

MENTOR GUIDE

MODULE 7: SEEKING THE HEART OF YOUR CITY

INTRODUCTION

In this module, **Josh Williams** teaches how to follow God's call to love your community and work for Jesus' desired transformation in your city or town. Then, he guides us through simple steps for beginning the work of serving your community alongside others in your church.



This module's teaching will help you answer two central questions:

1. How can I discern how God is calling me to join His work in my community?
2. How do I get started in serving my city with others from my church?

SESSION 1: SEEKING THE HEART OF YOUR CITY, PART 1

Video Notes

Love leads to service (John 1:14; 3:16; 10:10). Jesus loved those outside of His immediate religious community. Jesus deeply loves the world and calls us to serve others, and desires transformation in our communities. The Church is called not only to pastor its members, but also to shepherd the city. As John Wimber said, “The meat is in the streets.”

Step 1: Pray. Prayer is the way you align your heart with God’s heart for your city. You can build rhythms of prayer for your city into church life and into your own personal practice.

Step 2: Learn the redemptive history of your city or town. This involves discovering what God has done historically—spiritually and socially—in your city or town. Doing this helps you identify themes of God’s movement (freedom, justice, revival) and offers stories that can build credibility, encourage evangelism, and shape vision for your work.

Step 3: Just start serving! Don’t get stuck in analysis paralysis: pick a place to serve—even short-term. It’s okay if it’s not perfect—just get started. Faithfulness in small things opens doors for greater impact.

SESSION 1: SEEKING THE HEART OF YOUR CITY, PART 1

Participant Reflection Questions

After watching the video, participants will answer or journal the following questions for reflection. Feel free to utilize these questions for discussion at your next Coaching Session.

- 1.** What is God's heart for your city or town, and how are you being invited to align your prayers, compassion, and attention with it? Start by asking: what breaks God's heart in your community, and what brings Him joy?
- 2.** What part of what you know of your city's redemptive history or story might inform how you engage with its people today? Where has God already been at work, and how can you join that ongoing story?
- 3.** Where can you take a simple, faithful step to serve your community—and how might that action shape your heart and witness?

SESSION 1: ACTIVITY

What is one step you can take right now to engage with your city?

Tip: Someone is waiting for you to reach out—make the call!

SESSION 2: SEEKING THE HEART OF YOUR CITY, PART 2

Video Notes

- 1. Understanding the needs of your city helps uncover opportunities for impact.**
- 2. First: Identify needs and opportunities in your city.**
 - Start with *research*. Ask the leaders of your church and the leaders of your community (e.g., police/fire chiefs, city officials, community representatives) about community needs.
 - Look for *opportunities*. Something like “walkability” can indicate opportunities and be used to your advantage. Ask around, conduct surveys, and gather firsthand insights.
 - Gather the *data*. Facts and figures provide clarity and help you determine what action step to take next.
- 3. Then, discern what action you should take or where you should begin.** In discernment, always listen first—through scripture, prayer, and prophetic guidance; be realistic and wise in assessing what you’ve learned; and pray about the alignment between community needs and your calling.
- 4. Finally: Jump in!** Faith without works is dead—taking action is both obedience and an act of worship. Fight the excuses and, if no one else is doing it, learn to discern and act together as a community.

SESSION 2: SEEKING THE HEART OF YOUR CITY, PART 2

Participant Reflection Questions

- 1.** What steps have you personally taken (or could take) to learn about the real needs in your city or neighborhood? Who are the people or leaders you can reach out to for insight? What have you learned from them so far? Or, what would you like to learn?
- 2.** Where do you sense alignment between your gifts/calling and your city's needs? What area of brokenness or opportunity stirs your compassion or conviction most deeply?
- 3.** What barriers (internal or external) do you think may slow you or your church from taking action? How might God be inviting you to move past them?
- 4.** What is one small, faithful step you (or your group) can take this month to move toward meeting a need in your city? How can you frame that step as both obedience and worship?

ACTIVATION ASSIGNMENT

Put This Into Practice

Determine how you will learn the needs and opportunities of your city.

1. Who will you ask?
2. Will you conduct surveys?
3. What data will you gather?

MENTOR SESSION GUIDE

While the content we've provided will be impactful for participants, as a VLE mentor, the time you spend helping participants process will be transformative. Please use this time to make thoughtful observations and be prepared to speak into their lives. This time together will provide many opportunities to have an "ICNU (I See In You) Conversation", which will be catalytic in their growth and development! Here is a sample agenda you might consider using for your time together:

Connection (5-10 minutes). This is a great opportunity for small talk, to warm up the conversation. You can ask how their week has been, or if they have anything exciting coming up.

Celebration (5-10 minutes). Ask them if they have seen God do something in their lives or ministry in the past two weeks that they'd like to share. This is an opportunity for you to affirm and reinforce the good growth that is happening.

Coaching Conversation (40 minutes). See Coaching Conversation Section on the next page. This portion will be specific to each module.

Care & Prayer (10-20 minutes). As you wrap up your time together, make space for the work of the Holy Spirit. This could look different every time, especially if you are meeting with an individual versus a group. If you are with an individual, you could ask if the Holy Spirit has brought anything to the surface for them, and then pray into that. If you are with a group, this might be an opportunity for a hot seat, or for participants to break off into pairs and pray for each other.

Closing Communication (5 minutes). This is the time to highlight the next module, important church events, or announcements, etc.

MODULE 7: COACHING CONVERSATION

Module 7: Seeking the Heart of Your City calls leaders to engage their cities with the heart of Jesus. Seeking the Heart of Your City reframes outreach and justice not as programs but as a lifestyle of incarnational presence and Spirit-led discernment. Through a biblical framework and a six-step process, participants are invited to listen, learn, and love their local context in tangible and redemptive ways. This is a shift from ministry to a city toward life with and for it.

1. Start by sharing your own story of engaging with your city or neighborhood.

- What opened your eyes to the needs and beauty of your city?
- How has your love for your city grown over time—and what challenges came with that?

2. Invite reflection on the Activation Assignment by asking:

- What did you notice when you began to intentionally observe your city?
- What emotions, surprises, or invitations surfaced in prayer as you listened for God's heart?
- Was there a particular neighborhood, issue, or group that stood out to you?

3. Guide participants through some core themes from the sessions. Here are some suggested prompts:

- Jesus-centered presence: What does it mean to show up like Jesus in your city—not just serve, but see people?
- Listening over assuming: How can we posture ourselves as learners in our local context?

- The six steps (Prayer, Listen, Learn, Discern, Engage, Reflect): Which of these steps do you feel drawn to right now? Which one feels hard?

4. Help participants connect these concepts to their leadership by asking:

- How does your role in ministry intersect with your role as a neighbor or citizen?
- What small step could you take to deepen your local engagement?
- How could your ministry team or small group join you in this?

5. Close with prayer and ministry.

- Create space for intercession—for neighborhoods, schools, systems, or stories that surfaced.
- Pray for clarity, courage, and creativity in local engagement.
- Ask if there is anything specific to this material that you can pray for them about.