

Troika Score: Measuring Formation Without Reducing It

A psychometric instrument across the Fruit of the Spirit that names where the Spirit is working without turning formation into a performance metric.

Dr. J Rodriguez, Founder, Troika Ministries • 2026-07-09 • NIV84 (primary)

"Formation is the metric. Fruit is the evidence. Character is the credential."

— Dr. J Rodriguez, Founder, Troika Ministries

o. The Epidemic This Paper Answers

This paper is the direct answer to the **Diagnosis** itself, not merely one of its four symptoms: *"This is a formation famine — and no tool on the market even measures the thing the epidemic destroys... Nothing in the field measures the one thing whose absence causes the collapse: character... You cannot heal what you refuse to measure, and you cannot measure what you have no framework to name."*

Church technology measures giving and attendance. Leadership brands measure reach and revenue. Prayer apps measure streaks. **The Troika Score exists because none of these measure the thing whose absence actually produces the epidemic.** But building an instrument to measure character carries its own danger — the same danger this whole series has been naming since Paper 1: the temptation to scale a *number* faster than the *reality* it claims to describe. A poorly built formation instrument would not solve the famine; it would industrialize it. This paper explains how the Troika Score is built specifically to avoid that trap.

I. The Thesis

A number can describe how much someone gave or how often they attended. It cannot, by itself, describe whether a person is becoming loving, joyful, and at peace. **The Troika Score exists to close that gap responsibly — measuring the largely invisible work of formation without pretending to grade the soul it is measuring.** This requires holding two things in tension that most instruments collapse into one: real psychometric rigor (so the mirror is honest) and a hard theological ceiling on what any score is permitted to mean (so the mirror never becomes a verdict). Most tools sacrifice one for the other. Troika refuses to sacrifice either.

II. The Vocation This Protects — Rooted in Original Intent

This series has repeated the same doctrinal floor from its first page: the Father prepared a garden, the Son prepared a place, and the Spirit dwells in us now, preparing us for that place — so that we, in turn, might prepare a people for it (Luke 1:17). That preparation is real. It is also, by its nature, largely invisible:

The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.

John 3:8, NIV84

Jesus does not say the Spirit's work is undetectable — he says its *sound* can be heard, even while its origin and destination remain hidden. This is the precise theological space the Troika Score occupies: not a window into the soul (which belongs to God alone — 1 Samuel 16:7, "the LORD looks at the heart"), but an instrument tuned to catch the *sound* of the wind — the observable evidence of a work whose full scope no tool, however well-designed, can claim to see completely.

Without some way to catch that sound, the vocation of "preparing a people" runs blind. A church, a leader, a person cannot steward formation they have no way to notice happening. The Troika Score is not an attempt to make the invisible fully visible — that would overreach the doctrine it serves. It is an attempt to give the vocation eyes good enough to walk by, without ever mistaking what those eyes see for the whole picture God alone holds.

III. Two Failure Modes — Reducing the Soul to a Score, or Refusing to Look at All

Every instrument that touches spiritual formation eventually drifts toward one of two failures.

The first failure is turning measurement into performance. This is the corporate competency-assessment trap: once a number exists, people learn to produce the number rather than the reality behind it. Jesus names this precise danger, aimed at people who had turned righteousness itself into a measured performance:

Be careful not to do your 'acts of righteousness' before men, to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven... but when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

Matthew 6:1, 3-4, NIV84

An instrument that becomes a leaderboard trains exactly the behavior Jesus warns against: giving, serving, and loving *in order to be measured well*, rather than because the giving, serving, and loving are

real. A formation score that can be gamed for status is not just imperfect — it actively corrupts the thing it was built to protect.

The second failure is refusing to examine at all, on the theological grounds that only God can see the heart. This sounds humble, but Scripture does not actually license this refusal — it commands the opposite:

Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves.

2 Corinthians 13:5, NIV84

A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup.

1 Corinthians 11:28, NIV84

Let us examine our ways and test them, and let us return to the LORD.

Lamentations 3:40, NIV84

Self-examination is not a corporate invention imported into the church — it is a repeated biblical command, older than any psychometric instrument. The question was never *whether* to examine. The question is whether the examination can be done honestly, without curdling into the very performance culture Matthew 6 condemns. The Troika Score's entire design exists inside the narrow space between these two failures: rigorous enough to be a real examination, bounded enough to never become a stage.

