

Imagine that you are at a holiday dinner with your extended family. You, being the lucky person you are, get seated right between your two talkative and opinionated “favorite” uncles. One asks what you’ve been learning in school these days, and you reply that you’ve been learning about stewardship.

Uncle #1 snorts and says, “Stewardship?! Isn’t that just some tree-hugger type of stuff? Genesis clearly says that God put us in charge of the earth to use it how we want. It’s there to provide for us. Fact.”

Uncle #2 hears Uncle #1 and replies, “That’s nonsense. Humans have no special role or place here on earth. Everything has equal value and should have equal rights to life—no matter how it lives. We’ve also got to protect our resources on this planet, because our children will need them.”

Develop a response to both of your uncles in the form of a letter to them that accomplishes the following:

- Identifies and affirms what you agree with in both uncles’ statements
- Identifies and explains, with gentleness, what you disagree with in both uncles’ statements
- Makes clear connection to relevant biblical and theological arguments related to ruling, service, and image of God and shows how these arguments might speak to each uncle’s view
- Gives at least one significant example of how scientific understanding can inform the discussion
- Clearly outlines your own position on stewardship and the reasons for it

Questions to ask yourself as you write:

- Have you shown that you can make responsible use of sound scientific understanding to further the conversation? What scientific findings are relevant?
- Have you shown that you can make responsible use of theological and biblical material? Have you considered multiple passages and/or themes?
- Have you thought about how to communicate with humility and gentleness in the midst of disagreements?