

# Biblical Worldview Scope for Writing & Grammar 11 (4th ed.)

**Introduction:** Writing and grammar classes provide excellent opportunities not only to understand the mechanics of the English language, but also to cultivate students' creativity and craft—gifts from God that reflect His image. This document is our attempt to answer the question, “What should an eleventh grader know to understand writing and grammar from a biblical worldview?” What follows is an important list of themes for students to know and internalize. Early in the course, students will be required to *recall* and *explain* these themes. As these themes are engaged throughout the textbook, students will be guided to *evaluate* ideas within them, *formulate* a Christian understanding of them, and *apply* what they have learned about these themes to real-life situations. We hope that students not only understand the biblical worldview reflected in these themes but also embrace and live out this worldview.

The five biblical worldview themes in Writing & Grammar 11 are *identity*, *motive*, *integrity*, *judgment*, and *discipline*. These themes provide a logical sequence of thought for discussing grammar, writing, and various topics engaged in the writing exercises. *Identity* asks the fundamental question “Who am I?” *Motive* builds on this foundation, asking, “Why am I writing?” *Integrity*, *judgment*, and *discipline* finish the progression by asking, “How do I write?” We aim to help students better understand who they are as writers, why and how they write, and how they can do so in a redemptive way. Our five themes are especially pertinent for the eleventh grade, often the busiest year of the high school journey. Writing assignments in this textbook carve out opportunities for reflection on key issues and aspects of cultural engagement. The end of the school year will situate students only twelve months away from graduation, when important questions of identity, motive, integrity, judgment, and discipline become conspicuous and inevitable.

We engage these themes within an overarching Creation-Fall-Redemption framework, reflected in the exposition of the themes below. Under the heading of **Creation**, we discuss creational norms—structural aspects of God's design for His created world and how mankind is to live in it. To discern these creational norms, we may consider the world before sin entered it, Jesus Christ as the perfect image of God, or biblical teaching more generally. As we discuss themes under the heading of the **Fall**, we explore aspects of a fallen world that have been bent away from creational norms. Such investigation may reveal ways in which fallen mankind has consciously violated the way God created the world to work, or it may simply address how sin's curse has impaired human minds and made progress more challenging. When we explore themes under the heading of **Redemption**, we discuss how God intends for Christians to live in a world polluted by sin. Christians work redemptively by addressing things that have been affected by sin, bending them back toward their creational norms.

## 1. Identity

*“And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth” (Gen 1:26–28).*

## Creation: People receive their identity from God, who made them in His image.

Foundational to human identity is that people are made in the image of God (Gen 1:26–28). As image-bearers, humans both reflect and represent their Creator.<sup>1</sup> They *reflect* and *mirror* Him in their personhood as moral and rational beings who use language to communicate.<sup>2</sup> This involves (but is not limited to) their rationality, speech, aesthetic nature, emotion, and capacity for relationships. They *represent* and *model* their Creator as they exercise dominion over the world He has created. They must understand a foundational aspect of their identity—it is something they receive, not something they create.<sup>3</sup>

Though all people bear the image of God, they are not monotonously uniform. Each person reflects the image of God in a distinct way, with unique personality, ability, and life circumstances. Each person also has a unique voice by which to glorify God in creativity and craft. The task of writing, however, involves many aspects of the image of God shared by all people.

## Fall: Sinful hearts want to choose their own identity in accordance with their desires.

The Fall did not destroy or irreversibly damage the image of God in mankind (cf. Gen 9:6; 1 Cor 11:7; Jam 3:9), but it did twist it. Fallen mankind still reflects God, but somewhat like a broken mirror. Sin has distorted each person's identity. This distortion may result in the idolatrous elevation of a genuine but subsidiary aspect of one's identity to a central position or the illegitimate identification of oneself. Sin's distortion is seen in the present-day insistence that the answer to "Who am I?" is "whoever I want to be." In a society marked by expressive individualism, self-definition dethrones biblical truth.

In writing and grammar, the effect of the Fall on human identity manifests itself in two major areas. First, the no-etic effects of sin have diminished the ability to write well. This impairment is not intrinsically a matter of sinful choice but of sin's debilitating impact on creation more generally (Rom 8:19–21). Second, fallen mankind may use writing to express sinful desires in various ways, such as manipulating grammar to accommodate unbiblical ideologies and, more broadly, using writing in ways inconsistent with the character and law of God.