IV. The Instrument — Rigor as an Act of Honesty, Not Ambition

The Troika Score is a **63-item self-assessment** built across the nine Fruit of the Spirit, organized under the three ABC dimensions:

Dimension	Virtues	Primary Items	SD Items
Attitude	Love, Joy, Peace	18	3
Behavior	Patience, Kindness, Goodness	18	3
Character	Faithfulness, Gentleness, Self-Control	18	3
Total	9 virtues	54	9

That is 54 primary items (6 per virtue — 4 primary statements plus 2 reverse-coded) plus 9 social-desirability items (1 per virtue, detecting idealized or inflated responding) — 63 items total, answered on a 1-6 scale with no neutral midpoint, taking 15-20 minutes in a formation setting with prayer and pastoral framing, never administered as a cold, standalone test.

The rigor is deliberate and unapologetic: **response consistency is computed from intra-scale pairs** (a primary item and its reverse-coded counterpart within the same virtue — flagged if more than 4 points apart), the same approach used by established instruments like the NEO-PI-R, at zero added burden to

the person taking it. Internal reliability targets Cronbach's alpha $\geq .70$ per virtue and $\geq .80$ per dimension. The social-desirability scale exists **not as an accusation but as a pastoral flag** — a signal that a conversation about honesty may be needed before the score is used to guide anything, because an inflated score used for placement "would be worse than no score at all."

This level of rigor is not academic vanity. It is the practical form of the command in 2 Corinthians 13:5 — an honest self-examination requires tools sturdy enough that the answer isn't simply whatever the respondent wants to believe about themselves.

V. Why the Nine Read as One

Galatians 5:22-23 is the scriptural spine of the entire instrument, and the grammar matters as much here as it did in Paper 2's treatment of the ABC Model:

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

Galatians 5:22-23, NIV84

Karpos — fruit — is singular. The nine virtues are not nine separate scores to optimize independently; they are nine lenses on one Spirit-formed life. This is why the instrument builds in **fracture detection**: when a 20-plus point gap opens between dimensions — strong public Behavior sitting on top of a turbulent, unaddressed Attitude, for instance — the score does not average this away into a comfortable middle number. It flags it. Not as a failing grade, but as exactly what Paper 1 named as the mechanism behind most public collapses: a fracture between what looks formed and what actually is, revealed before pressure does the revealing more expensively.

VI. What the Score Refuses to Become

Four guardrails are fixed and non-negotiable, regardless of how the platform around the instrument evolves:

- **Not a verdict.** 1 Samuel 16:7 governs: "the LORD looks at the heart" — a tool built by people cannot. A low score is never a diagnosis of someone's standing before God; it is an invitation to deeper engagement.
- **Not a ranking.** There is no leaderboard, no person-to-person comparison, no advancement or platform granted by a number. This is the direct, structural enforcement of Matthew 6:1-4 — the score cannot become the trumpet Jesus warns against, because there is no audience built into the system for it to sound before.
- **Not works-righteousness.** Fruit is the Spirit's work, not an achievement to be earned by effort (Galatians 5:22; Ephesians 2:8-9, "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not

from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast," NIV84). Growth from a lower band to a higher one over months is genuine transformation regardless of how far a person still has to go — it is never framed as falling short of a finish line, because the instrument does not treat sanctification as a race with a scoreboard.

- **Not surveillance.** Results are private by default; sharing is always consent-based and revocable; church-level data is aggregated and de-identified with a hard cell-size floor so no small group of people is ever exposed by their own honesty.

Results are displayed only as formation words — **Emerging, Growing, Established, Deepening, Abiding** — never as raw numbers, precisely so the instrument cannot be repurposed as a scoreboard even by well-meaning users who might otherwise start comparing digits.

