



EXPLORE THE BIBLE.

Session 6: Authority Acknowledged
Suggested Week of Use: January 11, 2026
Core Passage: Matthew 7:15-29

News Story Summary

Recent data shows that in 2024, residents of Alaska lost \$1.3 million to scams where criminals impersonated government officials or law enforcement officers. That's more than five times the amount lost from similar scams in 2023. For example, some victims were told they had missed jury duty and that a warrant had been issued for their arrest. Scammers often get the name of a real police officer and use that officer's name during the scam. Victims are directed to pay a fine with either gift cards or Bitcoin to resolve the issue.

Often older residents are taken in by these scams because they are considered a vulnerable population. In total, Alaskans over the age of 60 lost more than \$8.2 million to various kinds of scams in 2024. The Alaska Department of Public Safety has warned people that law enforcement, banks, or other entities will not call and demand payment in gift cards or Bitcoin.

For more about this story, search "Scammers in Alaska impersonating officials."

Engage

To supplement the Engage activities, ask: *Would you answer the phone if the caller ID came up as the local police office? Why?* Discuss responses. Affirm that most people would answer because they view police officers as authority figures who protect us and deserve our respect. Say: *But sometimes people who act like authority figures are "wolves in sheep's clothing" instead.* Share the information from the news article about people in Alaska being scammed by criminals impersonating authority figures. Ask: *How can you know whether a person is a real authority or not?* Discuss responses. Share that this session considers the traits of a genuine spiritual authority and how believers can make sure they are putting their ultimate trust in our one, true Leader.

Challenge

To supplement the Challenge activities, review how residents in Alaska were fooled by people claiming a particular title or position. Ask: *How are people led astray by someone who claims a religious title or position? From today's lesson, what criteria can you use to distinguish true teachers from false teachers?* Emphasize that the consequences of being deceived by false teachers are greater than any dollar amount. Say: *It is a matter of eternal life and death.* Remind adults that Jesus is the standard for our teaching, so true teachers follow His Word completely. Close the session in prayer, asking God to give adults discernment and wisdom so they can follow true teachers who will help them become more like Jesus each day.