

# Biblical Worldview Scope for *Spanish 1, 4th ed.*

This document is our attempt to answer the question, What will help a ninth-grade student understand Spanish language and culture from the perspective of a biblical worldview? In what follows, we lay out the three biblical worldview shaping themes for *Spanish 1: Hospitality, Community, and Service.*

We will discuss each of these themes within an overarching Creation, Fall, Redemption framework. Under the heading of Creation, we describe a theme in terms of its creational norms: structural aspects of God's design for His created world and how people are to live in it. To discern these creational norms, we may consider man and his world before sin entered it, Jesus Christ as the perfect image of God, or biblical teaching more generally. As we discuss a theme under the heading of the Fall, we explore how things have been bent away from what they should be, a departure that is evident in a fallen world inhabited by sinful humanity. And when we explore the theme under the heading of Redemption, we discuss how God means for Christians to live as regards the topic at hand, each working strategically in his or her own sphere to press matters toward creational norms.

Within the Hospitality theme, students are led to understand the biblical underpinning of hospitality and its importance in Hispanic culture. They are brought to evaluate their own lives in terms of hospitality and encouraged to use their burgeoning knowledge of the Spanish language and culture to express the welcoming spirit of hospitality in practical ways—not least in service of the gospel.

By engaging another emphasis in Hispanic culture, the Community theme leads students to consider certain facets of life lived together with others. Students are guided to see how working together can better accomplish God's purposes, and they consider the matter of punctuality in Hispanic cultures. They recognize that in the family, God's guidance holds true even though different cultures may express family roles and relationships somewhat differently. Students explore how holidays and the ways a culture celebrates them reflect that culture's worldview, and they consider in this light their own celebration of holidays. They consider how aspects of typical city structure in Hispanic countries can reflect aspects of the Hispanic culture's worldview.

The Service theme brings students to understand biblical teaching about serving God and others and to see how their growing familiarity with the language and culture of Spanish speakers provides greater opportunity to serve. While foreign language acquisition can be framed solely in terms of its advantage for the learner, Scripture presses students to use Spanish for the benefit of others. Students will consider how their ability with Spanish can be used both domestically in one's own community and job and abroad in mission trips and disaster relief.

## 1. Hospitality

**Christians should have a mindset of hospitality that they show in their communication and their actions.**

### *Creation*

God wants people to show hospitality to each other (Rom. 12:13; 1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:8; 1 Pet. 4:9).<sup>1</sup> With its positive and welcoming orientation toward others, hospitality is an important way to show love toward one's neighbor, and

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<sup>1</sup> "Extending hospitality is the Christian norm." Garwood P. Anderson, "Hospitality," *Lexham Theological Wordbook*.

it is modeled on God's welcoming love toward us (Rom. 15:7).<sup>2</sup> It is portrayed as good in both testaments.<sup>3</sup> In biblical thought, the meeting of others' needs through hospitality is predicated upon the recognition of one's own needs (Exod. 22:21; Deut. 10:19). Opening one's home to others is an important way to show hospitality, because the home is not just personal space but also a place to show God's love to others. However, the welcoming spirit of hospitality can be shown in the way we act and speak in other venues as well. Indeed, our use of language plays a vital part in hospitality. For instance, warm and sincere greetings show love of neighbor by communicating the interest, acceptance, and welcome that hospitality is marked by.<sup>4</sup> When a culture values hospitality, as Hispanic cultures tend to do, it reflects the way God made the world to work.

## Fall

Sinful attitudes prompt people to twist God's ideal of hospitality. Because of self-centeredness, they may avoid hospitality entirely as being too much trouble or expense (Prov. 23:7). Their hospitality may have ulterior motives, being offered not for love's sake, but for their own advantage.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, fallen man may not merely avoid hospitality, but may also be characterized by hostility, actively rejecting and excluding people who should be welcomed. Fallen man may also respond sinfully to the hospitality offered by others by exploiting it or by not expressing gratitude. In addition, in the name of hospitality, people may affirm the sinful behavior of others.<sup>6</sup> Being inhospitable might look like people treating someone as unintelligent because he or she does not speak their language well as a second language, or not recognizing the need to make important materials available in his or her language.

