

The Covenant of Salt: The Story of God's Relentless Pursuit of His People

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The Covenant of Salt is an inspirational guidebook for believers.

Nguumbur Lovette Ikongo's inspirational self-help book *The Covenant of Salt* uses biblical insights to promote spiritual development. Building on Jesus's idea that the faithful are the salt of the earth, the text probes the metaphorical and biblical possibilities of salt in both the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament.

The book's five extended explorations, including "Perfect Imperfections" and "The Table," move from confusion and doubt toward faith. They begin with brief opening passages to set their scenes, as with the idea of salt at "the table" of the church. Subsequent subsections, concerning topics like flattery and connectedness, mix scriptural and anecdotal details to make their points. A strong consideration of church life includes frank descriptions of churches harming their members and failing to live up to God's ideals. That the church itself is presented as far from perfect makes the book's personal advice easier to accept.

The book's advice to faithful Christians concerns overcoming the power of sin and clinging to the life-giving spirit of God. It acknowledges the struggles involved with challenges like envy and fear and suggests ways to find new life in God and Jesus, accepting personal imperfections and seeking God's grace.

Herein, salt is a metaphorical spiritual cleanser. The text teases out instances where salt is mentioned in the Bible, plumbs their context, and imbues related verses with practical meaning. It also notes that salt, while it can be used in a purifying way, can also destroy lands if too much is used. Salt, it shows, is a symbol for biblical covenants and spiritual notions as well.

Word studies, biblical commentary, and thoughtful consideration of the biblical material result in meaningful ideas for effecting personal change. The text works from a familiar outline to arrive somewhere fresh. Sermon-like writing addresses the audience as "you" and mixes in a wealth of rhetorical devices. Personal asides, including an anecdote about how its author came to faith, are included. The text makes good use of biblical stories, including the story of David and Goliath, which is shared to encourage standing up to problems like anger and lust.

The text is warm and wise, its ideas appealing and common sense. Working from biblical considerations to suggest ways to live a life of faith, it addresses the real demands of church life in a weighty way. Its thoughtful consideration of spiritual matters, and its gentle delivery, make it an appealing avenue for developing a healthy Christian experience.

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JEREMIAH ROOD (December 3, 2019)

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