THE ANALOGY OF AGRICULTURE

Though our society is consumed with technology, convenience, automation, and digitalization, there is a sense of hi-tech fatigue that has begun to encroach on our fascination with it. Upcoming generations seem to be opting for smaller houses, a back-to-nature philosophy, organic and healthy eating, all amid rising environmental concerns. Though we may be a bit removed from the agrarian stages of civilization, we still need to eat and need agriculture to survive. It is amazing that Christ utilized illustrations that are so fundamental to any human experience that they will never be antiquated. Even urban disciples have to eat and are at least acquainted with the basic concepts of agriculture. As one of His teaching methods, Christ used these every day familiar activities to illustrate larger spiritual truths.

While the parable itself has many principles to mine in the context of Luke 8, the next five weeks take a look at the process of discipleship through the illustration of agriculture. Also known as the Grow Cycle, the course of soul-winning, discipleship, and evangelism is likened to the activity of growing food and fruit. The stages of the cycle consist of preparing the soil, planting the seed, cultivating the plant, harvesting the yield, and preserving the fruit.

This week hones into the stage of soil preparation. Even before the harvest and the planting of seeds, there is a crucial preparation work to be done that ensures a healthy growth process and bountiful harvest for the disciple. “As the garden must be prepared for the natural seed, so the heart must be prepared for the seed of truth” (Adventist Home, p. 145).

Read This Week’s Passage:
Luke 8:5–15
Write out Luke 8:5–15 from the translation of your choice. You may also re-write the passage in your own words, outline, or mind-map the chapter.
Go back to your scribed text and study the passage.

**Circle** repeated words/ phrases/ideas

**Underline** words/phrases that are important and have meaning to you

Draw **Arrows** to connect words/ phrases to other associated or related words/phrases

What special insights do your marks seem overall to point to?

Memorize your favorite verse in Luke 8:5–15. Write it out multiple times to help with memorization.

What are intentional ways you can manifest the preparation stage of soil in your discipleship?

Read more at www.inversebible.org/disc06-3
After looking at your scribed and annotated text, what special insights do your marks overall seem to point to?

What questions emerge after studying this passage? What parts are difficult?

What other principles and conclusions do you find?

How else does the Bible passage link with the preparation stage in the discipleship process?

For more information on preparation and the Grow cycle, visit https://grow.adventist.org/prepare/.

Read more at www.inversebible.org/disc06-4
What relationship do the following verses have with the primary passage?

Acts 10:38
Luke 10:5–9
James 2:14–17
Isaiah 58:6–10

What other verses/promises come to mind in connection with discipleship and people?

Where do you see Jesus in Luke 8:5–15?

How can we bring about more trust in all our relationships as Christ did and does?

What is He saying to you through these texts?

How do you see Jesus differently or see Him again?

Prayer: How do you respond to seeing Jesus in this way?
Review the memory verse. How does it apply to your life this week?

After this week’s study of the chapter, what personal applications are you convicted of in your life?

What practical applications must you make?

Read more inSight from the Spirit of Prophecy at www.inversebible.org/disc06-7

Discipleship Week Six
Share insights from this week’s memory verse and Bible study as well as any discoveries, observations, and questions with your Sabbath School class (or Bible study group). Consider these discussion questions with the rest of the group.

What do you know about soil preparation off the top of your head?

Outside of agriculture, why is preparation important regardless of endeavor?

What happens when preparation is not done in our evangelistic activity? How have you experienced this?

What are some acts of kindness that you have done to reflect Christ?

How can this stage become inauthentic? How can this stage become authentic?

How can your local church’s community service ministry be taken to the next level?

Who would be equivalents today of society’s hated, shunned, and rejected? How can they be reached today?