## Redemption

Hospitality should mark the lives and language of Christians, and Christian students should recognize that learning to speak the Spanish language allows them greater opportunities to show hospitality in their own context to those who may be strangers. Hospitality is a tangible, relational way that believers show the love of Christ to others, not least to those in greatest need (cf. Luke 12:12–14), and even to their enemies (Rom. 12:20).<sup>7</sup> Hospitality is a consideration when addressing the material and spiritual needs of Hispanic immigrants, a matter where Christians must take into account biblical guidance both to welcome the stranger and to obey governmental authorities. Hospitality is fruitful for evangelism, supporting and illustrating the work of Christ. Indeed, sharing the gospel, an important application of learning Spanish, can be understood as communicating the welcoming love of God to sinners. Christians do well to recognize how hospitality in the Spanish-speaking world can inform their own hospitality used for redemptive purposes.

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2 Hospitality is a "fundamental outworking of love." J. T. Fitzgerald, "Hospitality," in *Dictionary of New Testament Background* (InterVarsity, 2000), 505. Hospitality is often connected with love in the Scriptures.

3 For example, in the stories of Abraham (Gen. 18), Lot (Gen. 19), and Rebekah (Gen. 24), and in the regular deployment of hospitality as a Christian virtue and qualification for church elders. Note Matthew 25:21–46.

4 Hospitality is others-oriented, though it is often portrayed in Scripture as resulting in mutual benefit. J. Stephen Quakenbush, "Linguistic Hospitality and the Mission of God," in *God and Language: Exploring the Role of Language in the Mission of God*, ed. Michael Greed and Dawn Kruger (SIL, 2022). "There is a mutual benefit in hospitality; practitioners constantly comment that they receive more than they give." Christine Pohl, *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition* (repr., Eerdmans, 2024), 12-13.

5 Christine D. Pohl, *Living in Community: Cultivating Practices that Sustain Us* (Eerdmans, 2012), 144. The opening gesture of hospitality, the greeting, can mask and serve as an occasion for evil (2 Sam. 20:9; Matt. 26:48–49).

6 In a sinful world, hospitality has its limits and Christians should not show hospitality in ways that would affirm sin (1 Cor. 5:11; 2 John 10-11). "Pronoun hospitality" is a way that language is used in this way; see Rosaria Butterfield, *Five Lies of Our Anti-Christian Age* (Crossway, 2023), 18.

7 Pohl, *Making Room*, 16.

## 2. Community

**Christians should use communication in their communities to build relationships and fulfill their responsibilities.**

### *Creation*

God Himself has eternally existed in a perfect fellowship of loving community among Father, Son, and Spirit. In creating mankind in His image, God has endowed people with the capacity for relationship and the communication that fosters it. But not only does mankind have the *capacity* for relationship, it is also God's plan that they actively live in community with others, using communication and designing living spaces that support the flourishing of that community. God proclaimed that it was not good for man to be alone (Gen. 2:18), and because His command to fill the earth and have dominion over it (Gen. 1:27–28) could not be accomplished by individual humans in isolation, it indicates His intention for people to live in community. God has from the beginning structured communities to include various relationships of authority and submission, and His design holds though different cultures may express these roles somewhat differently. His command for each person to reflect His love to others (Mark 12:31) requires and is worked out in community.

### *Fall*

The first human community, small as it was, consisted of Adam and Eve, and the Fall immediately found them communicating in a way that disavowed their responsibility and strained their relationship (Gen. 3:9–13). Later, instead of seeking to accomplish God's purposes in community, mankind's sinful reticence to spread out and populate the earth resulted in the division of language, and thus the division of community (Gen. 11). Ever since the Fall, communication has been used in ways that fracture human community, such as gossip, slander, lying, complaining, boasting, and quarrelling (Prov. 16:28; 17:9; 26:20–22). Additionally, communities small and great come to be characterized by unbiblical worldviews, and the influence of the community leads those in it to uncritically embrace perspectives consistent with these worldviews. An outworking of this is seen in unbiblical emphases in the holidays a culture chooses to celebrate and the ways it does so. On a larger scale, while Jesus teaches, "Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment" (John 7:24), a community (whether small or great) can hold unbiblical stereotypes toward those in other communities.

