



How Do I Know?

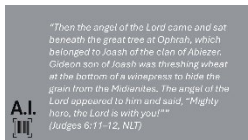
A.I. #2 • August 31, 2025

“How Do I Know?”

It might seem weird to start a sermon about Artificial Intelligence by taking you **back over 3000 years** in time ...but that’s what I’m doing!



I want to take you back to around 1200 BC, to the time of the Judges in ancient Israel, to early one summer during the wheat harvest. Israel had fallen on hard times, and the Midianites from the East were continually raiding them during harvest time to steal the Israelites’ grain and resources. A young man was doing his best to stay hidden, off their radar, threshing his grain in a spot that would make him less visible to any of the foreign robbers.



“Then the angel of the Lord came and sat beneath the great tree at Ophrah, which belonged to Joash of the clan of Abiezer. Gideon son of Joash was threshing wheat at the bottom of a winepress to hide the grain from the Midianites. The angel of the Lord appeared to him and said, “Mighty hero, the Lord is with you!”” (Judges 6:11–12, NLT)

Put yourself in Gideon’s sandals for a moment. How would *you* react if you encountered the angel of the Lord? I like to think that I would be calm and reverent...although the reaction of most people in Scripture makes me think I’d probably be freaked out! But regardless of my emotional state, I think there’s a part of me that would be asking, *“Is this real? How do I know?”*

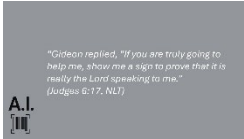


For those of you who know the story of Judges in the OT, you know that God is going to use Gideon to rescue His people from the oppression of the Midianites. You might remember the climactic battle, where Gideon’s small force of 300 men surrounds the enemy army at night. On his command, each person blows a trumpet and breaks open a jar to reveal a lighted torch – which makes it seem like Gideon’s force isn’t just 300 men but instead 300 *companies* of men, ready to attack. It’s a great story...but it almost doesn’t happen, because Gideon struggles here with one question:

“*How do I know?*”

As the angel of the Lord calls Gideon to lead this rebellion, Gideon hesitates.





*“Gideon replied, “If you are truly going to help me, **show me a sign to prove that it is really the Lord speaking to me.**” (Judges 6:17, NLT)*

God soon provides Gideon with a miracle (in Judges 6:21) to validate the message. But that’s not quite enough for Gideon’s doubts. When the time comes to act, Gideon runs another test, this time by laying a piece of fleece on the ground. He asks for the fleece to be covered with dew and the surrounding ground to be dry...*if* this is God’s plan. When that small miracle happens, Gideon believes...but still wants to run yet another test. This time, he asks God to do the opposite – dry fleece, wet ground. And it happens.

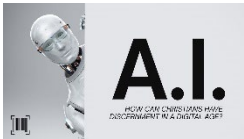


God answers clearly, and yet Gideon struggles to know whether this message is trustworthy or not. Should he believe it? Should he act on it? Is it true?

“How do I know?”

Series Recap

That question brings us back to the present and to today’s sermon. In our current sermon series, we’re looking at some **big questions** that are **generated when we begin using Artificial Intelligence.**



Artificial Intelligence (AI) is everywhere these days, and it can do both amazing and terrible things. We need wisdom to navigate its use! Thankfully, God has given us everything we need to handle it well. He provides us with **spiritual wisdom** to navigate deep questions, whether they relate to the human condition or to cutting-edge technology.

God knows our questions... like, *“How do we know?”* And He is prepared to help us find TRUTH when we need it!

And when it comes to AI and truth, we’re going to need a lot of help!



Is it Real?

AI has gotten very good, very fast, at presenting photos, videos, and content that look real...sound real...and feel real!

That realism can be fun when you are trying to be artistic. People without the tools (*or, dare I say, “talent”?*) can use artificial intelligence to bring their visions to life with just a well-written prompt. The computer does the heavy lifting and processing, and it spits out a (mostly) believable video clip.



Some of you might have seen a few of the viral “Bible influencer” video clips that came out earlier this year as Google released its Veo 3 AI Video Generator. The videos showed Bible characters like Jonah, Daniel, Peter, Joseph and others presented like modern-day influencers, filming themselves as they talk about their situations.

