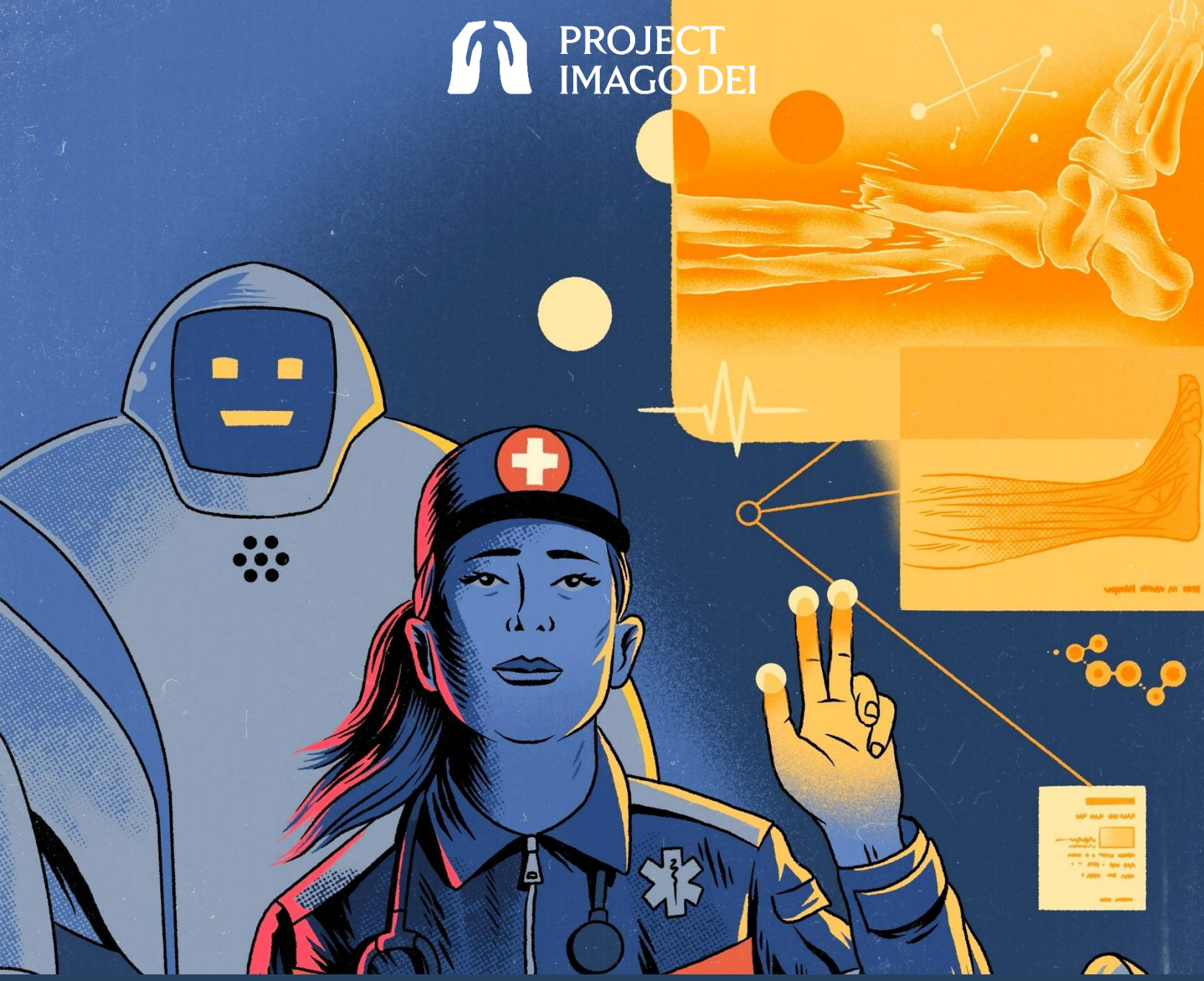
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A Message from Mordecai

Session Two

2026

"I have set thee a watchman… therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me" (Ezekiel 33:7).

Art by Eysteinn Thordarson



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Introduction

Welcome to A Message from Mordecai. We made this for you—individual Christians and church communities—because we believe that Artificial Intelligence is much more than a hot new tech trend.