## Redemption: Christians find their identity in Christ and represent Him in a fallen world.

A biblical understanding of human identity recognizes that in a fallen world, every person is created in the image of God, fallen in Adam, and redeemable in Christ. With such an understanding, believers are simultaneously honored and humbled. While Scripture affirms the legitimacy of many standard markers of human identity, it denies their ultimacy.<sup>4</sup> Instead, Christians look to God to understand who they are. Their relationship with Him includes their adoption as His children, their union with Christ, and the renewing of God's image in them over time. What God teaches His children through their life-shaping experiences informs their writing and allows them to serve their readers more effectively.

In their craft, Christian writers can bend things back toward creational norms in two areas. First, Christians should *reflect* their Creator with writing that is increasingly "more like God's in clarity, truth (accuracy, honesty, and precision), efficiency, winsomeness (including acceptability of grammatical usage and spelling as well as of strategy and

---

1 Anthony A. Hoekema, *Created in God's Image* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994), 67.

2 Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics: God and Creation*, vol. 2, ed. John Bolt, trans. John Vriend (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004), 561. "So the whole human being is image and likeness of God, in soul and body, in all human faculties, powers, and gifts. Nothing in humanity is excluded from God's image; it stretches as far as our humanity does and constitutes our humanness. The human is not the divine self but is nevertheless a finite creaturely impression of the divine. All that is in God—his spiritual essence, his virtues and perfections, his immanent self-distinctions, his self-communication and self-revelation in creation—finds its admittedly finite and limited analogy and likeness in humanity."

3 Michael Horton, *The Christian Faith* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 87. "Obviously, receiving one's identity from one's God, through a story that one hears, is different from determining one's own identity through idols that the worshiper has created and therefore controls."

4 Brian S. Rosner, *Known by God: A Biblical Theology of Personal Identity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2017), 42.

tone), and persuasive force (both logical and emotional).”<sup>5</sup> Second, believers should *represent* their Creator by using their writing in service to God and others. They should value writing as an avenue of redemptive activity, fulfilling the Creation Mandate. This redemptive work may be accomplished by crafting responses to unbiblical ideologies and by choosing to use language biblically when writing. In either case, believers’ focus in writing should be on using their craft to press a fallen world back toward creational norms.

## 2. Motive

*“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” (Matt 22:37–39).*

*“Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Cor 10:31).*

### **Creation: God created people to act based on their love for Him and their desire to glorify Him.**

Motives underlie why people do what they do. They are grounded in what a person loves. As image-bearers created to reflect and represent God, people should have motives that align with God’s will. God’s motive for His every action is His rightful love for Himself and His own glory. A person’s motives are multilayered, but a believer’s ultimate motive should be to reflect love for God and a desire for His glory. Closely related is the motivation of love for others, set forth in the second great commandment.

This love for God and desire for His glory should *motivate* Christians to use their writing to exercise dominion over creation in obedience and service to Him. Christians should *desire* to glorify God by incorporating truth, goodness, and beauty into their writing, reflecting Him in their creative work. Christians should *delight* in using their writing for the glory of God and the good of their neighbors.

### **Fall: Sin resulted in people loving self rather than loving God.**

Before the Fall, Adam and Eve were oriented toward God, but now the motives of fallen humanity are inherently self-centered. Even when people do the right thing outwardly, they may be motivated by love of self, love of money, or love of pleasure (2 Tim 3:2–4). God is aware of the motivations of people’s hearts and responds accordingly (1 Sam 16:7; Prov 16:2; Matt 6:1; Jam 4:3).

Communication by those who do not know the Lord involves malicious ends and evil motives. But Christians are certainly not immune to having sinful motives when writing. They may prepare a sermon to showcase their facility with words, shape a lesson to flaunt their mastery of a topic, deceptively craft an advertisement because of love of money, or write a song out of selfish ambition. Malice, or sinful anger, may prompt their response to someone on social media. Or they may inappropriately prioritize an acceptable motive, such as delighting their readers, as their ultimate ambition, supplanting the goal of pleasing God.

