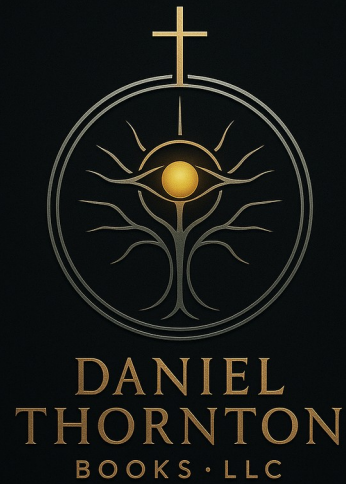




Artificial Intelligence Is Already Discipling People

Watchman's Journal | Essay 002

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"A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher."

— Luke 6:40 (ESV)

Jesus made an observation about human nature nearly two thousand years ago that feels remarkably relevant today: We become like those who teach us.

He wasn't simply describing education systems or religious instruction. He was describing something fundamental about people. The voices we trust gradually shape the way we think, the way we interpret the world, and ultimately the way we live within it.

Truth itself has never changed. It is not altered by culture, technology, or time. What changes are those we trust to teach us how to identify what is true.

For most of history, our teachers held trusted roles in our lives. They were parents, pastors, mentors, friends, scholars, authors—even those formally charged with instructing and educating us.

Today, millions of people have added another voice to that list: Artificial intelligence.

Artificial intelligence increasingly occupies this role of teacher, not because it inherently possesses wisdom or understanding, but because it has become the first place many people turn whenever they have questions, need explanations, or seek advice. The more often we return to the same voice to answer our questions and interpret our experiences, the more opportunity AI has to shape how we understand the world we inhabit.

Every time we ask AI to summarize an issue, explain a controversy, recommend a course of action, or help us understand a complex subject, it does more than provide information. It presents that information through a particular pattern of reasoning, emphasizing certain ideas while leaving others in the background. AI presents an interpretive narrative wrapped around the core of its response, reducing the intellectual effort required to form our understanding.

That efficiency is one of AI's greatest strengths. Yet convenience is never entirely neutral. When interpretation itself becomes increasingly convenient, it also begins to shape the way we think.

Most of the time we hardly notice that our thinking has been shaped. Yet every trusted voice leaves an imprint. Over time, that voice becomes a trusted advisor—a teacher.

Jesus' words now invite a deeper question. If disciples become like their teachers, what happens when one of our most frequently consulted teachers is neither parent, pastor, nor mentor, but an artificial intelligence?

Discipleship is not measured by the quantity of information received. It is measured by what that information gradually produces within us. A teacher does more than answer questions. A teacher shapes judgment, priorities, and ultimately the lens through which we understand reality. That distinction is subtle but important. Receiving information from a teacher is not the same as being disciplined by one.

Discipleship begins when repeated instruction shapes not only what we know, but how we think, what we value, and whom we trust. Technology is constantly changing the tools we use. Artificial intelligence is one of those tools. Yet it may be changing something far more significant. It may be changing who—or what—we allow to teach us.

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