



SESSION 03 / CONFERENCE HANDOUT

The Ethics of Artificial Intelligence

Claim only the work you actually did. Give credit where it is due.

Randy White | Taos Bible Conference | October 23-25, 2026

Question 1: If you didn't write every word, is it yours?

- Getting help does not make a work dishonest. Editors help writers, too.
- Your ideas and direction matter, even when someone helps with the wording.
- The more AI supplies the ideas and words, the less you can claim as your own work.
 - Giving AI close direction is different than giving AI a broad subject.
- Reviewing and approving AI's words makes you responsible for them; it does not mean you wrote them.
- Claim only the work you actually did. Give credit where it is due.

Question 2: If some use AI nefariously, are you supporting a dangerous tool?

- A tool's misuse does not make every use wrong.
- The internet spreads both Bible teaching and fraud. We must judge the use.
- But a tool's design and purpose matter, too. Some tools are built to deceive or harm.
- Using AI does not mean approving everything others do with it.
- Still, consider what your money and use support. Choose the tool and the task wisely.

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Sources and honest credit

Question 3: Did AI steal the information from copyrighted material?

- Learning from a work and copying it are different. But that alone does not settle how AI should be trained.
- Ask two questions: How was the material obtained, and what is AI giving back?
- A fact or idea is different from an author's exact words or creative expression.
- New wording does not excuse passing off someone else's work as your own.
- Do not use AI to disguise copying. Check sources, give credit, and seek permission when needed.

Question 4: If AI made the job much easier, can you take credit?

- Making a job easier does not make the work dishonest. Good tools often save time and effort.
- Credit should reflect your contribution, not how difficult the task felt.
- Choosing the approach, directing the work, and checking the result are real contributions.
 - Creating a work and executing every step are different roles. You can be the creator without doing every part yourself.
 - A director can rightly call it "my film" without operating every camera, acting every part, or editing every frame.

Question 4 continued

- Deciding what to include, what to reject, and how the parts fit together is itself creative work.
- When AI carries out your vision under your direction, you can rightly take credit for the work you conceived and shaped.
- "I created this" does not have to mean "I personally performed every step." It can truthfully mean "This work took its form through my ideas and direction."
- Honor what you promised. Some jobs require a finished result; others require your personal effort or skill.
 - A math assignment requiring you to show your work tests your reasoning, not merely whether you can supply the right answer.
 - A language exam may require you to translate a passage yourself. An AI translation does not demonstrate your ability.
 - A job applicant told to complete a writing sample without assistance must demonstrate personal writing skill.
 - Assigned piano practice requires you to develop coordination and technique. Playing a recording does not fulfill the assignment.
 - A customer who specifically commissions a portrait painted by you is paying for your personal craftsmanship as well as the finished picture.
- Accept credit honestly, without exaggerating how much you did or how hard you worked.

My notes and questions

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Disclosure and learning

Question 5: Do you owe someone an explanation of how you used AI?

- No. Not every use of AI needs a label. Fixing spelling, improving a routine email, or organizing a shopping list ordinarily needs no announcement; listing every tool adds little useful information.
- Ask what the other person is relying on. Are they receiving a finished result, or judging your personal knowledge, skill, effort, or experience?
- Explain when AI's role changes that understanding. A skills-test evaluator needs to know who solved the problem; a viewer needs to know whether an image records an actual event.
- Follow disclosure requirements you agreed to. A teacher, client, or publisher may make the process part of what is expected.
- Usually a plain sentence is enough: "I wrote the draft and used AI to polish it," or "I supplied the concept and AI generated the image." Match the explanation to what actually happened.
- Do not make an exaggerated claim and rely on fine print to correct it. Say what you did clearly at the point where it matters.
- If asked about AI's role, answer honestly. "It only helped with grammar" is misleading if AI actually wrote the draft.

Question 6: If an assignment is meant to develop your thinking, does having AI do the thinking defeat the purpose?

