

# BREAKTHROUGH TO BREAK FREE

## SMALL GROUP NOTES

Geoff Maile

Whitstable - 07/01/18

Canterbury - 28/01/18

## SCRIPTURE

Philippians 3:1-4:1

## SCRIPTURE CONTEXT

The church is Philippi, in contrast to Corinth and Galatia, appears to be a healthy congregation. Paul's letter therefore is one of encouragement rather than correction and is written in a joyful, exuberant tone. However the letter contains instruction and warning as well. The Philippians are doing well but they need to make sure that they don't rest and relax. They need to keep pressing on into the things of God that lead to growing maturity.

In chapter 3, Paul warns them not to listen to Judaizers (people who insisted that Christians needed to obey all the OT ceremonial laws). Paul states that righteousness comes from faith by the law and so we should put no confidence in the flesh (v3). He encourages the church that the key to spiritual progress is to forget what lies behind and strain forwards to what lies ahead; their inheritance in Christ and future resurrection.

## DID YOU KNOW?

- Philippi was the first church in Europe that Paul planted.
- Philippi was a Roman colony, meaning many of its inhabitants were citizens of Rome. Paul has this fact in mind when he says 'our citizenship is in heaven.'
- The word 'goal' in verse 14 (Greek. *Skopos*) can also refer to the finish line in a race.

## QUESTIONS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

1. What things can you be tempted to find your identity in rather than Christ?
2. What influence or experience (positive or negative) from your past has most shaped you?
3. Our identity can be shaped by either our past successes, pain, or failures. Which of these do you think most impacts your life today?
4. What opposition or challenge are you currently facing that makes it hard to 'stand firm'?

## DIGGING DEEPER

Read 1 Timothy 1:12-17. What encouragement do we find in these verses regarding the effects of our past sin on our present calling and relationship with God?

## RESOURCES FOR FURTHER STUDY / DEVOTION

The Emotionally Healthy Church, Pete Scazzero

Spiritual Depression, Chapter 5, 'That one sin' & Chapter 6 'Vain regrets', Martin Lloyd Jones