### **Redemption: Only God can purify and properly reorder the loves and motives of people’s hearts.**

When people turn to Christ and receive newness of life in Him, a fundamental reorientation occurs (2 Cor 5:17). God begins to restore His image in new Christians, conforming them to His Son (2 Cor 3:18) and transforming their motives to align with God’s plan. God’s unending love for humanity calls forth from His people a corresponding love for Himself and for others (1 John 4:7–12).

We want students to discern when their motives for writing are wrong or disordered. We hope they will better understand how their motives in writing should not be primarily self-oriented, but God-oriented, and others-oriented as well. Love of God and neighbor provides motivation for facets of writing such as revising for clarity,

---

<sup>5</sup> Ronald A. Horton, ed., *Handbook of Christian Education* (Greenville, SC: BJU Press, 2017), 107.

fashioning a story to delight, and structuring an essay for ease of reading. Instead of thinking of the craft of writing mainly in terms of self-expression, students should see it as a means of service to God and others.

### 3. Integrity

*“In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you”* (Titus 2:7–8).

#### **Creation: God created humans to live with integrity in reflection of His own divine nature.**

A life of integrity involves being honest and morally upright, even when costly (Ps 15:4; Prov 28:6). A person of integrity refuses to compromise what is right for the sake of convenience or personal gain (Dan. 3:1–18). God expects people to show integrity by trusting in Him and continuing to live uprightly even when circumstances are difficult (Job 2:1–10; Ps 26:1).

Such integrity extends to the craft of writing. It involves researching with due diligence, using credible sources, accurately portraying others’ views, making sound arguments that conform to evidence, and acknowledging evidence that does not support one’s own view.

#### **Fall: Sin compromises a person’s integrity.**

Satan introduced lies and dishonesty to the human race (Gen 3:1). Fallen humanity has enthusiastically embraced his crooked ways (1 John 5:19) which stand opposed to walking in integrity (Prov 10:9; 11:3; 19:1).

This lack of integrity is common in writing. It shows up when writers ignore evidence contrary to their views, make unfounded claims, or misrepresent others. They may plagiarize purposefully or through carelessness, involuntarily stealing the work of others. They may purposely misrepresent themselves in resumes and job applications, inflating their own abilities and experiences. They may craft marketing materials that purposely misrepresent a product or service to the detriment of others. They may apply reader-response approaches to others’ writing, overriding an author’s intended meaning in favor of importing their own foreign or contradictory ideas. In historical writing, they may show a lack of integrity by disregarding or distorting historical evidence to further their own agenda.

#### **Redemption: Christians are called to live with integrity and to act redemptively in a fallen world.**

Jesus provides a model of integrity for Christians. He wisely lived a life of uncompromising honesty, sincerity, and moral uprightness, even when He was opposed by the religious leadership of His day (John 8:46; 1 Pet 2:21–23).

Christian writers should use their craft redemptively to further God’s truth in the face of the many ways that truth is misrepresented and compromised. They should write with wisdom and truth, even when doing so is unpopular and costly. They should acknowledge when they have been incorrect and be willing to change their views when the evidence warrants it. Writing with integrity involves, for instance, treating biographical work evenhandedly, neither overemphasizing nor ignoring the subject’s flaws.

### 4. Judgment

*“But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil”* (Heb 5:14).

## **Creation: God has given His revelation to ground wise decisions.**

God gave Adam and Eve the responsibility of exercising dominion over the earth as His representatives (Gen 1:28), a task that entailed a great deal of wise discernment. It required them to consider what God had directly revealed to them and make decisions based on that knowledge to fulfill the responsibility God had given them. This arrangement reflects the way that God intends Christians to act, responding to life's situations with discernment. God has not left His people without guidance. They are responsible to call upon His divine wisdom and make wise decisions.

The same principle holds true in the craft of the Christian writer. God does not specify what writing projects one should undertake nor the words one should write, but He does provide scriptural guidance for the task through both instruction and model.

