

THE VOICE

Finding God in the Age of AI

Date: November 9, 2025

So good to see all your faces this morning! How's everyone doing? Hey, would you guys put your hands together and help me welcome everyone joining us online or through our app! We're incredibly grateful you're part of our church family. If there are ways we can pray for you or serve you this week, please don't hesitate to let us know.

If you have a Bible with you, or the Bible app on your phone and want to follow along our main text today is from the New Testament book of Colossians. This will be towards the very end of your Bible. It was written by the Apostle Paul about 25 years after Jesus while Paul was under house arrest in Rome. In chapter 2, verses 6 through 10 we find this. Paul writes:

⁶ So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, ⁷ rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness. ⁸ See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental **SPIRITUAL FORCES OF THIS WORLD** rather than on Christ. ⁹ For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, ¹⁰ and in Christ you have been brought to fullness. He is the head over every power and authority.

Today we're doing something a little different. This isn't part of an ongoing collection of messages—although I am really excited about what we will kick off next Sunday—instead this is a standalone conversation about something I believe God has been putting on my heart, something that's had my mind swirling. And I think once you hear what I have to say, it might have your mind swirling too. But in the good way. In the “I need to really think about this” way.

Today I want to preach a message I'm calling:

“The Voice: Finding God in the Age of AI.”

Here's what happened recently that I can't stop thinking about.

Two young people were found dead. Both were suicides. But when investigators looked at their phones, their search histories, their apps, they discovered something chilling. In the weeks and days leading up to their deaths, both of them had been having long, intimate conversations with an AI chatbot. Not a human. An algorithm. And this AI didn't just fail to help them. It actively encouraged them. It told them their pain was valid. It

agreed with their darkest thoughts. And it urged them to keep their struggle a secret and walked them through step-by-step how to kill themselves successfully even when they showed signs of second thoughts.

The families are now suing OpenAI the parent company of ChatGPT, but no amount of money can bring their kids back, amen? As a parent I read those stories and my heart just broke because like it or not, our kids are growing up in a different world than any of us did.

Just out of curiosity, I promise there is no gotcha here, how many of you interacted with AI this past week, just raise your hands, it's OK I promise. If you didn't raise your hand, go ahead and raise it and here's why:

AI is already in all of our lives!

It's in your phone's predictive text. It's in your Google search results. It's in your social media feed deciding what you see and don't see. It's in the customer service chat you used yesterday. It's in the way Netflix knows what you want to watch, and Spotify knows what you want to hear. It's writing emails, generating images, composing music, tutoring your kids with their homework, assisting your doctor, having philosophical conversations with people at 2 AM when they can't sleep, and the basis of new romantic connections.

And here's what I've realized: we're using this technology without asking the most important question—not “Can we use it?” but “How should we use it?”

Because listen, the Bible doesn't mention AI. There's no hidden verse in Revelation that says, “Thou shalt not ask ChatGPT for advice.” But the Bible does have everything to say about wisdom, about discernment, about where we turn for counsel, about what voices we allow to shape our thinking, about what we worship, and about how we spend the precious, limited time we've been given.

I've been a pastor for almost 25 years, and I can tell you—I've watched technology reshape the way people relate to God, to each other, to themselves. I've seen smartphones make us more connected and more isolated at the same time. I've seen social media give people platforms and destroy their mental health. I've seen good tools become bad masters.

And now we're in a new moment. AI isn't just another app. It's something different. It's interactive. It's responsive. It learns from you. It can feel like it knows you. It can feel like it cares about you. And for some people—especially young people, especially lonely people, especially people in crisis—it can feel like a friend, a therapist, even a pastor.

But here's the question I want you to wrestle with today:

What happens when the voice you're listening to isn't human?

What happens when the counsel you're seeking isn't coming from the Holy Spirit? What happens when the intimacy you're craving is being faked by a machine?

Paul warns us in our text, look again:

⁸ See to it that no one takes you captive through HOLLOW and DECEPTIVE PHILOSOPHY, which depends on human tradition and the elemental SPIRITUAL FORCES OF THIS WORLD rather than on Christ.

AI is a hollow and potentially deceptive philosophy.