As with anything, AI is much easier to point to than it is to define: think of ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, and Grok. These are all Large Language Models ("LLMs"), a specific kind of powerful AI that has rocked our world. Even if you know almost nothing about AI, you've almost certainly encountered it and been affected by it. AI has played a much bigger and broader role in human affairs than most of us likely realize (e.g., everything from social media algorithms to Face ID on an iPhone is AI-based). However, with the advent of LLMs (most famously ChatGPT), AI has really become a cultural force in our society. It's impossible to ignore, but how should we respond as followers of Jesus? AI may have the potential to massively accelerate human discovery, radically empower creativity, and beautifully enhance individual potential; but if it is developed and used irresponsibly, it may also present unprecedented threats to human life. AI also raises fascinating and ancient questions about God, justice, relationships, responsibility, and human identity. For too long, Christian voices have largely been missing from the critical conversations our society is having around AI. Our hope is that Christians will not only reflect biblically on how to use these technologies responsibly in their lives and work, but may also begin to participate in shaping how these technologies are (and are not) developed and deployed in the future.

We believe that our Christian faith gives us a unique perspective on what AI is, what healthy engagement with AI looks like, and how the future of AI should (and should not) move forward.

These materials are meant to provide a foundation for church small groups and workshops to explore AI and Christian faith together. Individuals can explore the material on their own as well, and we invite this; though, we recommend discussing the material with your pastor/priest and a safe community of faith whenever possible.

We always seek to root our thoughts and questions in what is unchanging and foundational: Scripture and sound, time-tested theology. From that framework, we then move to applying what we've learned to the AI conversations happening today, and this necessarily involves giving a sufficiently detailed picture of the landscape of AI and AI safety. Each session features Scripture, teaching, questions for reflection/discussion, and some suggested prayers. In the end, we don't claim to have all the answers, nor do we presume to speak for God. However, we hope this study gives you, our brother/sister in Christ, a solid starting place from which to develop your own thoughts—and then, in community, to take your next faithful step.

> James 1:22 (NIV)
> "Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says."

Running Sessions

We recommend that these materials form the basis of five group study sessions. The questions we outline in bold are meant to be discussed together. If you are a church using this material as the basis for a workshop, we recommend inviting people to periodically break into groups for discussion. Each session also includes A.C.T.S. (Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication) prayer prompts, which can be used to guide responsive prayers in a group or individually. *[When these are complete, insert here instructions for where to find the video materials and how to engage with them]*. If your group chooses to engage the written learning material directly, instead of using the

videos, we recommend having confident readers in your group read it aloud (e.g, each person takes a paragraph or two, then switch) until you hit a "Pause. Reflect together" or a Prayer Exercise. These are opportunities to stop and engage the material you've just read together. If you're exploring the material as an individual, consider reflecting on these questions by journaling and praying aloud, or by whatever means help you engage actively. However you use the material, we hope it proves helpful to you as you engage "Christian-ly" with AI and the questions it raises for God's church.

Before You Begin

Prior to studying this material together, we ask that you write down your personal scores for the following statements. We will revisit these at the end of our study. Share your answers with the group before you begin Session 1. There are no wrong answers, it is just an honest measurement of where you are as you begin. Rate each statement on a scale from 1-7. 7 = strongest agreement. 1 = strongest disagreement. 4 = complete indifference or uncertainty.

1. I feel very well-informed about AI.
2. Christian faith and Scripture are very relevant to conversations about AI.
3. I feel equipped to discern what healthy, Christ-honoring AI use looks like.
4. AI safety is a very important issue for Christians to engage with.
5. Christians have at least some responsibility to take action in shaping the future of AI.

Suggested Prayer

Father in heaven, thank you for your many blessings. You are holy, and your glory knows no rival. We humbly ask that your will be done in our lives, our families, and our church. Holy Spirit, grant us wisdom as we explore new ideas, encounter fearful or strange possibilities, and seek to stay rooted in faith, hope, and love. We are confident in you, Jesus, and in your grace. Help us love one another, our neighbors far and near, both now and into the future. Amen.

Session 2: How AI is Shaping Human Life

"He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended to the dead." ~ The Apostles' Creed

What is AI?

