



SESSION 01 / AI AND THE CHRISTIAN

We've Panicked Before

Christianity and Technology

Randy White | October 23, 2026

What should govern us

What should govern a Christian's thinking when the world changes?

The Word of God, rightly divided, gives us the foundation to understand ourselves, examine our reactions, judge carefully, and face the future with confidence in Christ.

A familiar human reaction

We become comfortable with the world we inherited. Its tools feel ordinary because someone else did the worrying before we arrived. Christians share these human reactions; we need to examine them.

Fear can borrow the language of faithfulness. Enthusiasm can borrow the language of progress. Either can bring a conclusion before the evidence.

Consider: What invention did your parents or grandparents expect to ruin everything?

The telephone and electricity

1878 — The telephone. The Christchurch Star printed a neighboring paper's skepticism about the telephone craze, then challenged it by pointing to useful inventions. Both fascination and mockery were already present. [H2]

1890 — Electricity. A clipping described fire dangers from wiring in dramatic language, then called for safeguards. An overheated imagination does not remove a concrete danger. We gladly turn on the lights and still expect sound wiring. [H3]

Sousa and mechanical music

In 1906 John Philip Sousa feared recorded music would weaken home music-making, training, and congregational singing—even the nation's throats and chests. He valued people making music, but moved from changed habits to sweeping predictions. [H1]

Our task: Ask what is true, what is at risk, and what Scripture says before choosing a side.

FOUNDATION 1

Made to make things

Mankind is made to make things, for God's glory.

Begin with creation

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

GENESIS 1:27 | KJV

And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.

GENESIS 2:15 | KJV

God made the world and its possibilities before our inventions. We discover, cultivate, combine, and arrange what He has made. **Human dignity rests on our creation by God**, rather than our latest accomplishment.

Genesis 1:26–28 addresses mankind at the beginning: fill the earth, subdue it, and exercise dominion. Adam's garden work required attention, order, and care before sin entered the account.

Abilities after the Fall

Thorns, toil, and death followed the Fall (Genesis 3:17–19). Human development continued: Genesis 4 records livestock keeping, music, metalworking, and city building. These abilities can serve both good and evil.

The same abilities used differently

Livestock. Abraham served a calf in hospitality (Genesis 18:7–8). Saul kept livestock in disobedience, then defended it as intended for sacrifice (1 Samuel 15:9, 15, 22).

Music. David's harp refreshed Saul (1 Samuel 16:23). Nebuchadnezzar used music to signal worship of his image (Daniel 3:5–7).

Metalworking. Bezaleel worked in metals for the tabernacle (Exodus 31:1–9). Aaron fashioned gold into an idol (Exodus 32:2–4).

City building. Nehemiah called for Jerusalem's wall to be rebuilt as a good work (Nehemiah 2:17–18). Babel's builders sought a name and resisted scattering (Genesis 11:4).

Bring ordinary work under God's glory

Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.

1 CORINTHIANS 10:31 | KJV

Genesis establishes mankind's place in creation. Paul directs believers' conduct in matters of food, idolatry, conscience, and others' good. Our abilities carry responsibility before God.

Consider: When we make something new, what changes about our responsibility to God?

FOUNDATION 2

Truth above tradition

God's truth must govern us above human traditions.

Where does the authority come from

*Howbeit in vain do they worship me,
teaching for doctrines the commandments
of men.*

MARK 7:7 | KJV

In Mark 7:6–13, Jesus confronts Israel's religious leaders about the tradition of the elders. Corban allowed people to evade the obligation to honor father and mother. Human tradition was displacing God's command.

A familiar practice may preserve something wise. Age and familiarity deserve an honest hearing; a claim to bind the conscience needs biblical grounds. **"The way I learned it" and "God has said it" have different sources of authority.**

David and the ark

David's new cart appeared practical. When the oxen shook it, Uzzah touched the ark and died under God's judgment (2 Samuel 6:3–7).

David later identified the failure: "for that we sought him not after the due order" (1 Chronicles 15:13, KJV excerpt). God had chosen the Levites to carry the ark on their shoulders with staves (1 Chronicles 15:2, 15).

Convenience must answer to obedience. A method can look practical and still disregard God's instruction.

Israel and the familiar past

Israel remembered Egypt's fish, cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions, and garlic while complaining about manna (Numbers 11:4–6). Fear of entering the land later brought a proposal to return to Egypt (Numbers 14:3–4).

We can remember the menu and forget the slavery. Familiarity can make the wrong direction feel reassuring.

Name the reason honestly

Conviction: "I believe this would violate what Scripture teaches, and here is my reason."

Prudential judgment: "I think this is unwise under these circumstances, for these reasons."

Preference: "I am more comfortable doing it this way."

Each can be said honestly. Trouble comes when a preference is announced with the authority of a biblical conviction.

For example, a printed Bible may help you mark passages, remember locations, and avoid distractions. Making paper itself a test of faithfulness adds a claim that needs support.

Consider: Think of a change that bothers you. Are you preserving a biblical truth, a wise habit, or a personal preference?

FOUNDATION 3

Judge the claim carefully

Truth is established by sound judgment, regardless of our fear or enthusiasm.

Hear the claim and check the source

He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him.

PROVERBS 18:13 | KJV

He that is first in his own cause seemeth just; but his neighbour cometh and searcheth him.