Here are a few examples:

[PLAY VIDEO – “Bible Influencer Videos”]

These videos are realistic, but they are easily seen as art – a visual tool to help us see the characters in the text come to life (*like “The Chosen,” or like productions at the Sight & Sound Theater in Branson*). These videos are obviously fake! No one thinks that David had an iPhone when he was slinging rocks at Goliath; no one expects Moses to be taking selfies and saying, “Bro.”

But... what happens when AI starts moving into less-obviously fake areas?

[PLAY VIDEO – “Just Kidding. I’m Not Real”]



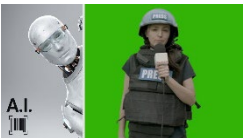
What do we do with that? Aside from the surreal situation, the news footage looks true. The reporter looks trustworthy. The voices sound like experts. It all seems real...except it isn’t.

Fake people. Fake situations. Fake audio. Fake video. Fake news. Fake truth.

Now we have a bit of a crisis on our hands! If AI is so good at creating lies, **how will we know** what is true? How will we know what to believe anymore?!

Have you had these kinds of conversations before, about the scary future when you won’t know what is real and what is fake?

We had a big discussion about it at our staff meeting the other day, and all of us have concerns! We recognize that clever lies can lead to mass confusion; they can be used to manipulate people and to do harm on a personal or a societal level.



In the 1990s, there was a book and a movie called “Wag the Dog,” in which a Hollywood producer was hired to produce a fake war as a distraction to keep attention off a scandal involving politicians. Create fake footage of conflict, explosions, interviews, press conferences? Then send that to TV stations and news outlets...and all of a sudden you have a fake war.

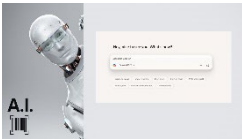
In the 90's, such an effort would take actors and sets and cameras and money. But with A.I., it just takes a few hours and keyboard strokes. It's that easy to start a campaign of misinformation.

Side Note: I realize that some of you are quite aware of A.I. and how to use it. Others might not know what is involved – you've heard the term, but you have no idea how you (or anyone) would use it.

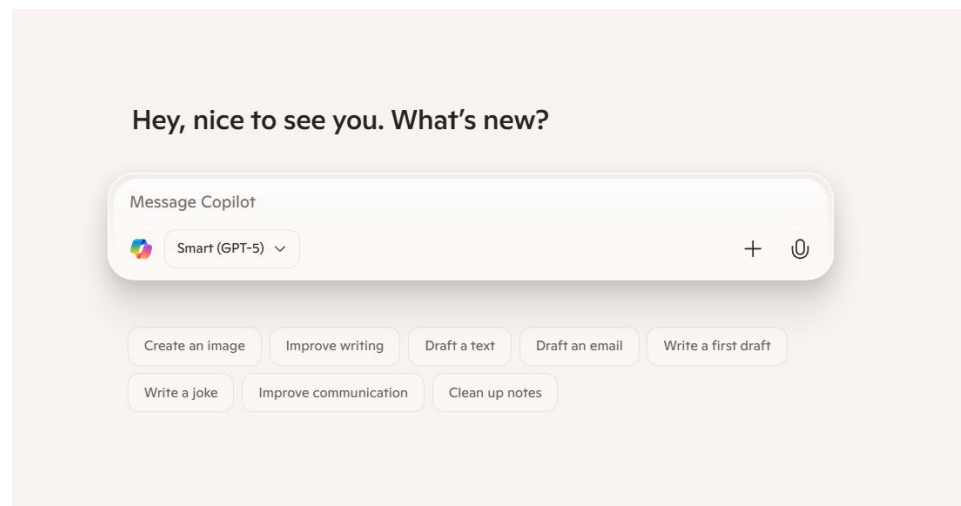
At its core, A.I. is just a computer program that takes in data, finds patterns, and gives useful results.¹ For advanced AI, most of the computing power happens away from your device – you send in a request from your phone or laptop, their computer processes things, and then it sends you the output.

We'll talk a little bit more about **where it gets its ideas** next week, but for now, just know that it is creating and generating content based on what a user requests.

If you've never used it, here's an example. You open up Microsoft's "Edge" browser and on the search bar you click the "Copilot" icon.



It then takes you to this kind of screen.



It's almost like searching on Google – a blank space to type your message, with maybe a few links to get you started.

Once there, you just type a simple prompt:

¹ [AI for Beginners: How to Start Using AI In 2025 - Workflows](#)

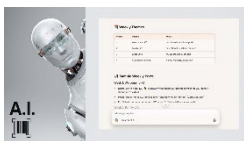
- “Write a short email about missing a meeting.”
- “Summarize this paragraph.”
- “Create a to-do list from this text.”

