
Date: May 7, 2023

Session Title: The Temptation to Place Something Else Before God

The Point: The greatest joy comes from exalting God.

Get Into the Study

Use the following information to introduce Question #1.

In February of this year, Americans were riveted by scenes from Alex Murdaugh's trial for the murders of his wife, Maggie, and son, Paul. Involving one of the most prominent families in South Carolina's lowcountry, details unfolded of drug addiction, money embezzling, and family drama, in addition to the homicides at the center of the trial.

Body language experts who reviewed scenes of his police interviews took particular note of his demeanor just after the murders. One of the oddities was the contrast between his recollections about the murder scene, versus his memories about everything else that happened that night. While talking with the police officers, within an hour of his family members' deaths, Alex Murdaugh went into great detail about an agricultural problem he was trying to resolve on their property, and how he had hurried down to visit his mom with late-stage Alzheimer's.

To the untrained, details like this might seem to be part of the mental fog of someone in shock, but to people trained in interrogation, the attempt to sneak in a "brag" about his land, his good behavior, and deep "care" for his ailing mom, combined with the lack of crucial details about the deaths, was a clue that something was off.

Even when it doesn't involve a murder trial, there is something off-putting about someone who "toots their own horn." Nevertheless, from time to time, we may all brag about things we've experienced, or people in our lives who we're proud of.

Proceed with asking the first question in the leader guide.

Information for this post was gleaned from:

- <https://www.wsav.com/news/local-news/full-law-enforcement-interview-with-alex-murdaugh-on-night-of-murders/>
- <https://www.drphil.com/videos/what-body-language-experts-say-about-alex-murdaughs-behavior-during-police-interview-on/>
- <https://abcnews.go.com/US/murdaugh-murders-mysteries-timeline-key-events-south-carolina/story?id=80041546>

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OtUGmKaSX6Q>

Study the Bible

Use the following information to introduce Question #2.

Anyone shopping for a used car in 2023 has noticed the sharp increase in prices. Supply chain difficulties, labor constraints, and microchip shortages have all contributed to the problem. CNN noted, “Car buyers haven’t seen price hikes like these since the 1970s and 80s. What makes the 2020s unique is how much car prices rose in a short period of time.”

Used car dealer Pete Catalano has been feeling the squeeze. With less than half the cars he’d normally have on his lot, he noted the difficulty of finding reliable, affordable used cars, “What the market wants right now is not available, and that’s \$3,000, \$4,000, and \$5,000 cars.”

Because the difficulties obtaining microchips may ease in late 2023, Kelley Blue Book currently advises that while prices will mostly remain high, there is potential for relief a little further down the road.

Cars have long been status symbols in American life, but because of the price increases, many may value their vehicles even more than in years past.

Proceed with asking Question #2.

Information for this post was gleaned from:

- <https://www.cnn.com/2023/04/02/cars/worst-time-to-buy-car-prices-inflation-dg/index.html>
- <https://www.cars.com/articles/is-the-inventory-shortage-coming-to-an-end-460943/>
- <https://apnews.com/article/used-cars-prices-new-vehicles-supply-522266dc94e089859f6eb393a4a786e1>
- <https://www.kbb.com/car-advice/when-will-car-prices-drop/>

Jessica Connell wrote these Leader Extras. Jess is a homeschooling mom of 9 who has served around the world in ministry with her husband. She loves hiking, exploring, and being active in her local church in North Texas.

Study the Bible [Option from the Young Adult Leader Guide]

Use this activity in connection with Matthew 4:8-11 to give the group an opportunity to focus on God and worship Him. Draw attention to Matthew 4:10: “Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.”

This option will give the group an opportunity to listen and identify meaningful lyrics in the song and discuss how knowing God and His Word can keep us focused on Him.

Study the Bible [Option from the Adult Leader Guide, p. 118]

Play a worship song like “[Agnus Dei](#)” that praises God for who He is. Invite a volunteer to lead the group in worship. Then close in prayer.

Additional Questions

Icebreaker

- What future goal are you working toward?
- What is something others say you’re good at?
- When are you most tempted to make yourself look good in front of others?
- Who do you find easy to brag about it?

Matthew 4:8-11

- How does the devil tempt people with kingdoms and their spendor today?
- How have you seen Satan work through good things today to tempt believers to worship him rather than God?
- What are some things you been tempted to put ahead of God?
- What good things can be idols in our lives?
- When have you recently felt the tension between what you want and what God wants?
- Where do you see temptation taking people’s eyes away from God in our culture?

Deuteronomy 6:10-12

- Why is it a healthy reminder to never forget all good things in our lives are from God?
- What daily things can we do to remember that God is the source of all our blessings?
- Why might times of plenty make it easier to forget about God’s work in our lives?
- How can we be careful not to forget about God’s faithfulness in our lives?
- What does it look like to be thankful in our everyday lives?
- What are some things you do to remind yourself and others of God’s blessings in your life?

Deuteronomy 6:13-15

- What do you think in today’s society poses the greatest threat to a believer’s faithfulness to God?
- How does the reverential fear of God help us resist temptation?
- What are some of the “gods” present in our culture today?
- What are specific ways we can live differently from the values and priorities of our culture?

For Those in Your Group

Send the following link to your group members as either a teaser before the group meets or as a follow-up thought:

[A Look at Satan’s Sales Tactics](#)

