Statistics tell us that in the Seventh-day Adventist denomination, more than four out of ten members have left the church over the past several decades. Though the organization has seen unprecedented growth rates around the world, it has also had alarming rates of departures. If any organization has 40 percent of its customers, members, adherents, or clientele departing, shouldn’t some emergency measures be taking place?

The question of why they are leaving naturally arises. Though many theories and opinions exist, the departures might be attributed to two primary causes. The “unripe harvest” and “members only” evangelistic strategies employed by churches have had a systemic effect on membership today. The former seeks to harvest souls prematurely through artificial pressure. The latter allows the mature harvest to spoil. Both miscalculate the timing of the harvest and its fruit.

Though much effort has gone into preparing, planting, cultivating, and harvesting, churches are reticent to take care of souls after baptism, which in the Grow cycle is referred to as preserving. Ellen White states, “After individuals have been converted to the truth, they need to be looked after. . . . They do not realize that these newly converted ones need nursing, —watchful attention, help, and encouragement. These should not be left alone, a prey to Satan’s most powerful temptations; they need to be educated in regard to their duties, to be kindly dealt with, to be led along, and to be visited and prayed with.” (Evangelism, 351, 352). We focus on this stage this week.
Write out Luke 15:1–7 from the translation of your choice. If you’re pressed for time, you may write out Luke 15:4–7. 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?

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How can shame and fear be removed from the discipleship process?

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Read more at www.inversebible.org/disc10-3
After looking at your scribed and annotated text, what special insights do your marks seem to point to overall?

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

What other principles and conclusions do you find?

Why do churches cease one-on-one discipleship after baptism? How can you prevent this from happening?

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

Read more at www.inversebible.org/disc10-4
What relationship do the following verses have with the primary passage?

Mark 4:8, 20
Luke 19:10
Luke 6:40
Luke 15:8–32

What other verses/promises come to mind in connecting the entire Grow cycle?

How was Samuel like Jesus?

Who is someone “lost” that you can “receive” and “eat” with?

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 can you make in your school, family, workplace, and church?

Read more inSight from the Spirit of Prophecy at www.inversebible.org/disc10-7
inQuire

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.

Why do you think 40 percent of converts leave the church? What can you do to help plug this leak?

Why do “unripe harvest” and “members only” evangelistic strategies exist in the church?

What does intentional and systematic discipleship look like in your life? In your personal ministry? In your church?

Why isn’t every member discipled in the church immediately after baptism?

How does following Jesus’ model for ministry help with the current dearth of discipleship today?

Where does discipleship fit the lost pattern of Luke 15?

Are you being directly discipled by Jesus today? How are you discipling someone else today in the footsteps of Jesus?