The more detail you put in, the better. Instead of “Write a caption,” you might say:

“Write a casual caption for a Facebook post about a coffee shop promoting a new seasonal drink.”

Or more specifically:

“Acting as a marketing director, create a calendar of social media posts for a business that is trying to expand into the Kansas City area. Focus on upper-middle class customers who have kids in elementary school. Provide it as a PDF.”



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Weekly Themes

Week	Theme	Focus
1	Welcome to KC	Introduce brand, local pride
2	Family Life	Parenting tips, school routines
3	Local Love	KC events, parks, schools
4	Aspirational Living	Home, wellness, education

Sample Weekly Posts

Week 1: Welcome to KC

- **Mon:** “We’re here, KC! 🎉 Discover what makes our brand perfect for your family.” (Brand intro video)
- **Wed:** “Top 5 things KC families love—and how we fit right in.” (Carousel post)
- **Fri:** “Meet the team behind our KC launch.” (Behind-the-scenes reel)

Week 2: Family Life

Message Copilot

Smart (GPT-5) ▾

+

Some AI programs are better at certain tasks than others.

- **Writing?** Use ChatGPT or Grammarly
- **Notes?** Try Otter.ai
- **Design?** Go with Canva.com

All of these AI programs are capable of creating the things that are requested, **whether the request is truthful or a lie...**



The Source of Lies

...and THIS is where we realize that the issue we have with AI might not really be the technology or the output. **No, it is the *heart* of the person who is trying to create content.** Our issue is with the source of lies!

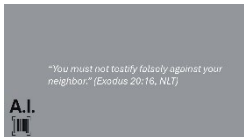


The good news (if you can call it that?) is that **dealing with the hearts of liars** is not a *new* task; it didn't originate when AI chatbots started appearing in your browsers. Lies have been around since the beginning!

If we are going to understand truth and lies in our content creation, God has already equipped us to recognize those things, and to recognize the hearts of those who oppose truth.

Lying is clearly wrong. Just check out the Ten Commandments, in case you forgot:

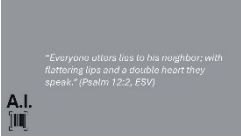
"You must not testify falsely against your neighbor."
(Exodus 20:16, NLT)



Scripture has numerous statements and character studies related to lies and lying and deceit that help us understand its **evil**...and how **natural** it can be.

- **Sometimes lies are told for self-preservation.** Abraham, for example, tried to protect himself from jealous violence by saying that his wife was just his sister. (Genesis 12)
- **Sometimes lies are told to avoid guilt.** Joseph's brothers sold him into slavery, but they misled their father into believing that Joseph had been killed by wild animals, shifting the blame to a lion or a bear instead of the brothers. (Genesis 37)
- **Sometimes lies are told to steal glory.** Ananias and Sapphira lied about their generosity to gain a greater reputation in the early church. (Acts 5)
- **Sometimes lies are told to gain power.** Herod lied to the wise men, asking for the Messiah's location supposedly to worship him, but secretly wanting to murder him and fend off a future challenge to his throne. (Matthew 2)

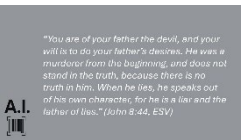
We understand why *they* told lies, and we need understand why we tell lies! (You do. I know you do). We all do, to varying degrees.



“Everyone utters lies to his neighbor; with flattering lips and a double heart they speak.” (Psalm 12:2, ESV)

Some are **social** lies (“It’s good to see you!”), or **scheduling** lies (“I’m not available today”), or **obligation** lies (“I’m not feeling good, can’t come in to work”).

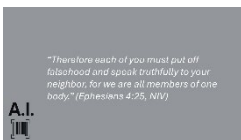
We have our reasons for lying or bending the facts, but whenever we do lie, we are putting ourselves in alignment with the wrong supernatural being:



“You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father’s desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.”
(John 8:44, ESV)

Lying is Satan’s gameplan. It’s what he does. From the Garden of Eden to the Garden of Gethsemane, he always pushes an alternative to truth.

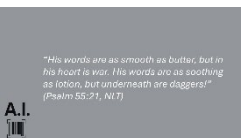
There is much to be said about his (and our!) practice of twisting truth. Honesty is vital to the Christian experience, and we all should commit to being truthful in our speech.



“Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body.”
(Ephesians 4:25, NIV)

But as we examine our main question in the sermon today, our personal experience with lies and lying helps us answer the question, **“How do I know?” when it comes to truth.** If we can understand **our own** sinful hearts, we can see our own twists and lies in *other people’s* messages, in what they create!

So, whenever you are trying to evaluate whether something is real or true, ask yourself: **what is the heart behind it trying to get you to think, or feel, or do?** What kind of agenda is hidden beneath the surface, like in Psalm 55?



“His words are as smooth as butter, but in his heart is war. His words are as soothing as lotion, but underneath are daggers!”
(Psalm 55:21, NLT)



Ask yourself:

- Is the content **promoting peace** or **conflict**?
- Is the goal to **educate**, or to get you **addicted to the dopamine hit** in your brain as you scroll endlessly and make money for them?
- Is it encouraging **forgiveness** or is it **rage-baiting**?
- Is it designed to make you build **unity** or to **distrust** others?
- Is it causing you to **withdraw** from interactions with people who need the gospel, or is it pushing you to **engage** with them and show them the love of Jesus?

Jesus equipped us to recognize these motives, and he warned us to look at the fruit to determine the heart behind the actions.



“Beware of false prophets who come disguised as harmless sheep but are really vicious wolves. You can identify them by their fruit, that is, by the way they act. Can you pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? A good tree produces good fruit, and a bad tree produces bad fruit. A good tree can’t produce bad fruit, and a bad tree can’t produce good fruit. So every tree that does not produce good fruit is chopped down and thrown into the fire. Yes, just as you can identify a tree by its fruit, so you can identify people by their actions.”

(Matthew 7:15–20, NLT)

Be wise in identifying the heart behind the message, and you’ll be better equipped to spot the lies amidst the truth!



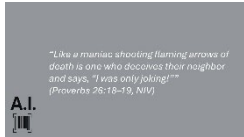
Truth When It Matters

Even with that knowledge, though, our ability to distinguish between truth and lies may not be enough. There are going to be times when we are fooled.



- If you see a cute video of bunnies jumping on a trampoline, you might not be able to tell that it was made by someone using AI.
- If you see an article that gives you wrong facts about the history of tariffs, you might not be able to tell that it was manipulated by someone using AI.
- If you see a picture of a celebrity at an event, you might not be able to tell that it was created by someone using AI.

Whoever creates this stuff is intentionally causing chaos.



“Like a maniac shooting flaming arrows of death is one who deceives their neighbor and says, “I was only joking!”” (Proverbs 26:18–19, NIV)



The people posting these lies are shooting flaming arrows of death all around us faster and more realistically than ever. That’s scary... but as we ask, “HOW DO I KNOW?” let me ask you a different, honest question: **could you really trust your sources before?**

How did you know whether your encyclopedia had accurate information?

How did you know that your teachers in school were correct in what they taught?

How did you verify the statistics you saw or used?

- **Scientific knowledge** is always changing...which means many things we were taught as **settled science** were **factually incorrect!**
- **New revelations** come out about a **sports star**, and all his great **accomplishments** and **stats** are **skewed** by steroids!
- **Schools in Kansas knew** they had a certain amount of **dollars** to spend, until (as just happened on Wednesday) a **data error** was discovered and now they must repay over \$11 million!

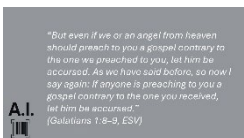
We have always lacked certainty in almost every area! But most of the time, it doesn’t make much difference in what we do or how we act daily and locally.



That means if AI leads us to have false knowledge, we aren’t doomed forever!

- If AI convinces someone they are wrong about whether the earth is round or flat, they can still use GPS to navigate to that new restaurant in KC.
- If AI convinces someone that lizard people are hiding among us, that person can have the same vigilance against violence and corruption they might have had against normal criminals or politicians anyway.
- If AI convinces people to certain foods will cause cancer, they can still eat and get nutrition from other foods.

If you get deceived by AI on something, don’t fret. There’s only **one thing** that really matters eternally. The most important truth is the truth that brings us closer to God.



“But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a

gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed.”
(Galatians 1:8–9, ESV)

And what is the gospel we received? It is the message of the cross!

“My old self has been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. So I live in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.” (Galatians 2:20, NLT)

If we are firm in that truth, it doesn’t matter what other lies we’ve been told!