### *Redemption*

In creating the church, God enabled the apostles to reach supernaturally across language barriers (Acts 2:1–11), signaling His intention to form a community of His followers from every nation. People are individually responsible to come to Christ in faith, and this can happen only when the gospel is communicated to them. When they trust in Christ, they are made part of the church, a worldwide community of believers that transcends all languages and cultures (Rev. 5:9). Their membership in the church should exemplify what true community should look like (Acts 2:44–47). Thus, being part of the community that is the church has implications for all the other communities of which they are a part (Matt. 10:37; Mark 3:31–35). While the apostles were supernaturally able to overcome differences in language to make disciples of Jesus, God calls believers today to diligent study for the same purpose: to bring men and women from every people and language to become followers of Christ and worshipers of the true God (Rev. 7:9). Studying the Spanish language and culture is a strategic means toward that end: it helps believers better share the gospel and make disciples in the many places that the Spanish language is spoken.

### 3. Service

**Christians gain increased ability and opportunity to serve others by understanding their language and culture.**

#### *Creation*

God created all things for His own glory (Rom 11:36), and all creation exists to serve its Creator. This is true of both the physical creation and of humankind. Humans, however, have the privilege of serving God in a unique way as His image-bearers. The Creation Mandate points to this remarkable service, guiding people to act as God's vice-regents by representing Him as they tame the earth into usefulness (Gen. 1:26–28). The nature of our exalted calling to serve God worshipfully also entails serving those who bear His image,<sup>8</sup> a service that necessarily involves the use of language and takes place in the context of a given culture. A good education early in life can prepare one to serve more effectively, and this is certainly true with foreign language acquisition.

#### *Fall*

In a fallen world, the ability of humankind to serve God and others properly has been corrupted. Instead of seeking to serve God and others, the fundamental orientation of people has become self-focused and they tend to seek their own interests (2 Tim. 3:2). They may simply not consider doing things that help others and do not directly benefit themselves. More directly, instead of serving those who have difficulty speaking a country's common language, the unrighteous may exploit that difficulty for their own benefit. In cases where someone actually does aim to serve others, the variety in human language and culture can hinder this pursuit (Acts 6:1). In foreign language acquisition and other educational pursuits, people apart from God pursue knowledge with lesser motives than the glory of God and the good of others. Some, indeed, grow in their understanding of other languages and cultures only to put that knowledge to use for evil purposes.

#### *Redemption*

Abundant opportunities exist in a fallen world to show and share Christ through acts of service, and these opportunities are only increased by learning Spanish. Where people apart from Christ seek their own interests, Christians are called to glorify God by serving His image-bearers in a way consistent with His will. This sort of service was exemplified in Christ, the Servant of the Lord who came not to be served, but to serve (Matt. 20:28). When Christ's death was drawing near, He provided a poignant illustration of serving others by washing His disciples' feet (John 13:1–11) and calls His followers to serve others as well (John 13:12–16; Matt. 20:25–28). Believers are called to good works that benefit others (Gal. 6:10; Eph. 2:10; 1 Tim. 5:10; Titus 2:14) and bring glory to God (Matt. 5:16). Though in a fallen world the idea of service may be considered demeaning, Christians find it a privilege as they work out in practical terms the command to love God and neighbor (Matt. 22:37–40). The Lord mandates rest as well as work, but His call to serve means that discretionary time will be used not selfishly, but wisely to accomplish His purposes. Diligently studying the Spanish language and culture can expand Christians' opportunities to serve others. And people can extend their ability to serve others with their Spanish language ability by using technology wisely to learn about service opportunities in Spanish-speaking countries. Students should actively strategize ways to use their Spanish language ability outside the classroom to serve others, perhaps on a missions trip or through a church's Spanish ministry.