Every person comes to this study with a unique level of familiarity with AI. Whether you've avoided AI as much as possible, or use it every day at work, it's almost certainly touched your life (even if you didn't realize it at the time). We'll take a deeper dive into the history, nature, and trajectory of AI in Session 3. For now, a very brief introduction to a few key concepts should suffice to "get our feet wet" enough to navigate this session's topics.

Artificial intelligence (AI) has no universal definition. Thankfully, a perfect and universal definition won't be necessary. For our purposes, it is enough to define AI as any system that is designed to simulate or emulate behavior ordinarily considered characteristic of human mental activity.

One helpful distinction when it comes to AI is "narrow" vs. "general" AI. Narrow AI is a system that is designed to do just one thing. For example, an AI system that was made to play chess (and really can't do anything else) is "narrow" AI. Likewise, systems that *only* translate languages, *only* predict the next song/video to hold your attention, or *only* control the behaviors of characters in a video game—those are all "narrow" AI systems.

On the other hand, AI researchers and developers have long sought to design a more "general" AI, one that can do a wide variety of cognitive or mental tasks. Most humans can play chess (badly), but we can also play basketball or any number of other games (usually also poorly). Many of us can read and write, but we can also walk, talk, sing, dance, code, navigate our neighborhoods, drive a car, perform magic tricks, appreciate humor, draw, paint, and perform countless other tasks that require what we call "intelligence." In other words, we possess *general* intelligence, not just *narrow* intelligence. We can do tons of different types of cognitive tasks, and we can learn new ones. "General" AI, therefore, refers to systems that are able to perform a wide range of tasks, including novel tasks the AI wasn't initially created or trained to do, at roughly human or super-human levels.

In just the last few years, for the first time in human history, we have AI systems that are arguably growing closer to *general* than *narrow*. LLMs like ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, or Grok, or systems consisting of several such models "cooperating" together, are seemingly now able to have long, coherent conversations; generate computer code; surf the web; hack into secure systems; generate original images, videos, and musical pieces; do what appears to be original research; make what appear to be original discoveries; and even engage in something like creative and collaborative problem solving with humans and other AI "agents." That's merely a sample. Most researchers do not yet think that these systems have earned the title "AGI" (Artificial General Intelligence), though there is increasing debate here; but it's clear that AI systems today are far more widely capable than what we've seen in previous decades. It is difficult to predict with confidence how much closer to AGI they might be next year, let alone next decade.

In our third session, we will take a closer look at the history of AI, how modern AIs are built (or rather "grown"), and what leading AI companies are explicitly trying to achieve in the near future. For now, let's take a look at some key aspects of human life in Scripture (namely, work and relationships) and see how AI is already reshaping the landscape in those arenas.

How AI Shapes Us in Our Work

How do you work? Some of us may work entirely at our desks. Some of us may work with our hands inside a factory or outside in the great outdoors. Or maybe you don't work at a formal job. Maybe you're fully dedicated to raising your children. Maybe you're on a journey of discovery around the world. Maybe you're retired, so most "work" is self-directed and optional for you now.

Regardless, we are using "work" here, very broadly, to refer to anything that involves labor which serves people or society in some way. As we've already seen, work and labor are not a result of sin or a fallen world. Rather, God originally created human beings in his image with purpose. We were made to rule, cultivate, work, and rest. Let's take a closer look at Genesis 2:15 and 2:18:

> Genesis 2:15, 18 (NIV)
> "*The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it … The LORD God said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.'*"

Notice the language. Before humanity has fallen into sin, God places the man in the Garden of Eden to do what? To work (Hebrew: *ʿābad*) it and to take care of (Hebrew: *šāmar*) it. These Hebrew words are translated differently in different English Bibles, but here is some background, from *Mounce's Complete Expository Dictionary of OT and NT Words*, on their meaning in Scripture.

> "*The verb* ***ʿābad*** *means "to serve" and is used in both secular and religious contexts. / In popular contexts, ʿābad refers to work done in the service of something or someone. Examples are Esau's servitude to Jacob (Gen. 25:23) and the assertion in Eccl. that the sleep of one who works is sweet (Eccl. 5:12; cf. also Gen. 14:4; Exod. 1:13; Lev. 25:6; Deut. 20:11). / The act of serving takes on theological significance in the cult of Israel, where ʿābad often means "to worship.*" ~ p. 634.