Practical Questions

Do we still want to distinguish between truth and lies? Absolutely. Like Gideon, we want to make sure we’re not listening to the wrong voices.

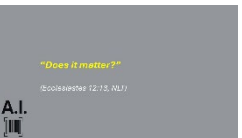
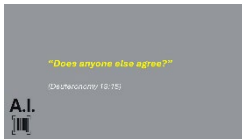
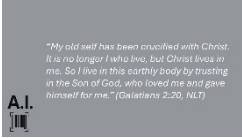
In fact, let me give you three questions to ask, practically, right now, when it comes to information you find:

1. **“Does anyone else agree?”** The OT law used to require the testimony of 2-3 witnesses to establish truth (Deuteronomy 19:15). Look for other seemingly trustworthy sources – news outlets, people, sites – to see if they are consistent with whatever you’re researching.
2. **“Did you ask God for wisdom?”** *“If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking.”* (James 1:5, NLT) When you need truth, speak to the one who created truth! Make sure you humbly turn to Him to understand the wise course of belief or action.
3. **“Does it matter?”** Does it help you follow God more closely? In Ecclesiastes 12:13, we are reminded that our main duty is to fear God and obey Him, not to have every other bit of information correct. If a bit of incorrect knowledge doesn’t get in the way of helping you follow Jesus, don’t fret about it!

Closing

“How do I know?”

“... test everything that is said. Hold on to what is good.”
(1 Thessalonians 5:20–21, NLT)



I can't tell you that you'll always get the right answers, or that you'll always be able to distinguish AI lies from concrete truth. But I do believe that the truth will make itself known. And it has...in the person of Jesus Christ!

Whatever struggles we have with AI pale compared to the confidence we can have in our Savior! That's what matters most!

“How do I know?”

Be wise and discerning when it comes to AI creations. Check for the heart behind what you see, looking for lies and avoiding falsehood where you can. Ask good questions to help you reach conclusions.

But remember that as humans our knowledge is always limited. We are often wrong. Our one and only hope isn't in perfect knowledge; it is in the knowledge of the One Who is Perfect!

Remember His words:

... *“I am the way, **the truth**, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.”* (John 14:6, NLT)

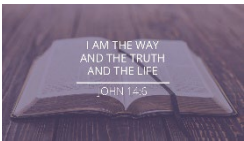
Amen? Amen!

Prayer

Invitation

During our invitation song, if you have a prayer request you'd like to share, a struggle with truth you need help with, or a spiritual decision you'd like to make, please write it down on your connection card in the bulletin and drop it off to in the baskets by the exits. We want to pray for you and with you as you pursue truth!

Now, please stand and sing with me!



Sermon Notes

How Do I Know?

(Judges 6:11-12; Judges 6:17)

Is it Real?

The Source of Lies

(Exodus 20:16; Psalm 12:2; John 8:44; Ephesians 4:25; Psalm 55:21; Matthew 7:15-20)

Truth When It Matters

(Proverbs 26:18-19; Galatians 1:8-9; Galatians 2:20; 1 Thessalonians 5:20-21; John 14:6)

Practical Questions

- “Does anyone else agree?” (Deuteronomy 19:15)
- “Did you ask God for wisdom?” (James 1:15)
- “Does it matter?” (Ecclesiastes 12:13)

Discussion Questions

- Are you concerned about fake information being generated by AI? In what situations would that information be harmful?
- What does the Bible say about lying? (Exodus 20:16)
- Do you ever share posts or news without verifying them? How does that reflect your walk with Christ? What would it look like for Christians to be known for truthfulness online—both in what we share and what we create?
- What's an area of your life where you need to commit to greater honesty—with others or with yourself?
- Read Galatians 1:8-9. What is one area of truth that matters more than accurate use of AI? Can you explain what that gospel message is? Does your explanation match up with what the Bible teaches?
- How does staying rooted in the gospel help you navigate a world full of uncertainty and lies?
- This week, intentionally look for one AI-generated image, video, or article. Then ask, "Was it obvious?" How can Christians stay discerning without becoming paranoid?
- Jesus said we can know people by their fruit (Matthew 7:15-20). Think of one news source or influencer you follow. What "fruit" do you see from them? Does it align with God's values? Decide if you should keep or cut that influence.
- Make a list of three truths from Scripture that matter more than any piece of news or AI content. How can you keep those front and center this week when everything else feels confusing?