

The SALT Index

The **SALT Index** (Scripture Absorption and Life Transformation) is a research framework designed to answer a question the global Church increasingly recognizes as essential:

Is Scripture truly being absorbed in ways that measurably transform lives?

For decades, Christian impact has often been described through outputs:

- Messages delivered
- Bibles or scriptural materials distributed
- People “reached”
- Decisions recorded

While these measures matter, they do not fully answer the biblical question of fruit: whether faith is taking root deeply enough to shape beliefs, daily behavior, resilience, and long-term discipleship.

The SALT Index exists to help close that gap.

What the SALT Index Measures

Rather than evaluating ministries or programs, the SALT Index examines **outcomes at the population level**. It focuses on whether exposure to scripture is resulting in durable spiritual formation that can be *observed, described, and tracked* over time.

SALT measures five core domains repeatedly emphasized in Scripture and historic discipleship:

- 1. Belief & Discernment**
The clarity and conviction with which individuals hold essential Christian beliefs.
- 2. Scripture Absorption**
The frequency, authority, and personal application of Scripture in daily life.
- 3. Practice & Discipleship**
Practices such as prayer, participation in Christian community, and obedience-oriented habits.
- 4. Life Transformation**
Evidence of inner and outward change, including forgiveness, reordered priorities, service, and resilience.
- 5. Community Engagement**

Honest self-assessment of moral, spiritual, and behavioral alignment with living as a disciple maker.

Together, these domains offer a holistic picture of whether Scripture is shaping lives—not just informing minds.

What the SALT Index Is Not

The SALT Index is **not**:

- A scorecard for individual churches or ministries.
- A tool for ranking, comparison, or competition.
- A replacement for evangelism or outreach metrics.

Instead, SALT functions as a **diagnostic and learning tool**—helping leaders see formation patterns that are often invisible when only activity is measured.

How Ministries and Churches Use the SALT Index

The SALT Index is offered as a **service to ministries, churches, and networks** that want greater clarity about the people they serve.

Many leaders face the same challenge: they work faithfully, but lack a clear, evidence-based way to understand **where formation is strong, where it is thin, and where to focus next**. SALT helps address that challenge in two primary ways.

1. Establishing a Baseline

SALT can be used to establish a **baseline snapshot** of spiritual formation among a congregation, ministry audience, or community. This baseline helps leaders:

- Understand current Scripture engagement patterns
- Identify gaps in belief, practice, and transformation
- Recognize differences across age, gender, or life stage
- Move beyond assumptions to evidence-informed insight

This baseline is not about evaluation or judgment. It is about **listening carefully** to the lived spiritual realities of people.

2. Measuring Progress Over Time

Because SALT is designed for repeat use, it can be administered **longitudinally**—allowing ministries to observe change over time rather than relying on one-time impressions.

Used this way, SALT helps leaders:

- Track whether discipleship efforts are producing deeper Scripture absorption
- See where growth is occurring and where it has stalled
- Evaluate whether changes are sustained, not just momentary
- Adjust strategies based on outcomes, not only activity

Longitudinal measurement allows ministries to move from asking “*Are we busy?*” to asking “*Are people actually growing?*”

Why the SALT Index Matters

Across cultures and contexts, Christian leaders increasingly report the same concern: high levels of access and activity, but uneven depth of formation. Scripture is available as never before, yet confidence, discernment, endurance, and disciple-making often lag behind.

The SALT Index provides a way to observe this reality honestly—without alarmism or assumption.

By establishing baselines and tracking change over time, SALT helps answer questions such as:

- Are people moving from belief to lived obedience?
 - Is Scripture shaping decisions under pressure?
 - Is faith being reproduced naturally, not just professionally?
 - Are investments leading to lasting transformation?
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A Tool for Stewardship, Not Self-Promotion

The SALT Index is developed and stewarded by **Back to the Bible** as part of a broader commitment to help people engage Scripture in ways that lead to lasting life transformation.

At its core, SALT is an act of stewardship.

It reflects a conviction that the Church serves the gospel best not by assuming outcomes, but by seeking clarity—so that future efforts can be aligned more faithfully with Scripture’s vision of fruit that remains.

The goal is not simply to measure more, but to **measure what matters**.

Who the SALT Index Is For

The SALT Index is designed to serve leaders who care deeply about **faithful formation**, not just visible activity.

Churches

For pastors and church leaders seeking a clearer picture of spiritual formation within their congregation, SALT helps establish an honest baseline, identify discipleship gaps, and track growth over time—without turning people into projects or metrics into verdicts.

Ministries and Networks

For parachurch ministries, mission organizations, and collaborative networks, SALT provides a shared, outcome-focused framework that can be applied across diverse contexts. It enables leaders to compare learning, not performance, and to align strategies around Scripture absorption and life transformation rather than outputs alone.

Foundations and Funders

For foundations and donors committed to long-term impact, SALT offers a way to support outcome-based stewardship. It helps answer not only *what* is being done, but *what is changing*—over time, across populations, and beyond anecdote.

In every context, SALT is intended to inform wisdom, not replace discernment.

An Invitational Next Step

If you are leading a church, ministry, or network and sense the need for greater clarity about the spiritual formation of the people you serve, the SALT Index is available as a collaborative resource. Used humbly and thoughtfully, it can help establish a baseline, illuminate priorities, and track growth over time—so that discipleship efforts are guided not by assumption, but by insight. We invite leaders who share this commitment to faithful, Scripture-shaped formation to explore how SALT might serve their context.

How the SALT Index Works: Baseline → Formation → Growth → Review

Baseline

Establish a clear, evidence-based snapshot of Scripture engagement, beliefs, practices, and transformation among the people you serve.

Formation

Use insights from the baseline to shape discipleship priorities, Scripture engagement strategies, and pastoral focus.

Growth

Allow time for Scripture-shaped practices and formation efforts to take root in daily life, community, and decision-making.

Review

Re-measure over time to observe progress, identify remaining gaps, and steward next steps with humility and clarity.

This cycle is designed to be **repeatable, longitudinal, and adaptive**, supporting long-term faithfulness rather than short-term reporting.

Why NOW?

Across the global Church, we can count **reach** and **responses** at scale. What we often cannot describe with the same confidence is **formation**—whether Scripture is producing disciples whose lives are increasingly shaped by obedience to Jesus and who reproduce that faith in others.

The SALT Index exists to help leaders, movements, and funders answer one question with greater honesty:

Are we measuring activity—or evidence of Scripture-shaped discipleship?

The SALT Index is intentionally **delivery-agnostic**: it works in oral cultures, persecuted contexts, digital environments, and established church systems without privileging a Western pathway.

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