



Key Points:

God wants our hearts more than anything else.

- Key point 1. **Rebuilding of the temple and walls took precedence over the rebuilding of their hearts (Nehemiah 13:7)**
 - When Nehemiah wasn't present, the people quickly went awry. Without external control, God's way wasn't being followed. After years in Exile, God's people hadn't internalised God's way – they were still used to being told what to do
- Key point 2. **There is always a pull to harden our hearts to God (Nehemiah 13:11)**
 - We may think we can live neutrally in our financial systems but the capitalist market is the air our society breathes and it only understands value in monetary form and this warps so much.
- Key point 3. **Jesus gives us a new start and a new heart (Jeremiah 31:33 & Ezekiel 36:26)**
 - So much of the Old Testament narratives show us that God's people were unable to follow God's ways by external control, but Jesus brought a new way—a complete renovation, restoration and rebuilding of our hearts.

Questions:

Conversation Starter

1. Can you think of a thing that you started but lost heart when it got hard?

Start thinking

2. Why do you think God's people turned away so quickly after Nehemiah left?

Start sharing

3. What things in our culture do you feel most contend for the desires of your heart?

Start praying

4. Heavenly Father, please will you make a home in our hearts afresh today. Would you allow our roots to grow down into your love and keep us strong." (Eph 3.17)

Start doing

5. For each morning this week, why not ask God to fill your heart and keep it soft towards Him every day. Seek to be aware of the things that battle against this.