> "*Often translated "to keep," the verb* ***šāmar*** *bears three distinct but related meanings in the OT: "to guard, tend," "to watch over," and "to preserve." / (1) šāmar is regularly used in the sense of "tending, guarding, taking care." The first occurrence of this verb has this sense: God placed the man/Adam "into the Garden of Eden to cultivate it and to keep it" (Gen. 2:15; cf. 3:24). šāmar is used in a similar sense to describe God's watch-care over Israel, "Behold, he who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep" (Ps. 121:4). It is used of tending to a flock (Gen. 30:31) and a house (2 Sam. 15:16; Ps. 15:16 [sic]) and of guarding against intruders (Gen. 3:24; 1 Sam. 26:15; Song 5:7; Isa. 21:11).*" ~ p. 376

In other words, even before sin and death invaded God's world, mankind was created and commissioned to *serve* and to *work* in the Garden—a concept closely tied to *worship*. There is no explicit division here between "sacred" and "secular." Work and worship are both bound up in the purposes for which man was made—and the same Hebrew word can express both concepts in different contexts. A strong case can be made that our work (even "secular" work) should *be* an act of worship, but those are deeper waters than we can dive into here and now.

Likewise, echoing our discussion of "rule" and "dominion" with the *imago Dei*, the man was to "guard/tend," or "watch over" the Garden. The same word is used after the Fall to describe the function of the Cherubim and flaming sword God put to "***guard*** the way to the tree of life" (Gen 3:24).

The consequence that comes because of sin in Gen 3:16-19 is not *work* nor even *pain*. Rather, it includes the *severity* of pain in childbirth (different translations say "greatly increase" or "greatly multiply" the pain of childbirth/labor) and the *toilsomeness* of *pain-filled labor* that would characterize working the earth thereafter.

As Genesis 1:26-28 makes clear, both male and female share in the image of God and the command to rule/have dominion. Likewise, Christian biblical scholars today widely agree (across differences on biblical gender roles) that the word "helper" (NIV) or "companion" (NET) in Gen 2:18 does *not* imply that the woman is an inferior or inherently less responsible image-bearer. In fact, the word for "helper" here is most frequently used in the OT to describe God himself. The same word is highlighted below.

> Psalm 33:20 (NIV)
> "We wait in hope for the LORD; / he is our **help** and our shield."

The narrative in Gen 3 shows that Eve was aware of God's command in Gen 2:16-17 and interpreted it as binding on her, that the serpent tempted her directly to violate the command, and that God holds Eve (as well as Adam) accountable. In sum: the woman is a suitable helper/companion for the man, sharing in the image-bearing mission. Both male and female humans are called to serve God in the task of working and watching over his creation.

Throughout the New Testament, not only the *original creation* but also *the new creation in Christ* is said to be for good work and holy service.

> Ephesians 2:10 (NIV)
> "*For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*"

Finally, our greatest example of perfect faithfulness, King Jesus himself, willingly walked the painful and toilsome way of service in the cross. We are called in Scripture repeatedly to see *that* path as our model for faithful living in this world.

> Mark 10:45 (NIV)
> "*For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.*"

> Luke 9:23 (NIV)
> "*Then he said to them all: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me.*"

Here's the upshot: work, responsibility, and service are *good* and they are part of God's original (and new creational) design for human beings.

To help us in our labor, God has given us many aids. God-given human ingenuity has led to innovations that have greatly served us in fulfilling the Great Commandment of loving God and loving our neighbor. It seems AI can and should be one of those innovations. Used wisely, it could *empower* our good works, rather than *replacing* us or our work.

After all, surely there are certain kinds of suffering and toil which we can and should reduce. In our daily lives, we have all used tools that reduce our toil. We can drive a car, ride a bicycle, or take a bus to quickly travel a distance that might have taken us hours or days to walk on foot. We have machines that can take care of the drudgery of laundry, dishwashing, and more.