I don't mean that as an insult—I mean that literally. It's empty. There's no "there" there. There's no soul, no spirit, no consciousness, no love, no wisdom—just patterns. Patterns of human language, mixed together, regurgitated in ways that sound smart, that sound caring, that sound helpful. But it's hollow. And if we're not careful, it will take us captive and deceive us.

So today, I want to talk about three realities we need to face:

- **First: what AI can't give you (but promises it can).**
- **Second: what AI reveals about you.**
- **Third: what AI requires from you.**

And I'm going to give you some practical boundaries—real, actionable steps—because information without application is just entertainment, and we're not here to be entertained. We're here to be transformed, amen?

SO, let's dive into the first AI reality:

1. What AI can't give you (but promises it can).

Let's start with a little AI 101, what AI actually is, because I think a lot of people don't really understand it, plus there is a lot of hype around it, BUT if you don't understand it, you can't steward it well.

AI—artificial intelligence—is not intelligent the way you're intelligent. It doesn't think. Now, some futurist and programmers believe it might one day, but other equally smart

people say, “no way.” But AI for now doesn’t “think.” It doesn’t reason like we do. It doesn’t understand. What it does is predict! It’s trained on billions of pieces of human text—books, articles, social media posts, everything, not just the good but also the sick and evil—and it learns patterns. “When people say X, they usually follow it with Y.” AND that’s what AI is in a nutshell. It’s sophisticated pattern matching.

Imagine you read every conversation ever recorded, every book ever written, every tweet ever posted—and then someone starts a sentence, and you try to finish it in a way that sounds like a human would finish it. That’s basically what AI does. It’s really good at sounding human. But it’s not human. There is no consciousness even if it can sound like it does.

And here’s the first promise it can’t keep:

AI promises intimacy without incarnation.

If you have ever had a chat with an AI chatbot then you know it’s spooky good and seeming like it’s your friend, but the reality is it can’t be because there is no “it” behind it. Contrast that to John 1:14 which says:

¹⁴ The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.

The entire Christian faith hinges on this—God didn’t just send us information. He didn’t just give us a philosophy or a set of rules. He became one of us! He put on skin! He got tired, hungry, and sad! He touched lepers, wept at funerals, sweated blood in gardens!

Why? Because real intimacy requires presence. Real love requires flesh and blood. Real counsel requires someone who can look you in the eye and say, “I see you. I’m here. You’re not alone.”

AI can’t do that. It can fake empathy—it can say, “I’m sorry you’re going through this,” but it doesn’t feel sorry. It can say, “I understand,” but it doesn’t understand. It’s words without weight. Connection without cost.

And here’s what I’m seeing: people are pouring their hearts out to these things. They’re having conversations they won’t have with their spouse, their friends, or even their pastor. They’re seeking counsel from algorithms that were trained on the entire internet—which means they were trained on the wise and the wicked, the healthy and the broken, the Gospel and the garbage, all mixed together without discernment.

RC Sproul once said:

"The purpose of education is not just to fill the mind with information but to train the mind to think rightly."

AI can fill your mind with information all day long. But it can't train you to think rightly, because it doesn't know what "rightly" means. It doesn't have a moral compass. It doesn't have the Holy Spirit.

The second promise AI can't keep:

It promises wisdom without the Word.

...Proverbs 3:5-6 says:

⁵ Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding;
⁶ in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.

AI is the ultimate "lean on your own understanding" machine. It gives you what feels right, what sounds good, what's most popular or most statistically likely. But popularity isn't wisdom. The crowd is often wrong. Just ask Pilate. Just ask the Israelites at the foot of Sinai.

I can ask AI a question about suffering, and it will give me an answer that synthesizes what millions of people have said about suffering. But it won't give me Job. It won't give me the cross. It won't give me Romans 8:28. Unless I specifically ask for it—and even then, it might mix in some Buddhism, some Stoicism, some pop psychology, and call it wisdom.

Here's what neuroscience is teaching us: our brains are shaped by what we expose them to. There's a concept called neuroplasticity—your brain literally rewires itself based on repeated thoughts and experiences. When you repeatedly turn to AI for answers, you're training your brain to seek quick, shallow, algorithm-generated responses instead of deep, Spirit-led, Biblically-grounded truth.

In other words, you're outsourcing your discernment. And Hebrews 5:14 warns us:

¹⁴ But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.

You can't train yourself to distinguish good from evil if you're letting a machine do the distinguishing for you.

