

THE CHRISTIAN AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

As awareness of artificial intelligence grows, many Christians are wondering about its use, in personal and professional life and also in church ministry. Are there ethical concerns? Is it different from other time-saving technology? What does the Bible have to say?

WHAT IS AI AND HOW DOES IT WORK?

1. Artificial intelligence (AI) is generally defined as computer systems capable of performing tasks that have historically required human intelligence, such as perception, interacting with an environment, solving problems, or even creativity.
2. The launch of chatbot programs and image generators, such as Open AI's ChatGPT, made AI accessible to average computer users and has drawn a wide spectrum of responses from ministry leaders and faith-based groups.
3. AI systems are computer programs that can receive information, process the data, and perform some action in response. Ultimately, humans program them with sets of encoded directions—algorithms—that instruct the systems to perform certain steps, in response to certain inputs, to achieve certain goals.
4. While the Bible naturally does not address AI directly, Scripture reveals timeless truths, principles, and mandates that apply to guiding Christian thought about AI. The most fundamental of these truths is that God is the Creator, and we are His creatures.
 - a. God made us in His image as finite beings. He designed us for relationship with himself and with one another, calling us to love others and to exercise wise dominion over creation. God completed his creation and called it “very good” (**Gen 1:31–2:3**), but creation is now fallen because of human sin.
 - b. We rightly use technology in ways that point toward the fulfillment of God's kingdom, trying to alleviate some symptoms of the curse under which creation groans (**Rom 8:36**).
 - c. But, we must remember technology is not creation's ultimate Healer, Savior, and Redeemer who will make all things new (**Rev 21:5**). Jesus alone can establish a renewed creation and a perfected humanity.

CONCERNS

1. AI is a tool that can save time, but must be used within an overall Biblical framework.

- a. Institutions are researching and receiving guidance on the impact of ChatGPT and similar programs on education. A teacher who asked ChatGPT to write a middle-school student essay found it very similar to student essays in her experience, showing that educators at all levels will need to limit student access to AI during testing.
 - b. Excluding inappropriate content is also a concern.
 - c. On the positive side, carefully-designed AI-assisted education could potentially revolutionize remote areas of the world.
 - d. Any use of AI needs to reflect submission to our Creator instead of a rejection of His authority or a forgotten sense of who we are as His creation. Part of this submission involves applying AI in ways that assist, rather than undermine, the human purposes for which God designed us.
 - e. Scripture suggests that God intended some tasks specifically for humans, whom He created with all the traits we would need to fulfill these tasks. Biblically, we can understand technology as a gift that reflects our God-given creativity. We can apply this gift in ways that help us better tend, protect, and learn about creation. Through technologies, including AI, we can invent new ways to steward our time more effectively, share the gospel, love others, and help alleviate the suffering of our fallen world—remembering that only Jesus will redeem creation from sin's effects.
2. Excessive use of AI can isolate people from vital socialization and relationships.
- a. Dr. James A. Bradford, pastor of Central Assembly of God in Springfield, Missouri, and the former General Secretary of the Assemblies of God, is no stranger to advances in technology. (Bradford earned advanced degrees in aeronautical engineering prior to being called into ministry.) He sees AI as a tool for quickly finding facts, such as historical dates during sermon prep, but cautions, "While it can certainly speed up research, it can't replace God's Word and the Holy Spirit."
 - b. There is a risk of disengagement from community and from actually reading the Bible. Such risk is not new with AI; the internet itself brought the same danger, and Covid-19 restrictions led to more online church options.

- c. People will not receive the same benefit from asking only the questions they want to, compared to meeting in person with a Spirit-filled pastor or leader offering prophetic insight and facilitating discussion.
 - d. The Church should emphasize connection through regular sermons and teaching, just as the Apostle Paul taught both large and small group gatherings. ([Acts 20:20](#))
 - e. **Interactions with AI cannot realistically replace human companionship any more than Eden's animals could alleviate Adam's solitude**—the only aspect of creation God had declared not good ([Gen 2:18](#)). God designed humans to be with humans, and we will not truly flourish unless we conform to His designs.
3. AI can cause harm and cause spiritual confusion.
- a. The Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC) statement on AI cautions about harm to others, stating, “We know [technological tools] can also be designed and used in ways that dishonor God and devalue our fellow image-bearers.”
 - b. It is likely that there are both ethical and moral, as well as unethical and amoral ways to use AI, especially for Christians. However, God knows and holds the future. Nothing humans have ever achieved has surprised Him.
 - c. Centuries ago, the printing press revolutionized the spread of God's Word, and it continues to do so; yet it is sometimes used unwisely. The same television that offers unwholesome content also provides Bible training in restricted nations via satellite. The bottom line seems to be that we must seek the Holy Spirit's guidance to use technology wisely to advance the Kingdom of God.
 - d. Humans may easily be tempted to begin looking to AI as the final authority for truth. We may begin looking to AI as the ultimate, unquestionable expert. But **AI is engineered by imperfect humans, trained on data from imperfect humans, and prone to bias and errors - presenting made-up information as factual.**

- e. Only God is all-knowing, infallible, and the ultimate Truth. His Word, not the outputs of AI, must be our final authority.
- f. It is Jesus, not AI, through whom all things were created (Col 1:16–17). He who “became to us wisdom from God” (1 Cor 1:30) is the most intelligent being to walk the earth—and is himself the Truth (John 14:6). His voice is the one we must follow. Amidst the unfolding spiritual impacts of AI, we must look to God’s Word and the gospel as humanity’s authority for truth and source of hope for redemption through Jesus.

CONCLUSION

1. A biblical worldview demands navigating the AI age with wisdom, keeping timeless truths about God and humanity at the forefront. These truths include the realities that we are finite, fallen creatures who bear our Creator’s image.
2. This Creator designed humans with specific purposes in mind, manifested in how He ordained humans to live in relation to Himself, to one another, and to creation. From “having dominion” over creation, to loving our neighbors, to raising families, to leading churches, to sharing the gospel, some tasks seem specifically meant for humans.
3. Our best approaches to AI will be those that support humans in our God-given callings without displacing, devaluing, or promoting false assumptions about humanity. Even in this new world, God’s Word supplies the principles we need to navigate technological change as the creatures that our Creator designed us to be.