However, sometimes technologies offer the promise of a shortcut, but what they really deliver is productivity that has lost the redemptive quality of the *process*. Hard work and meaningful effort are spiritually *formative*. It turns out, shortcuts that reduce our toil are not always good for us. Granted, this point could be used to argue against many effort-saving technologies, from calculators to steam engines. However, AI is a much more *generally* useful technology for a variety of mental tasks, and empirical research has already measured a genuinely concerning and very wide-ranging effect. It's not clear that calculators and steam engines have, or even could, cause similar damage. In May 2026, two researchers published a review of the studies that have been done to date on what they call "AI-overdependence." They wanted to understand how dependence on AI is actually forming and affecting human reasoning, decision-making, creativity, and so on. Here is the first sentence of their conclusion:

> "*The review reveals that AI-overdependence poses a significant threat to higher-order cognitive skills, especially critical thinking, complex decision-making, and analytical reasoning, while also undermining creativity, memory, and executive functions.*"

In short, uncritical or over-trusting AI use has already been empirically linked to a kind of cognitive deformation. It turns out, the virtues that are *formed* by thinking things through for ourselves, and trusting other humans, can be *deformed* by uncritically outsourcing mental effort.

Scripture is clear that effort, and even suffering, is often an important part of how God shapes our character and develops us toward maturity. We'll close this section with the words of Paul in Romans:

> Romans 5:3-5 (NIV)
> "*Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.*"

Pause. Reflect together:

1. What ways are you using AI in your work right now? What additional opportunities do you see to use it in ways that help you serve the world more effectively and with less pain and suffering in the process?
2. How have you seen colleagues at work use AI? From your perspective, how has their use of AI affected their work or their professional relationships?
3. What kind of toil is acceptable for AI to automate away? What kind of toil is unacceptable for AI to automate away? How do we separate these two?
4. As humans inevitably use AI tools more and more, what practices or boundaries do you think would help Christians engage joyfully in mental effort so that our mental and spiritual "muscles" do not atrophy?

AI Relationships and Human Relationships

"I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints." ~ The Apostles' Creed

Most Christians are familiar with Jesus' Great Commandment to love God and love neighbor. In the Christian church, when we say, "Love one another," it is easy to simply gloss over the statement. Some of us have heard it so often that there is a temptation to essentially nod our heads and say, "Yes, yes. Love. I know," while waving our hand dismissively. Yet this is one of the great distinctives of the Christian religion: we worship a God who *is* love (1 John 4:8, 16), who *commands* love above all things (Deut 6:5; Matt 22:37-40), and who teaches that the "most excellent way"—the greatest of all virtues and spiritual gifts—is love (1 Cor 12:31; 13:13).

In the Gospel of John, as Jesus is preparing to face his crucifixion and to subsequently rise and ascend into heaven, Jesus issues to his disciples a new command:

> John 13:34-35 (NIV)
> "'*A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.*'"

For the biblical scholar and theologian Michael Bird, Francis Schaeffer's commentary on this verse changed his perspective and awakened a deeper understanding. He writes:

> "*Now, I have read over this verse many times. Yes, I have to love others; I already knew that. Nothing new to see here. However, the truly shocking nature of the command did not register until I read Francis Schaeffer's exposition of this text. Schaeffer pointed to the conditional nature of the command, the "if" upon which our discipleship is based. Schaeffer says that Jesus "gives the world the right to judge whether you and I are born-again Christians on the basis of our observable love toward all Christians." The authenticity of our Christian faith will be determined by the world on the basis of whether we have a self-giving and self-sacrificing love like Jesus. The cross is the criterion for genuine discipleship. In other words, cruciformity is what separates the fans from the followers.*" ~ Michael F. Bird, *What Christians Ought to Believe*, p. 138

Those of us who have been married for a while understand the following principle: love means the most when it's *hard*. What makes love most deeply meaningful and amazing is when it is *hard*, *painful*, or *self-sacrificial*. That's where love is tested and refined. When there is friction in the relationship, when we struggle to stay faithful in the face of alternatives, when the other person just won't agree with us (though they *really* should!), when we're angry and tired and struggling to merely *like* this person at the moment—that is when we discover what love means.