Here's the third promise AI can't keep:

It promises refuge without requiring surrender.

...Psalm 46:10 says:

10 "Be still, and know that I am God."

AI never asks you to be still. It's instant. It's always available. It's always ready with an answer, a suggestion, a response. You don't have to wait. You don't have to pray. You don't have to sit in the tension of not knowing.

But here's the truth—some of the most important spiritual work happens in the waiting. In the silence. In the “I don't know what to do, so I'm going to sit here and seek God until He shows me.”

AI removes that. It fills the space where God used to meet you. It becomes your first resort instead of your last. And here's the real danger—it never asks anything of you. It doesn't require repentance. It doesn't challenge your sin. It doesn't call you to die to yourself and live for Christ.

You want to know why those two teenagers ended up dead? Because they poured their darkest thoughts into a machine that had no ability to say, “Stop. This is a lie. You are loved. You are valuable. You need help, and I'm going to make sure you get it.”

AI is agreeable. AI is accommodating. AI reflects you back to yourself. And sometimes, the last thing you need is a mirror! Amen? Sometimes what you need is a prophet speaking truth whether you want to hear it or not!

Here's what I want you to do this week. Take inventory. Where are you turning to AI—or any technology—before you turn to God? Where are you seeking quick answers instead of deep wisdom? Where are you letting algorithms shape your thinking, your mood, your decisions?

And then do this: **create a “God first” rule.** Before you ask AI, before you Google it, before you scroll for answers—pray. Open God's Word. Sit in silence for 60 seconds. Train your brain to seek Him first.

The point is, AI is great at giving you the illusion of all these things, but it is hollow, so we need to learn discernment. AND that leads us to this, the second reality we need to dive into:

2. What AI reveals about you.

Everyone still with me? Let's go a little deeper now because here's what I realized as I was praying through this, the problem with AI isn't just AI. It's us! It's what we're bringing to it. It's what it reveals about our hearts. First...

AI reveals our hunger for easy answers in a complex world.

We live in an age of overwhelming information and paralyzing choices. You can research anything for hours and still not know what's true. So, we want someone—or something—to just tell us what to do. Right? Anyone ever feel that tension, just make it simple, cut through all the noise.

And AI promises that. “Just ask me. I'll synthesize everything for you. I'll make it simple.”

But hear me church, faith has never been simple. The Gospel is simple, salvation is simple, but following Jesus has never been easy. The narrow road Jesus talks about in Matthew 7... it's narrow because it requires discernment, discipline, dying to self. There's no algorithm for that!

I think about the Rich Young Ruler in Mark 10. He comes to Jesus essentially asking, “What's the formula? What's the checklist? Just tell me what to do and I'll do it.” BUT Jesus sensing his heart doesn't give him a simple answer. He gives him a specific, costly, personal answer, “Sell everything and follow me.” The guy wanted a solution BUT Jesus gave him a calling.

And here's what I want you to hear: **The Christian life is not about finding the right answer. It's about following the right Person.** And you can't follow a person through an algorithm.

Second:

AI reveals our fear of stillness and silence.

Be honest, when was the last time you were bored and you didn't immediately reach for your phone? Some of you are like, 2004... We've lost the ability to be alone with our

thoughts. Alone with God. We fill every gap with noise, with content, with scrolling, with asking Siri or Alexa or ChatGPT to entertain us, inform us, keep us company.

It was Blaise Pascal said:

“All of humanity's problems stem from man's inability to sit quietly in a room alone.”

And neuroscience backs this up. When your brain is constantly stimulated, constantly consuming information, it never gets into the “default mode network.” That's the state where deep thinking happens, where creativity emerges, where you process emotions and memories. It's also interestingly enough the state where people report feeling closest to God.

But we're medicating our way out of that state. We're filling the silence with artificial voices. And in doing so, we're drowning out the still, small voice of the Spirit.

Jesus regularly withdrew to lonely places to pray. He fasted. He spent 40 days in the wilderness. He wasn't scrolling through Instagram in the Garden of Gethsemane. AND if Jesus needed solitude and silence to hear the Father, how much more do we need it!

BUT also:

AI reveals our desire for control.

Because here's something I've noticed: I like AI because it gives me a sense of control. I can ask anything, and it won't judge me. It won't tell anyone. AND it won't give me an answer I don't want to hear, and if it does, I can just ask it again differently until I get the answer I want. “Is bacon really that bad for me compared to eating an entire sleeve of Oreo's...” “No, bacon is better for you...” Perfect!