## **Fall: Rejecting God's revelation leads to a lack of wise judgment.**

The Fall involved Adam and Eve making a judgment based on Satan's lies instead of on God's revelation (Gen 3:1–7). When people turn from God and His righteous standard, they make judgments based on other criteria, largely their own sinful desires (Gen 3:6). At some level, their judgments will reflect the ethos of the surrounding culture, which they naturally absorb. Since these judgments are not grounded in God's revelation, they will be inconsistent with His guidance and thus unwise. Because humanity's natural tendency is hostility toward God, believers who hold to God's revelation as their standard of judgment may be seen as backward, if not hateful.

The effects of sin on the human mind make sound reasoning a challenge. Those who do not seek godly counsel will regularly make unwise or even actively wicked judgments. In writing, they often promote what is contrary to God's law, whether through crafting scripts for sin-endorsing movies, writing online content that promotes unbiblical ideas, or publishing books that advocate LGBTQ+ ideologies. Because their judgments are untethered from biblical revelation, they may justify the use of unbiblical writing practices and elements, such as plagiarism, off-color humor, or gratuitous depictions of evil.

## **Redemption: God provides His people with all they need to make wise judgments in a sinful world.**

As believers grow in grace, they also grow in wisdom and discernment. When they ground their judgments in Scripture, they are attempting to be discerning, as God is discerning.

Christian writers must actively engage God's Word as the standard for the judgments they make—in what they read, in what they write, and in how they write. In research, they should seek to discern the worldview assumptions that underlie stated arguments. In composition, they should formulate a biblical position on an issue they are addressing and purposely evaluate their writing against Scripture. In research, they will need to hone discernment, selecting only credible sources. In relating personal experiences, they should portray themselves honestly but with propriety. When approaching a topic, Christian writers should seek to discern what biblical principles are involved in the sort of writing they are doing—argumentative, informative, narrative—and proceed with these principles in view. They should know about the different avenues for publishing their work and choose an appropriate method. They may also reach out to godly counselors, other believers who can guide them toward understanding and clearly presenting truth.

## **5. Discipline**

*“But the fruit of the Spirit is . . . temperance” (Gal 5:22–23).*

## **Creation: The work to which God calls people requires discipline.**

Christians reflect the image of God in their ability to create; however, while God can simply speak something into existence, His image-bearers must put forth effort to bring about their creative endeavors. Before the Fall, Adam

and Eve did not have to resist sinful tendencies toward slothfulness, but they certainly had to exercise self-discipline as they applied themselves to the work for which God had made them (Gen 2:15).

The use of language was no exception to the need for discipline and effort in a pre-fallen world. Though the un-fallen minds of Adam and Eve doubtless had more facility in communication than humans do now (Rom 1:21), even their uncorrupted language required diligent crafting for specific purposes.

### **Fall: The Fall increased the need for discipline.**

The Fall made subduing the earth far more difficult. Not only has sin affected the created world and made work more painful and toilsome (Gen 3:17–19), but it also fostered laziness and self-indulgence. Scripture has no sympathy for slothful people but recognizes the detriment they are to themselves and others (Prov 13:4; 12:24; 15:19; 20:4; 24:30–34).

Patterns of laziness can also affect writing projects. Some students may fail to research sufficiently, to use proper grammar, to conform their writing to a prescribed format, or to revise their work for clarity. Others may wait for inspiration to strike them instead of working through the difficult tasks of the writing process.

### **Redemption: The Spirit enables discipline so that Christians may do the will and work of God.**

Believers have the blessing of the Spirit, who brings His fruit into their lives (Gal 5:22–23) to conform them to the image of Christ. One of these fruits is self-control. People who exercise self-control say “no” to what they want in the moment, denying a place to the desires of the flesh (Gal 5:16–21). For an example, Christians look to Jesus: He was faced with suffering He would rather have avoided, but He endured it to accomplish His Father’s will (Matt 26:39; Heb 12:2).

The self-control which the Spirit brings displays itself as discipline in writing projects, enabling writers to say “no” to self-indulgence and laziness. Discipline is essential if one’s writing is going to be well-suited for redemptive purposes, because well-crafted writing is hard work. The Spirit enables believers to say “yes” to the sometimes-tedious aspects of writing. Because of the way God has created people, the discipline involved in writing becomes second nature as they purposely cultivate good habits, such as a consistent writing practice