- If AI is specifically prohibited for an assignment, do not use it for that assignment. If only certain uses are allowed, stay within those limits.
- When its use is allowed, AI can help you develop your thinking in practical ways:
 - Ask it to explain a difficult idea in plain language, give examples, and show how the idea applies in a different situation.
 - Give it your argument and ask, "What assumptions am I making? Are there missing steps or weak points in my reasoning?"
 - Ask for the strongest case against your position. Work through how you would answer those objections and whether you should revise your conclusion.
 - Ask it to question you one step at a time and wait for your answers. Explaining your reasoning can help you discover what you understand and where you need help.
 - Ask for practice problems or new scenarios, try them yourself, and then ask for feedback on your approach.
- Asking, answering, evaluating, and revising are exercises in thinking. AI can give you more opportunities to practice them; you still decide whether its answers and criticisms make sense.

My notes and questions

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Truth and the impression we create

Question 7: If AI gives you false information and you pass it along, who is responsible?

- You are responsible for what you choose to pass along, even when the error began with AI.
- Check important facts, quotations, and references. A confident answer is not proof that it is true.
- If you have not verified something, do not present it as something you have checked.
- An honest mistake is different from a deliberate lie, but it still needs correcting.
- When you discover an error, correct it plainly with the people who received it.

Question 8: When does an AI-generated picture, voice, or video become a lie?

- Invented material is not automatically a lie. Art, illustrations, and fiction can honestly depict things that never happened.
- It becomes deceptive when you present an invented scene or recording as evidence of something that really happened.
- The impression you create matters. "I never said it was real" does not excuse deliberately leading people to believe it was.
- When the context does not make the difference clear, explain it plainly: "AI illustration," "imagined reconstruction," or "synthetic narration."

Question 9: If your use of AI follows the rules but creates a false impression of your knowledge or ability, is it honest?

- Example: "Write this explanation as if I were a brain surgeon." You publish the result under your name, and readers assume you have medical training.
- Asking for clear, professional wording is not automatically dishonest. Help with expression can make your actual knowledge easier to communicate.
- But if you knowingly invite people to trust you as a specialist when you are not one, the impression is dishonest even without an explicit claim about credentials.
- "I followed the rules" does not settle the question. **Ask what your audience reasonably believes about the person giving the explanation.**
- Better request: "Help me explain this clearly and accurately, without implying that I have medical training or clinical experience."
- Better introduction, when needed: "I used AI to help summarize this subject. I am sharing an explanation, not speaking from medical practice."

My notes and questions

PRACTICAL EXAMPLES / CREATIVE WORK

Is It Ethical...

Is it ethical to say "I wrote a song" when you used AI?

- The song did not write itself. AI responded to your request; you initiated the project and may have supplied its message, style, lyrics, and revisions.
- Those choices are real creative contributions. You can deserve credit for creating the song without personally supplying every part.
- You do not need formal musical training to write lyrics or invent a melody. Not reading music does not automatically disqualify someone from songwriting.
- But if AI supplied the lyrics, melody, arrangement, and singing, the finished song does not demonstrate that you can write lyrics, compose music, or sing.
- "I wrote a song" can imply that you supplied words or music you actually asked AI to generate. Starting the project and writing its contents are different contributions.
- Better wording: "I created a song using AI"; "I wrote the lyrics and used AI for the music"; or "I gave AI the concept and selected this version." Choose the description that fits what you did.

My notes and questions

Is it ethical to say "I wrote a book" when AI drafted much of it?

- Developing the argument, organizing the chapters, supplying examples, and revising the text can be substantial creative work.
- A book can express your ideas even when you received extensive help putting them into words.
- But providing a broad topic and accepting a generated manuscript gives you a different claim than developing and writing the book yourself.
- Better wording: "I developed the ideas and outline, and used AI to help draft the book"; or "I wrote the manuscript and used AI to help edit it," if that describes your process.

Is it ethical to say "I painted this picture" when AI generated it?

- Choosing the subject, composition, colors, and revisions can make you a creative contributor to the image.
- You can create a worthwhile picture without knowing how to handle a paintbrush.
- But "I painted this" ordinarily describes a particular activity and skill. Generating an image that resembles a painting does not mean you performed that activity.
- Better wording: "I created this image with AI"; "I directed an AI illustration"; or "I generated this picture from my description."

PRACTICAL EXAMPLES / TEACHING AND COMMUNICATION

Is It Ethical...

Is it ethical to call an AI-assisted sermon "my sermon"?