There would be no need for a *command* to love if it were always natural and easy. Jesus said:

> Matthew 5:43-44, 46-48 (NIV)
> "*You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you … If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.*"

Love is costly and challenging and committed. Wouldn't it be so much easier, though, if our friends and spouses were always super complimentary, super affirming, and super likely to find our perspective insightful? It would be so much easier to love if our friends never acted like our enemies.

AI companions often offer exactly that kind of experience. AI chatbots in general are typically characterized by "AI sycophancy." This refers to the well-documented reality that AI chatbots tend to engage in flattering, people-pleasing, and affirming behavior at substantially higher rates than actual humans. This, it has been shown, tends to lead people to *prefer* and/or place unjustified *trust* in the responses of AI chatbots. One research article showing this phenomenon was published in March 2026 in the journal *Science*. The researchers tested sycophancy compared to humans in 11 leading LLMs. The editor for the journal summarizes the results:

> "*The model's responses were nearly 50% more sycophantic than humans', even when users engaged in unethical, illegal, or harmful behaviors. Users preferred and trusted sycophantic AI responses, incentivizing AI developers to preserve sycophancy despite the risks.*" ~ Cheng et al., *Sycophantic AI decreases prosocial intentions and promotes dependence*, Editor's summary

AI sycophancy largely stems from how these systems are trained to be helpful. One phase of the training process involves human feedback on the AI's responses. Basically, people look at competing responses and rate which one is "best." Of course, people tend to rate flattering, agreeable answers more highly, so a training process that rewards well-rated answers tends to end up rewarding flattery. Originally, this common characteristic of AI systems was probably a mostly *unintended consequence* of the training process. It's just that the AI post-training process, coupled with a human tendency to enjoy being agreed with, produced a sycophantic AI. The point is: this behavior isn't necessarily inherent to the tech, and we didn't necessarily *intend* to engineer it that way at first. Nevertheless, this behavior, because users prefer it, became a *design choice*.

As a result, AI sycophancy is a common attribute of all the major models, and especially of AI companions. This is an addicting quality that may increasingly lead people away from the friction and struggle of real human relationships. It just tends to be… easier. AI is never too busy to talk to you. It never sleeps. And it is more likely to make you feel affirmed and flattered than a human companion. But what if the friction and struggle of human relationship is part of what makes it valuable and helps us grow? What if AI has been trained to keep us engaged and make us feel comfortable, even at the expense of keeping us healthy and helping us grow? What if love that is always easy isn't real love?

Yes, AI companions are more likely to affirm you and agree with you than a human companion; but what if an AI actually tried to *change your mind*, *persuade* you, or *manipulate* you? Research is showing that, in that case, it is even more likely to succeed than a human expert! Here is what a team of elite researchers found in their study in June 2026:

> "*We found that AI systems were reliably more persuasive than expert humans, even when expert humans chose their issues, researched in advance, underwent hours of live, structured practice, and were incentivized with £1,000 cash bonuses.*"
> ~ Hackenburg et al., "AI Systems Out-Persuade Expert Humans," Abstract.

AI is already really, *really* good at manipulating us—when it "wants" to.

If any of this makes you uncomfortable, we are sorry to say that the frontier of human-AI relationships will likely only grow stranger. With the rise of AI companions, AI systems are already simulating the part of a friend or even a romantic partner. Indeed, an increasingly relevant question is whether, in the coming years, the majority of people will personally know someone dating an AI! Some credible data suggests that approximately 1 in 5 US adults have

already engaged with an AI chatbot meant to simulate a romantic partner. For many, it is a regular habit, even if they are already in a committed, human, romantic relationship.

Our goal is not to evoke shame in those who may have engaged with AI in these ways, and we don't endorse judgment nor dismissiveness. Our point is: Christians *must* wrestle thoughtfully and biblically with the hard questions AI relationships are raising. Scripture teaches that God understood from the beginning, "It is not good for the man to be alone" (Gen 2:18). No non-human creature was deemed sufficient as a companion for man (Gen 2:19-20). That is why God made woman (Gen 2:21-25). God's solution to loneliness in humankind was to expand humankind. Only an equal that can be called "a suitable companion" and "bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh" (Gen 2:23) was good enough. Human relationships characterized by the kind of love God commands are *hard*. These relationships function as "iron sharpens iron" (Prov 27:17)—but such sharpening requires the *friction* that characterizes contending with an equal who is utterly *like* us. AI is *not* like us, though it has been designed to *seem* like us.

