**HOLY SAVIOUR, BITTERNE BIBLE STUDY – WEEK BEGINNING AUGUST 16th**

**PHILIPPIANS 3.12-4.1 – WINNING THE PRIZE!**

*In the previous section of Philippians we read of the great blessings of being a Christian; but experiencing them doesn’t mean we can be proud of having ‘arrived’. Paul reminds us that no-one is perfect. We still have a goal to aim for. We are citizens of heaven now, an even greater privilege than being a Roman citizen. That’s something to live up to in our way of life!* ***As usual you may find it helpful to jot down your thoughts about the questions in the spaces provided*** *–* ***and it would be really good to share them with others.*** *Phone, Skype, email some members of your homegroup or a friend and/or email me your thoughts (* brianparfitt@btinternet.com*).* ***Brian Parfitt***

In the worlds of work or study has having standards to follow, goals to achieve or deadlines to work to helped you to get things done? How can they make a difference?

**READ Philippians 3.12-4.1**

**A GOAL TO PURSUE (verses 12-14)**

Paul is aware that, like us, he is not perfect. How can the picture of the athlete pressing on in the race motivate us in living the Christian life?

Why is it helpful to ‘forget what is behind’ – both the failures and the successes?

How is running the race rewarded?

***What things distract you from running the Christian race?***

***How can we avoid giving the impression of having ‘arrived’ in the Christian life?***

**AN EXAMPLE TO FOLLOW (verses 15-17)**

How does Christian teaching and living relate to each other? How can the example of other Christians help us?

***Who are the Christians whose example you would choose to follow?***

***What sort of impact might your example have on others?***

**A DANGER TO AVOID (verses 18-19)**

Why do you think the people described here drive Paul to tears?

What are the failings in the beliefs and behaviour of these people which Paul wants us to avoid?

***The way Paul describes the people here could look like a description of those who are not Christians, but his concern for them suggests that these are Christians who have adopted a different lifestyle. Why might that lifestyle be appealing? How can we avoid a lax approach to Christian living?***

**A CITIZENSHIP TO HONOUR (verse 3.20-4.1)**

Philippi was a Roman colony, where citizens lived with the same privileges and laws as if they were in Rome – something in which to take pride. What does Paul say about the nature of the Christian’s citizenship? How does that shape our view of the future? How should it shape our lives in the present?

***How can the security of being a citizen of heaven make a difference to our lives now?***