidence mounts that Smollett perpetrated a hoax, how has it affected your attitudes about the media, politics, and law enforcement?
2. In our text today, Jesus said that those seeking to exalt themselves will, in the end, be humiliated. Tell about a time when you found that to be true.
3. We would all like the work of our church and the power of Jesus to be exalted in our community. What does this text seem to prescribe as the best way of accomplishing this?

—Charles R. Boatman

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