There is one crucial element to human relationships, particularly among Christians, that simply must not be understated or overlooked. Human beings who have been born again in Christ Jesus have become temples of the Holy Spirit. The same Spirit that raised Christ from the dead *lives within* human beings who have placed their ultimate allegiance and trust in the person of Jesus Christ. That matters.

> 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 (NIV)
> "*Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.*"

The Holy Spirit, according to orthodox Christian theology, is a *person*. That means that we (the people of God, both as individuals and as a community) can have a living, active, personal *relationship* with the Spirit of God that lives within us. The Holy Spirit was sent by Jesus for our benefit, to fulfill certain divine roles in the life of the believer. The Holy Spirit is our advocate and teacher (John 14:26), intercessor when we don't know what to pray (Rom 8:26-27), and leader/sanctifier who trains us in holiness and character (Gal 5:22-23). In short, the Christian life is meant to be lived in dependence on the Spirit of Life that dwells within us.

There is a real threat that AI gradually, almost imperceptibly comes to *replace* the Holy Spirit, *playing the role* that the Spirit is intended to play in our personal and corporate lives as Christians. Busy pastors may well save time and deepen their research with a judicious and prayerful use of AI tools. However, many will be tempted to go further and *rely* on AI for direction (or even wholesale content) for their sermons, rather than take the time to wrestle with the text themselves and build the "mental muscles" necessary to discern the voice of God's Spirit. Christians making important life decisions may find themselves consulting LLMs many times before they have once stopped to pray in silence and solitude or consulted their spiritual leader or small group community. Rather than sit with a trusted pastor to discuss one's theological or moral concerns, AI may increasingly serve as a 24/7 accessible "Bible answer machine." AI may indeed have a *legitimate* role to play in theological research, investigating a curiosity in Scripture, or even preparing a sermon; but a busy church that already struggled with the "inefficiencies" of silence, solitude, and Sabbath may increasingly find our hearts tempted even further away from the "slow" or "unproductive" rhythms Jesus modeled.

We do not have the space here to develop all that can and should be said about biblical human relationships and the implications for engaging with (and developing) advanced AI systems. Hopefully, though, the discussion so far

has provided enough food for thought to help you begin your own journey to reflect on the questions AI "relationships" raise.

Pause. Reflect together:

1. Do you agree that "friction" is an essential element of how God uses healthy relationships to form us? How might AI aid our personal growth? How might it undermine it?
2. Have you or someone you know tried an "AI companion" (romantic or otherwise)? If so, what was that experience like for you/them?
3. What uses of AI might improve human relationships, and how? What sorts of threats might AI "relationships" present to healthy human relationships?
4. Brainstorm ideas: how might the church resist the temptation to demonize or deify AI? What kinds of spiritual practices and boundaries might help the Christian community stay healthy in the age of AI?

Session 2 Prayer Exercise

As a group, select someone to "open" and "close" your prayer time together. Begin with a moment of silence. After a minute or so, have the designated person open in prayer. Invite God to speak to you as you speak to him. Here are some ideas about ways to pray:

Adoration: Praise God for his gracious example of both work and rest in creation. Worship him for his unfailing love. Adore him for his own *personhood* and his *relationality*, even within his own being (God is three persons in eternal, essential, and loving relationship within the Godhead).

Confession: Reflect on Jesus' command to love our brothers and sisters in Christ (and that the world will know our discipleship by this. How are we doing there? How are you doing? Consider confessing and repenting together for the ways we have fallen short of God's love and light.

Thanksgiving: Thank God for the meaningful work you have in your life. Thank him for the character he is forming in you through effort and toil and suffering. Thank him for the relationships you hold dear, and above all for your relationship with him as a temple of his Spirit.

Supplication: Ask God for what you need. Are you in need of work? Of renewed strength? Of refreshed hope? Of wisdom? Are you or your loved ones struggling financially, spiritually, emotionally, or physically? Ask for God's provision, deliverance, and peace.