PROVERBS 18:17 | KJV

The first account may sound convincing because we have heard only what its presenter chose to tell us. Five articles repeating one announcement still give us one source.

Ask: What happened? Who saw it? Where is the original report? When did it happen? Can I read what was actually said?

Distinguish a proposal, a demonstration, and something people can obtain and use. Ask what was tested, under what conditions, and whether the result was repeated.

Give an unfamiliar claim a hearing

And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see.

JOHN 1:46 | KJV

Nathanael objected before meeting Jesus, then heard Him and changed his conclusion (John 1:45–49). Skepticism can reach a verdict as carelessly as enthusiasm.

Tesla and changing conditions

The original Roadster was unveiled in 2006 and entered production in 2008. Bob Lutz recalled skepticism about lithium-ion technology. [T1, T2]

TechCrunch reported in 2008 that production had answered skeptics, but charging away from home remained a problem. As charging networks develop, the travel question needs reexamination. [T5]

A limitation under one set of conditions does not settle what can happen when conditions change.

On October 15, 2026, a Roadster prototype briefly became airborne. Predictions must answer to demonstrations; future availability remains a separate claim. [T3]

Match the evidence to the claim

These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

ACTS 17:11 | KJV

The Bereans searched Scripture because Paul's claims concerned Christ and Scripture. A biblical claim needs the passage in context; a machine's claimed ability needs a test.

A sales claim needs a category, place, and period: Kelley Blue Book estimates identify Model Y as the leading U.S. electric vehicle for January–September 2026. [T4]

If better evidence arrives, change the conclusion it bears on. Say what is established and what remains a prediction.

FOUNDATION 4

Confidence for an uncertain future

Our confidence in God enables us to face an uncertain future faithfully.

Practice discernment

Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.

1 THESSALONIANS 5:21 | KJV

In 1 Thessalonians 5:19–22, Paul tells the Thessalonians not to quench the Spirit or despise prophesyings. They must exercise discernment rather than accept claims indiscriminately.

That pattern offers a useful discipline: examine, judge, retain what is good, and refuse evil. We can make a limited judgment on the evidence available, explain its limits, and learn more.

I can be settled about Scripture while still learning about a new circumstance. Humility makes correction possible.

Power love and a sound mind

For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

2 TIMOTHY 1:7 | KJV

Paul urges Timothy to remain faithful in testimony and share in the gospel's afflictions (2 Timothy 1:7–8). This courage serves costly faithfulness in serious circumstances.

Philippians 4:6–8 joins prayer, thanksgiving, God's peace, and attention to what is true. Bring the concern to God and give the mind truthful things to consider.

Let hope shape present conduct

Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;

TITUS 2:12–13 | KJV

Paul joins grace, conduct in this present world, and the believer's expectation of Christ. We have present responsibilities and a settled hope. Technological forecasts remain forecasts; Christ's appearing is our blessed hope.

Stay occupied with the duties Scripture makes plain: truthfulness, love, sober judgment, good works, and faithfulness to the gospel.

I do not have to solve the whole future before I can do what is right today. Confidence in Christ frees us to acknowledge what we do not yet know.

Consider: What do you know well enough to act on? What remains uncertain? What responsibility do you have today?

REFLECTION AND SOURCES

What will govern us

The world will keep changing. Let the Word of God govern how we think.

Return to the four foundations

1 Work responsibly. Am I beginning with what God says about human beings and their work in His world?

2 Hold convictions honestly. Can I show the biblical reason for my conviction?

3 Judge carefully. Have I examined the claim, or merely reacted to it?

4 Face the future faithfully. Can I be faithful today while trusting Christ with what I cannot yet see?

Bring one question to Scripture

Choose a concern about AI or another new technology. What does Scripture actually say? What do you actually know? What follows from those things?

One claim to check

What claim have you repeated without checking it? Identify the original source or evidence you need.

Sources for the examples

Source labels match the historical and technology examples in this handout. All Scripture quotations are from the King James Version.

H1 John Philip Sousa. “The Menace of Mechanical Music.” Appleton’s Magazine 8 (1906), pp. 278–284. MIT OpenCourseWare reproduction.

H2 Telephone. “What Some People Think of the Telephone.” Star, Christchurch, February 18, 1878, p. 2. The article quotes the Ashburton Mail, then challenges its skepticism. Papers Past, National Library of New Zealand.

H3 Electricity. “Dangers of Electricity,” attributed to The Fairbury Gazette, March 29, 1890, p. 2. Publication and date follow the supplied clipping; its concluding attribution reads “Atlantic.”

T1 Original Roadster timeline. Pebble Beach Concours d’Elegance, “Tesla Makes Its Debut in 2006.”

T2 Bob Lutz’s recollection. “Plugged In,” The New Yorker, August 24, 2009.

T3 Roadster demonstration. Eric Stafford, “Revealed! New Tesla Roadster Takes Flight with SpaceX Thrusters,” Car and Driver, updated October 16, 2026. The report distinguishes the prototype demonstration from promised production.

T4 Model Y sales category. Kelley Blue Book, Q3 2026 Electric Vehicle Sales Report, estimates as of October 13, 2026. January–September U.S. sales estimates, electric vehicles by model.

T5 Early skepticism and charging. TechCrunch, “Going Green: Will the Tesla Roadster bring about the all-electric revolution?” April 29, 2008.

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