VII. Read at More Than One Scale, Without Changing Its Floor

The same instrument extends in two directions without altering a single guardrail. In the **Berean Score** (the church-level companion), the same nine virtues are read across four constituencies — leaders, staff, volunteers, and the aggregated, anonymous congregation — and then read *in reverse*, with members examining whether the church itself is loving, patient, and faithful toward them, anchored in Acts 17:11's picture of the Bereans "examining the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true." In **LIA**, the marketplace context, the identical 63 items measure the identical nine virtues, because — as the canon states plainly — "the fruit of the Spirit is the fruit of the Spirit; it does not become secular when expressed in a boardroom." Band labels change (Growing Leader, Whole Leader) to fit context; the instrument, the theology, and the guardrails do not. One fruit, read at multiple scales, joined only by consent.

This matters for the epidemic this paper answers: a leadership famine that spans church and marketplace alike needs an instrument that can speak honestly into both without becoming two different, incompatible tools — or worse, a corporate competency framework wearing thin theological language.

VIII. Conclusion — Beholding, Not Grading

Paul writes of the mechanism underneath all of this, and it is worth ending here rather than with the mechanics of the instrument itself:

And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

2 Corinthians 3:18, NIV84

Transformation happens through *beholding*, not through being graded. The Troika Score does not transform anyone — it is not the mechanism of sanctification, only a mirror held up periodically so a

person can see, imperfectly and partially, what beholding Christ has actually produced in them so far. A mirror that flatters is useless. A mirror that condemns is cruel. **The Troika Score is built to be neither — an honest enough reflection to be trusted, and a bounded enough tool to never mistake itself for the face it is reflecting.**

"Formation is the metric. Fruit is the evidence. Character is the credential." The famine this series answers is not a shortage of leadership talent. It is a shortage of anyone willing to build a mirror this honest, and this humble, at the same time.

Scripture Reference List

- John 3:8 — the wind's sound heard, its origin and destination hidden (the Spirit's largely invisible work)
- 1 Samuel 16:7 — the Lord looks at the heart (why the score can never be a verdict)
- Matthew 6:1-4 — do not practice righteousness to be seen (why there is no leaderboard)
- 2 Corinthians 13:5 — test yourselves, examine yourselves (the biblical mandate for self-examination)
- 1 Corinthians 11:28 — let a person examine himself
- Lamentations 3:40 — let us test and examine our ways, and return to Yahweh
- Galatians 5:22-23 — the fruit (singular) of the Spirit
- Ephesians 2:8-9 — by grace, through faith, not from works (why growth is never framed as falling short)
- 2 Corinthians 3:18 — transformed by beholding, from glory into glory
- Luke 1:17 — preparing a people for the Lord (the vocation this instrument serves)
- Acts 17:11 — the Bereans examining the Scriptures (anchor for the church-level Berean Score)

All Scripture quoted from the New International Version, 1984 edition (NIV84), per Troika Ministries' translation standard settled 2026-07-08. Converted from the original Lexham English Bible (LEB) citations, 2026-07-09.

Canon Alignment

Existing canon

The Epidemic (Series Preface)

Original Intent Narrative

The ABC Whole Leadership Model (Paper 2)

Formation Must Match Responsibility (Paper 1)

How this paper reinforces it

Direct answer to the Diagnosis itself — "nothing in the field measures character"

§II frames the instrument as catching the "sound" of the Spirit's invisible preparation, never claiming to see it fully

§V extends the singular-fruit argument (Gal 5:22) into fracture detection as a diagnostic, not a verdict

Fracture detection is presented as the earlier, cheaper place to catch the same gap that paper's §III names as the root of scaled-too-fast collapse

Troika Score & Berean Score – The Formation Assessment System v1.0

§IV-VII summarize this canon document's fixed guardrails, instrument architecture, Berean Score, and LIA into treatise voice

Troika Score – Psychometric Framework & Validity Architecture

§IV draws its instrument specifications (item counts, RC methodology, reliability targets) directly from this canon document

Canonization Record

- **Originated by:** Dr. J (Jose G. Rodriguez, Ph.D.)
- **Drafted by:** Shepherd (AI), at Dr. J's direction, using Dr. J's quoted thesis and Troika canon (including the Team Plan knowledge base files 07_TROIKA_SCORE_SYSTEM.md and the Psychometric Framework & Validity Architecture document) as source material, with Scripture retrieved live from Dr. J's Logos library
- **Status:** Awaiting Dr. J's review for voice and doctrinal precision
- **Review:** Dr. J retains sole authority to amend, publish, or withhold this paper

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