

Living as Christians in the City – Part One

Overview: This is a 2-part discussion based on Greg Thompson’s presentation “Living as Christians in the City” (Video here: <https://vimeo.com/144594045>.) We recommend having group members watch the 14-minute segment before your meeting and then watching it again as a group before using the discussion questions below. The content is so rich that you really need to watch the video twice to fully absorb it.

Who is Greg Thompson?

Greg Thompson is Executive Director of [New City Commons](#), a social impact consulting firm that helps leaders understand the complexity of our time, re-imagine the nature of civic life, and nurture strong economic, educational, political, artistic, and religious institutions for the common good. He has a PhD in theology, ethics, and culture from the University of Virginia, where he studied the civil rights movement and African-American spiritual history. Prior to his time at New City Commons, Thompson served as senior pastor at Trinity Presbyterian Church in Charlottesville, Virginia.

What’s the context of this video? Greg Thompson spoke in Denver as part of DIFW’s Thriving Cities event (Fall 2015.) In this talk, “Living as Christians in the City” he asks, “What does it mean to live a public faith?” In Part One, Thompson establishes a framework that begins with personal redemption and flows outward through our relationships, work, and engagement with the community. Part Two explores six principles for public faith.

How to watch the video: Have a pen and paper ready as you watch the video, you’ll absorb the content more fully if you take notes. Listen for the both the framework of faith (Part 1) and the six points Thompson makes about public faith (Part 2). Ask yourself, “What implications do these principles have for my life and work?”

Part One: (through 14:57)

I. A Shared **WOUND**

- Thompson says we intuitively understand there’s something wrong with our individual lives and with our life in community. Do you agree? Give an example to support your opinion.
- The consequences of this shared wound are restlessness, discontent, and “dis-integration.” How do you see these symptoms expressed around you?

II. A Shared **CALLING**

- Thompson explains how God calls us to a personal faith that grows to have public ramifications. As a group, practically “flesh out” the 4 steps on this journey:
 - Personal redemption
 - Relational reconciliation
 - Vocational restoration/redirection
 - Civic reimagination

- He challenges us to “See ourselves as inextricably bound up in the healing of the world.” What’s your gut reaction to hearing that? In practical terms, what do you think that means for your life & work?

III. A Shared **INTUITION** - Thompson helps us gain a clearer understanding of what our “labor” should be—civic reimagination.

- How could the gospel inspire and empower us to reimagine the possibilities of civic life?