- It can be your sermon when you studied the passage, reached the conclusions, shaped the message, and take responsibility for the teaching.
- Help with wording, organization, or illustrations does not erase your preparation or convictions.
- But reading an interpretation you have never examined does not make it your considered understanding of Scripture. The congregation is relying on your judgment as a teacher.
- Better wording, when explaining your preparation: "I studied the passage and used AI to help organize and polish my message." If AI supplied the initial outline, say that when describing its role.

Is it ethical to submit a school paper that AI helped write?

- Your research, argument, and revisions may be substantial contributions even when a tool helps with expression.
- The assignment's rules and purpose matter. A paper meant to develop your reasoning requires you to do that reasoning.
- Permission to use AI for proofreading does not automatically include permission to have it develop the argument or draft the paper.
- Better wording, when permitted and accurate: "I developed the argument and wrote the draft; AI helped me edit the wording." Honest disclosure does not by itself fulfill an assignment that required a different process.

Is it ethical to send an AI-assisted personal letter as your own message?

- Getting help expressing your thoughts does not make the thoughts or feelings insincere.
- You should understand and mean what you send. An apology still requires your regret; a promise still requires your intention to keep it.
- The concern grows if you claim to have personally labored over every word, or let the letter describe feelings and memories that are not yours.
- Better wording, if an explanation is called for: "I used AI to help me put my thoughts into words, but I mean what this says." Routine wording help does not automatically require a disclosure on every note.

My notes and questions

PRACTICAL EXAMPLES / WORK AND REPRESENTATION

Is It Ethical...

Is it ethical to say "I built a website" when you do not know how to code?

- Building a website can involve choosing its purpose, planning its pages, directing its appearance, and testing whether it works.
- Tools can let you accomplish a real project without personally possessing every technical skill involved.
- But a working website does not establish that you can independently write, explain, or repair all its code. Claims about your coding ability should reflect what you can actually do.
- Better wording: "I built this website using AI coding tools"; or "I designed the site and used AI to generate the code."

Is it ethical to charge for a project that AI helped you finish quickly?

- An agreed price for a finished project can reflect the value of the result, your judgment, and your responsibility for delivering it.
- Finishing efficiently does not automatically make your contribution or the result less valuable.
- But if you agreed to charge for actual hours worked, reporting ten hours when you worked one misrepresents what you supplied. Any promised personal craftsmanship also remains part of the agreement.
- Better wording: "The price covers the completed project" for an agreed project fee; or "I worked one hour using AI tools" when reporting actual time. Describe the arrangement you really made.

Is it ethical to present an AI-generated scene as a photograph you took?

- You may have conceived and directed a compelling image. That gives you a real contribution to describe.
- But a realistic image does not establish that the scene occurred or that you were there with a camera.
- An illustration can help people imagine a scene; presenting it as a record of an actual event gives it a different meaning.
- Better wording: "I created an AI illustration of this scene"; or "This is an imagined reconstruction, not a photograph of the event."

Is it ethical to say "I translated this" when you do not know the language?

- Choosing the passage, identifying the audience, and directing the task can be useful work.
- AI can help you communicate across a language barrier, but its fluent output does not establish that you understand the language.
- If you cannot judge the translation, do not present it as an expression of your own linguistic expertise or claim you personally verified its accuracy.
- Better wording: "I used AI to translate this passage"; or "This is an AI translation checked by a fluent speaker," if someone actually checked it.

REFLECTION AND NOTES

Judgment skill and diligence

When does relying on AI weaken the judgment, skill, or diligence you have a duty to develop?

- 1. When you routinely accept its first plausible answer. You stop questioning the assumptions, examining the reasoning, or considering objections.
- 2. When it replaces practice you personally need. If you are learning to translate, having AI translate every passage removes opportunities to develop that skill yourself.
- 3. When you teach material you have not examined. An AI sermon outline does not fulfill your responsibility to study the passage and judge the interpretation.

My notes and questions

- 4. When convenience causes you to skip necessary checks. You pass along quotations, references, or factual claims because the response looks finished and sounds convincing.
- 5. When you hand over decisions you are responsible for making. AI can suggest options and objections; you still need to weigh the reasons, consider the circumstances, and decide what you can stand behind.
- 6. When your output improves while a skill you are expected to possess deteriorates. Ask whether you can still explain your choices, recognize errors, and perform the parts your role requires you to handle personally.

My notes and questions