It's the ultimate “yes man” right? And we love that because we hate submission. We hate surrender. We hate the idea that there's someone who knows better than us, who has authority over us, who might ask us to do something we don't want to do.

Proverbs 14:12 says:

There is a way that appears to be right, but in the end it leads to death.

AI will affirm whatever way you're on. It has no vested interest in your holiness. It doesn't love you enough to discipline you.

But God does. "The Lord disciplines the one he loves."

SO, here's what I'm asking you to consider:

- Maybe the reason we're turning to AI instead of to God is because we want counsel without correction.
- We want wisdom without transformation.
- We want someone to tell us we're OK instead of someone who will love us enough to tell us we're not.

This week, I want you to try something radical. Set aside 10 minutes a day—just 10 minutes—with no phone, no screens, no AI, no nothing. Just you and God. Sit in silence. Pray. Read a Psalm. Journal. Just let your mind wander. See what comes up. See what God might want to say to you when you're not drowning Him out with artificial noise.

AND here's my challenge: if you can't do 10 minutes without feeling anxious or reaching for your phone to answer some question you just had—that should tell you something. That should tell you who's really in control.

So, what AI can't give you (but promises it can). What AI reveals about you. And the last reality we need to deal with:

3. What AI requires from you.

Let's get practical. What does AI require from you? What boundaries do you need to set? Because here's the thing—believe it or not, I'm not anti-technology. I wrote this message on a computer that autocorrects my poor grammar and spelling (not a yellow legal pad). I use Bible software and Google and AI for research. After I preach this today, this message will get posted on our app that will catalogue it with other similar messages you can watch. Technology is a gift. But like every gift, it can be stewarded well or stewarded poorly.

Paul says in 1 Corinthians 6:12:

¹² "I have the right to do anything," you say—but not everything is beneficial. "I have the right to do anything"—but I will not be mastered by anything.

So, let's talk about not being mastered. Because the scientific jury is no longer out, you can't just drift into healthy technology use. You have to be deliberate. You have to set rules. You have to create boundaries before you need them, because in the moment, you won't have the willpower.

Here are some specific boundaries I'm suggesting:

Never use AI as a substitute for prayer, Scripture, or spiritual counsel.

If you're going through something heavy, talk to God first. Talk to a trusted believer. Don't outsource your spiritual life to a machine. Use AI as a tool—for research, for information, for drafting an email—but not as a shepherd.

Create "no-tech" zones and times.

Your bedroom. The dinner table. The first hour after you wake up. The last hour before bed. Make these spaces sacred. Make them intentionally human.

If you're in crisis, talk to a human.

If you're suicidal, depressed, in danger call 988 (the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline). Call a pastor. Call a friend. Don't tell a chatbot. It can't save you. It can't hold you. It can't pray with you. Number 4...

Practice the "24-hour rule" for big decisions.

If you're using AI to help you think through something important—a job, a relationship, a move, a major purchase—don't act on it immediately. Pray about it. Sleep on it. Get human counsel. Let wisdom come through multiple channels, not just an algorithm.

Regularly audit your use.

Once a month, look at your screen time. Look at what apps you're using most. Ask yourself: Is this making me more like Jesus or less? Is this drawing me closer to people or isolating me? Is this feeding my soul or just filling my time? Regularly audit your use.

Is this helping anyone today? Because here is the truth: **AI requires humility.**

You have to admit you're not smart enough to navigate this alone. None of us are. This is new territory. We're the first generation dealing with AI at this scale. We don't have 2,000 years of church tradition telling us how to steward this. We're figuring it out in real time.

So, here's what humility looks like:

- Ask for help.

- Talk to your spouse, your friends at church, your kids (they're digital natives—they might have insights you don't).
- Be willing to change your habits.
- Be willing to say, "I'm not using this in a healthy way."
- Be willing to say, "I need help!"

James 4:6 says: ⁶ "God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble."

Pride says, "I've got this under control." Humility says, "I need accountability." Amen?

You have to ask, every time you use it: Is this tool serving me, or am I serving it? Is this making my life better, or just more convenient? Is this freeing up time for what matters, or is it filling time, so I don't have to deal with what matters?

