A Weighted Average of Good

Leader Guide · a fifteen-minute Culture class

The article: Krysta Fauria, "To make AI morally good, tech companies are turning to religion. But some say it isn't that simple," Associated Press, October 25, 2026.

The one thing to land: a machine can be taught an *average* of what people think is good, but only God is good. Goodness is not averaged into us; it is written on the heart by the Spirit and formed in us as we behold Christ.

Before you start — notes for the teacher *(not read aloud)*

Timing. About **15 minutes**. The bracketed times are cumulative. The **Samaria and Elijah** section is the designated cut if you are short of time.

Tone. The people in this story are asking honest questions, and several of the critics quoted are on our side of the argument. Treat everyone in it with respect. Paul in Athens is the model: courtesy, then the gospel.

Time of day. The script is deliberately time-neutral, so it reads correctly in any service.

0:00 – 2:00 · The story

Say, in your own words: The companies building AI have hit a question they cannot code their way out of: how do you teach a chatbot right from wrong? So they are asking pastors, priests, rabbis and philosophers. One company founder told the Vatican, "These are not questions a lab can answer." Another, Sam Altman of OpenAI, said ChatGPT should reflect "that weighted average, or whatever, of humanity's moral view."

Some scholars push back. One says religion is not a rulebook you can pull out of people's lives. Another worries the machine will "throw it all together, mix it all up, and make sense of none of it."

Ask: **"If you could average every religion's idea of 'good,' would you get something good?"** Take two answers. Do not debate them yet.

2:00 – 4:00 · The right question, asked in Athens

> **Acts 17:22–23** — So Paul, standing in the midst of the Areopagus, said: “Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious. For as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription: ‘To the unknown god.’ What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. (ESV)

Say: Paul stood in a room full of curious people who collected every religious idea. He did not mock them for asking. He credited them for seeking, and then he named the God they did not know. **That is our place in this conversation: not one more opinion to be weighted, but witnesses to a Person.**

> **Proverbs 9:10** — The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight. (ESV)

4:00 – 7:00 · Can goodness be averaged?

> **Exodus 23:2** — You shall not fall in with the many to do evil, nor shall you bear witness in a lawsuit, siding with the many, so as to pervert justice, (ESV)

Say: God told Israel not to follow the majority into evil. And a weighted average has a problem it cannot solve: **who sets the weights?** Whoever decides one view counts more than another is already using a standard of good that did not come from the average.

> **Genesis 11:4** — Then they said, “Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth.” (ESV)
>
> **Genesis 11:6** — And the LORD said, “Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language, and this is only the beginning of what they will do. And nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them. (ESV)

Say: Babel was the one time all of humanity spoke with one voice and pooled its wisdom. It was perfect consensus, and God did not bless it.

Then be fair:

> **Romans 2:15** — They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them (ESV)

Say: The average is not worthless. That is why nearly every culture condemns murder and theft: God wrote the work of His law on the heart. But Paul says in the chapter before that people also "suppress the truth" (Romans 1:18). **Average the light together with the suppression, and you do not get the light. You get grey.**

7:00 – 10:00 · Not a rulebook

Say: One scholar says religion is not a rulebook. On that point, Scripture agrees with him.

> **Mark 10:18** — And Jesus said to him, “Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone. (ESV)

Say: A man asked Jesus for the right rule. Jesus pointed him to God. **Goodness is not first a list; it is a Person.** Not the many, not the average: one.

> **Jeremiah 31:33** — For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. (ESV)
>
> **2 Corinthians 3:6** — who has made us sufficient to be ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit. For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. (ESV)

Say: God's answer to rule-keeping that never reached the heart was not a better rulebook. It was a new heart. A machine can be given the letter, a great many letters. The letter alone has never made anyone good.

Do not say: that using AI is a sin, or that the people building it are wicked. The point is where goodness comes from.

10:00 – 12:00 · "Mixes it all up": Samaria did this first

Designated cut if you are short of time.

> **2 Kings 17:33** — So they feared the LORD but also served their own gods, after the manner of the nations from among whom they had been carried away. (ESV)
>
> **1 Kings 18:21** — And Elijah came near to all the people and said, “How long will you go limping between two different opinions? If the LORD is God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him.” And the people did not answer him a word. (ESV)

Say: "They feared the LORD but also served their own gods" is a weighted average. It was not tolerance; it was the end of knowing who God is. A machine told to give every answer "equal depth" will always

limp between opinions, because it has been told not to choose. **We can be courteous about other faiths, but we cannot pretend the question is open.**

> **John 14:6** — Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. (ESV)

12:00 – 14:00 · How good character actually forms

Say: One company says what it really wants to learn is "how good character actually forms." Good question. The New Testament answers it.

> **Romans 5:3–4** — Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, (ESV)
>
> **Romans 12:2** — Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. (ESV)
>
> **2 Corinthians 3:18** — And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit. (ESV)

Say: Character is not gathered from opinions. It is proven through suffering, grown as fruit of the Spirit, and formed as we behold the Lord. And notice Romans 12:2: do not be conformed to this age. **An average of the age *is* the age.**

14:00 – 15:00 · Send them out

Four things for the week:

1. **Do not outsource your conscience.** "Test everything; hold fast what is good" (1 Thessalonians 5:21).
2. **Be a Berean, not an Athenian.** Check what you hear against the Scriptures (Acts 17:11).
3. **Do not limp.** Elijah's question is for you: "If the LORD is God, follow him."
4. **Pray for the people building these tools.** Some of them are honestly seeking.

Pray the closing prayer. **Stop there.**

If you only remember three things

1. **Goodness is not an average.** "No one is good except God alone" (Mark 10:18), and the majority is not a moral authority (Exodus 23:2).
2. **Goodness is not a rulebook.** God writes His law on the heart (Jeremiah 31:33); the letter kills, the Spirit gives life.
3. **Character is formed, not accumulated** — by the Spirit, as we behold Christ (2 Corinthians 3:18).

Honest answers to hard questions

If someone asks…	Say…
"Isn't it good that tech companies are asking religious people?"	Yes. Paul honoured the Athenians for seeking. The question is what they do with the answers.
"Isn't it arrogant to say one faith is right?"	Treating every answer as equal is also a claim: that no one has the truth. Jesus said, "I am the truth." We can say that humbly and kindly.
"Should Christians use AI?"	As a tool, yes, the way we use a calculator or a search engine. Not as a conscience, a pastor or a judge of right and wrong.
"Does the Bible say how AI should be built?"	No, not in so many words. It tells us where goodness comes from and how character forms, and that a made thing cannot be our moral authority.

The full article online

This class is the fifteen-minute version of a longer Culture article, with the Greek of the Septuagint and New Testament beside the ESV and notes where the ancient texts differ:

ps-church.com/discipleship/culture/a-weighted-average-of-good

All Culture articles: **ps-church.com/discipleship/culture**

Closing prayer

Lord God, You alone are good. We thank You that You have not left us to guess at right and wrong by counting votes, but have spoken, and have written Your law on the hearts of Your people. Forgive us when we follow the crowd, when we limp between two opinions, and when we keep other gods beside You. Give wisdom to the men and women who build these new tools, and give them hearts that seek

You. Make us Bereans who search the Scriptures daily. Form in us the fruit of Your Spirit, and as we behold the glory of Your Son, change us into His image. In the name of Jesus, Amen.