

THE QUESTIONS

EVERY CHRISTIAN SHOULD ASK

*Authority, Scripture, the Church, and Faithful Human Formation in a
Technological Age*

A Formation Foundations Guide

Dr. Jason Owen

Computer Science Professor, Researcher, and Christian Human Formation Strategist

DrJasonOwen.com

An Invitation to Seek Truth Faithfully

These questions are not designed to tell Christians what to think. They are intended to help us examine what we believe, where those beliefs came from, who has authority to teach the faith, and who Christ is forming us to become. They invite honest study, prayer, humility, and the courage to follow the truth wherever the evidence and the Lord lead.

“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.”

Romans 12:2

Use this guide slowly. Read one section at a time. Write down your first answer, then ask what Scripture, history, reason, prayer, and the witness of the Church require you to reconsider.

PART ONE

Christ and His Church

1

Did Christ leave Christianity primarily as a written text interpreted by individual believers, or did He establish a visible, authoritative, sacramental Church?

What did Christ actually establish, and how would the first Christians have recognized it?

2

Why did Christ establish a Church instead of simply leaving a Bible?

Consider the chronology: the Church preached, baptized, worshiped, governed, and suffered before the New Testament canon was complete.

3

Did Christ found one identifiable Church with enduring authority, or an invisible collection of believers without institutional authority?

What kind of unity did Christ pray for in John 17?

4

When Christians disagree about essential doctrine, what authority did Christ establish to settle the dispute?

How were disputes handled in Matthew 18 and Acts 15?

5

If Christ intended His followers to remain one, how should we understand competing Christian communities teaching contradictory doctrines?

Unity cannot mean contradiction. What visible principle safeguards one faith?

Scripture, Tradition, and Authority

6

Where does Scripture teach that Scripture alone is the Christian's sole and sufficient rule of faith?

A doctrine as foundational as sola scriptura should itself be clearly taught in Scripture.

7

Did the apostles transmit the Christian faith only through writing, or through both written and oral teaching?

Read 2 Thessalonians 2:15 and 2 Timothy 2:2.

8

Who identified, preserved, copied, defended, and canonized the books Christians now call the New Testament?

The canon did not identify itself. Which community received and discerned it?

9

When sincere and intelligent Christians interpret the same inspired text differently, who has authority to determine which interpretation is faithful to apostolic teaching?

Private interpretation alone cannot resolve mutually exclusive conclusions.

10

Is every Christian doctrine required to appear explicitly in Scripture, or can authentic doctrine also be received through apostolic Tradition?

How did the earliest Church receive and hand on the faith before all New Testament books were written?

Apostolic Continuity

11

What authority did Christ establish to preserve and interpret the apostolic faith after the apostles died?

Christ's promises to His Church extend beyond the lifetime of the Twelve.

12

Did the apostles appoint successors to continue their teaching, governing, and sacramental ministry?

Consider Acts 1, Titus 1:5, and 2 Timothy 2:2.

13

Which Church today can demonstrate historical continuity with the apostles through doctrine, worship, sacraments, and succession?

Continuity is historical as well as theological.

14

Was apostolic succession understood merely as agreement with apostolic ideas, or as the transmission of an actual ecclesial office?

How did early Christians identify legitimate bishops and teachers?

15

If the early Church became fundamentally corrupt, when did that corruption occur, and where was the faithful Church during that period?

A claim of universal apostasy must account for Christ's promises and the historical record.

Sacramental Christianity

16

Did Jesus intend the Eucharist to be merely symbolic, or did He mean what He said when He called it His Body and Blood?

Read John 6, the Last Supper accounts, and 1 Corinthians 10-11 together.

17

Why did the earliest Christians speak of the Eucharist as a real participation in the Body and Blood of Christ?

Historical proximity to the apostles matters when evaluating later interpretations.

18

Did Christ give His ministers real authority to forgive sins, baptize, teach, govern, and celebrate the sacraments?

Consider John 20:21-23, Matthew 28:18-20, and the pastoral epistles.

19

Is Christianity primarily an intellectual agreement with certain teachings, or a sacramental life lived within the Body of Christ?

Christian faith is believed, embodied, worshiped, and lived.

20

If Christ is truly present in the Eucharist, what response does that require from us?

The answer affects worship, communion, obedience, and the shape of Christian life.

Truth, Judgment, and Formation

21

Am I willing to follow the truth even when it challenges beliefs I inherited, communities I love, or conclusions I previously defended?

Conversion begins with the willingness to be corrected.

22

Do I seek truth in order to be transformed, or merely to win arguments and confirm what I already believe?

The goal of Christian reasoning is faithful assent and holy action.

23

What habits are forming my judgment, attention, desires, and character?

Every practice forms the person who repeats it.

24

How do I distinguish information from wisdom, probability from truth, and persuasive language from sound judgment?

Accurate description is not the same as lived understanding.

25

What does it mean to renew the mind so that we can discern what is good, acceptable, and perfect?

Discernment joins truth, moral judgment, conscience, prayer, and action.

26

Am I allowing technology to assist my judgment, or gradually surrendering my judgment to technology?

Tools should extend human agency, not replace moral responsibility.

27

What human capacities become more important as machines become more capable?

Wisdom, virtue, courage, stewardship, and the capacity for personal assent become more—not less—important.

28

How should Christians use artificial intelligence without weakening responsibility, agency, conscience, wisdom, or authentic relationships?

Efficiency is not the highest good. Formation and flourishing must remain central.

29

Who will I become if my present patterns of technology use continue?

The most important question about a tool is not only what it does, but what it is doing to us.

Who is Christ forming me to become in a technological age?*Christian flourishing is not mere adaptation. It is becoming holy, wise, responsible, and capable of love.*

A Framework for Faithful Discernment

Reality	Begin with what is true, not merely what is preferred or plausible.
Experience	Attend to lived encounter, history, community, embodiment, and consequences.
Apprehension	Grasp what the evidence means rather than merely collecting information.
Inference	Bring reasons, testimony, patterns, and context into a coherent judgment.
Discernment	Test conclusions in prayer, conscience, Scripture, Tradition, and the life of the Church.
Assent	Freely commit to what one has responsibly judged to be true.
Action	Allow truth to govern worship, relationships, work, and technological practice.
Habit and Character	Repeated faithful action forms the person.
Flourishing	The goal is not information alone, but life ordered toward God and the good.

The Question Beneath Every Question

Who must we become to flourish faithfully in a technological age?

Christianity does not ask us merely to gather information. It calls us to receive truth, exercise judgment, accept responsibility, form virtuous habits, and become the people God created us to be. The Church is not simply a source of religious data. It is the Body within which the apostolic faith is proclaimed, preserved, interpreted, worshiped, and lived. Technology can retrieve information and generate plausible language, but it cannot make the personal act of faith, accept moral responsibility, love God and neighbor, or become holy.

These questions therefore belong together. Questions about Scripture, authority, the Church, sacraments, judgment, and technology are all questions of formation. They ask not only, “What is true?” but also, “Will I have the courage, humility, and wisdom to live according to it?”

JOIN THE FORMATION COMMUNITY

Receive new essays, research developments, publications, keynote announcements, and reflections on human formation in a technological age.

DrJasonOwen.com

© 2026 Dr. Jason Owen. This guide may be shared freely in its original, unaltered form.