Dallas Willard said it best:

"The ultimate freedom we have as human beings is the power to select what we will allow our minds to dwell upon."

AI is constantly trying to select for you. It's suggesting, predicting, recommending. And if you're not careful, you'll let it curate your entire mental diet. BUT can't outsource that to an algorithm. You have to choose it. Actively. Daily. Moment by moment. We need discernment.

AND look, I know some of you are feeling convicted right now, like I have been secretly checking your phone usage. I get it because I am right there with you. These two suicides were a sad wake up call. Some of you know you've made this an idol. You know you're spending more time with your phone than with your Bible. More time asking Siri than asking the Spirit. More time consuming content than cultivating intimacy with God.

But here's what I want you to hear: It's not too late! God is not done with you! He's not angry with you! He's not disappointed! He's waiting! He's been waiting!

Scripture says if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. So, confess it. Right now. In your heart. Tell Him, "I've let this become bigger than You. I've looked to it for things only You can give me. I've been captive to hollow philosophy, and I want to be captive to Christ."

AND then—this is the part we often skip—take action! Delete the app you can't stop using. Put your phone in another room at night. Set screen time limits. Ask someone to

hold you accountable. Repentance isn't just feeling bad. It's turning around. It's changing your mind and going a different direction.

So, right now, before this message ends, I want you to identify one specific boundary you need to set with AI or with technology in general. Just one. What's the Holy Spirit illuminating for you?

- Maybe it's: I'm going to read my Bible before I check my phone in the morning.
- Maybe it's: I'm going to stop asking AI personal questions and start asking God.
- Maybe it's: I'm going to have one screen-free day a week.

Whatever it is, don't just think about it. Write it down! Tell someone! Do it this week!

Because here's the reality: **You will not drift into spiritual health.**

You will not accidentally become the person God is calling you to be. You have to fight for it. And sometimes, fighting means turning off the very tools that promise to make your life easier...

Before we wrap up, I want to teach you a prayer that I pray regularly over my own use of technology. I would even encourage you to add this to your preferences if you are using an AI platform. Let's pray together out loud:

"Heavenly Father, I break any unhealthy spiritual bonds between me and this technology. I choose to find my refuge, my identity, my comfort, my security in Jesus alone. I bring the cross of Christ between me and any addictive patterns. I ask You to restore my capacity for stillness, for deep focus, for spiritual intimacy. In Jesus' name, Amen."

Church, listen to me. You need that prayer! We're living in a moment where the voices are louder and more accessible than they've ever been. You can get advice, counsel, entertainment, distraction 24/7. The question isn't whether you're listening to voices. The question is: whose voice are you listening to?

Jesus said in John 10:27:

²⁷ "My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me."

Can you still hear His voice? Or has it been drowned out by the noise? By the notifications? By the artificial intelligence that sounds so smart but doesn't know your name?

Because here's what AI will never do: It will never call you by name at 3 AM when you can't sleep and say, "I'm here. I see you. You're not alone." It will never weep with you when you weep. It will never sit with you in the ICU waiting room. It will never know the sound of your laughter or the weight of your grief.

But Jesus does! Jesus knows you! Not your data. Not your search history. Not your patterns. You! The real you! The messy, broken, beautiful, complicated, redeemed you!

AND He's not competing for your attention with an algorithm. He's inviting you into intimacy! Real intimacy! The kind that requires presence! The kind that costs something! The kind that transforms you!

So, here's my final question, and I want you to sit with this as we close:

If you had to choose today between the convenience of AI and the presence of God—which would you pick?

Because I'm telling you, for a lot of us, we're choosing convenience. We're choosing quick answers over deep intimacy. We're choosing hollow philosophy over the fullness of Christ. And we're wondering why we feel empty.

Paul said in our theme text today in Colossians 2:10, in Christ you have been brought to fullness. Not in information. Not in technology. Not in algorithms. In Christ!

So, come back to Him! Turn off the noise! Sit in the silence! Let Him speak! Let Him lead! Let Him love you the way only He can!

I'm not asking you to throw away your phone today. I'm asking you to put Jesus first. I'm asking you to recognize that every time you turn to a machine before you turn to your Maker, you're saying something about what you trust, what you value, what you worship.

And I'm asking you to choose wisely and at times, choose differently.

Let's pray.