

SERIES: 2018 THE YEAR OF BREAKTHROUGH
PART 2: DEVELOPING THE HABITS FOR BREAKTHROUGH

Good morning (afternoon). Ralph Waldo Emerson once said, **“Sow a thought and you reap an action; sow an act and you reap a habit; sow a habit and you reap a character; sow a character and you reap a destiny.”** You tell me your habits and I can tell you the kinds of outcomes you are presently having in your life and how your life will turn out. Why is this important? Because as we pursue the breakthroughs that God has for us in 2018, the Year of Breakthrough, the habits that you presently are engaged in must change if you truly desire God’s breakthrough in your life. The major premise of this series and our entire year together is that the Bible teaches that a lifestyle of Breakthrough is only possible as you have a relationship with Jesus, and you commit yourself to learning the habits that are most conducive to living a life that is filled with His joy, strength, stamina, resilience, and a love for God and others, and that you’re fully engaged in God’s purposes and plans for your life.

We’re going to look at today, **FIVE DAILY HABITS FOR BREAKTHROUGHS IN 2018**. Please follow along in your Bible as I read Philippians 3:1-21 **“Whatever happens, my dear brothers and sisters, rejoice in the Lord. I never get tired of telling you these things, and I do it to safeguard your faith. 2 Watch out for those dogs, those people who do evil, those mutilators who say you must be circumcised to be saved. 3 For we who worship by the Spirit of God are the ones who are truly circumcised. We rely on what Christ Jesus has done for us. We put no confidence in human effort, 4 though I could have confidence in my own effort if anyone could. Indeed, if others have reason for confidence in their own efforts, I have even more. 5 I was circumcised when I was eight days old. I am a pure-blooded citizen of Israel and a member of the tribe of Benjamin—a real Hebrew if there ever was one! I was a member of the Pharisees, who demand the strictest obedience to the Jewish law. 6 I was so zealous that I harshly persecuted the church. And as for righteousness, I obeyed the law without fault. 7 I once thought these things were valuable, but now I consider them worthless because of what Christ has done. 8 Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For His sake I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I would gain Christ 9 and become one with Him. I no longer count on my own righteousness through obeying the law; rather, I become righteous through faith in Christ. For God’s way of making us right with Himself depends on faith. 10 I want to know Christ and**

experience the mighty power that raised Him from the dead. I want to suffer with Him, sharing in His death, 11 so that one way or another I will experience the resurrection from the dead! 12 I don't mean to say that I have already achieved these things or that I have already reached perfection. But I press on to possess that perfection for which Christ Jesus first possessed me. 13 No, dear brothers and sisters, I have not achieved it, but I focus on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, 14 I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us. 15 Let all who are spiritually mature agree on these things. If you disagree on some point, I believe God will make it plain to you. 16 But we must hold on to the progress we have already made. 17 Dear brothers and sisters, pattern your lives after mine, and learn from those who follow our example. 18 For I have told you often before, and I say it again with tears in my eyes, that there are many whose conduct shows they are really enemies of the cross of Christ. 19 They are headed for destruction. Their god is their appetite, they brag about shameful things, and they think only about this life here on earth. 20 But we are citizens of heaven, where the Lord Jesus Christ lives. And we are eagerly waiting for Him to return as our Savior. 21 He will take our weak mortal bodies and change them into glorious bodies like His own, using the same power with which He will bring everything under His control."

The first habit that Paul models here is this:

I. Every day: Rely on God's grace

In v. 3 Paul writes, **"For we who worship by the Spirit of God are the ones who are truly circumcised. We rely on what Christ Jesus has done for us. We put no confidence in human effort."** There is a striking difference between religion and a relationship with the living God. Paul was adamant after Jesus revealed Himself to him that the only way you can have your sins forgiven, be reconciled and placed in a right relationship with Jesus and become a part of God's family, the church, is to accept what Jesus Christ has accomplished for you on the cross and to repent, turn from your sins and turn your life over to Jesus Christ. God says, "I don't want your religious routines, rituals and rules; I want your heart. I want to have a relationship with you." Dogs in Paul's day were zoological lowlifes, scavengers that were detested by the Greco-Romans society and considered unclean religiously by the Jews who sometimes used the term "dog" to refer to the Gentiles. Dr. Fee argues that Paul reversed the epithet; by trying to make Gentiles "clean" through circumcision,

the Judaizers become unclean dogs. They were using religion to control the gentiles who were accepting Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. They said that the Gentiles would have to be circumcised under the O.C. so that they could belong to the people of God, demonstrating their obedience to Christ. Paul threw a fit. He argues that every one of us who have surrendered our lives to Jesus Christ and we worship God by the power of His Holy Spirit are the truly circumcised. Why? Because we rely on what Christ Jesus has done for us. You cannot earn your way into God's love and family. It is only by receiving God's grace for you. You must relax and rely solely on who Jesus Christ is and what He did for you. One of the things that will rob you of your happiness is the first of five traps in this passage.

The first trap is: Legalism.

What does this mean? What does Paul mean in v. 6 when he writes, "**And as for righteousness, I obeyed the law without fault.**" Paul is saying that according to the Torah, the five books of Moses and the 666 laws within them, he had no blemishes on his record. As Fee writes, "**Paul scrupulously adhered to the pharisaic interpretation of the Law, with its finely honed regulations for Sabbath observance, food laws, and ritual cleanliness.**" Righteousness concerning the law, right standing has nothing to do with God's character or the gift of right standing with God, but it is his righteousness according to the law. Paul argues that what makes this kind of righteousness so worthless is that it generates confidence in his own flesh, his own achievement based on Torah observance as opposed to the righteousness before God predicated on faith in whom Jesus is and what He did on the cross for us. You can tell if you are a legalist, trying to earn God's love, favor and eternal life by what you do. You are judgmental of other people. You will be harsh on others. It's because you're trying to earn God's love and favor, and you know deep inside you can never do that so you don't feel like you ever measure up. So you put others down. The more you live out your life based on God's grace, love, acceptance, and forgiveness, you will be more gracious towards others. This directly impacts your happiness and joy level. The biblical word for joy is Chara. The biblical word for grace is Charis. Joy and living in God's grace go hand in hand. Trying to prove your own righteousness, favor and place with God will lead to somberness, anger and arrogance. The first habit of happiness in this passage is **Rely heavily on God's grace.**

II. Every day: Resolve to know what matters most

This is key to maintaining your happiness and joy. This is where knowing your purpose every moment of every day is key. I must resolve to remind myself every day concerning what counts and what doesn't count. You cannot let yourself be distracted by what's inconsequential in life—by what's petty, trivial, and unimportant. Why is this such an important habit? Have you noticed just how easy it is to lose your sense of identity over something small? Paul says in verses 7-9 in order to keep your eyes on God's purpose, plan and glory you must focus on what really matters. **“I once thought these things were valuable, but now I consider them worthless because of what Christ has done. 8 Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For His sake I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I could gain Christ 9 and become one with Him. I no longer count on my own righteousness through obeying the law; rather, I become righteous through faith in Christ. For God's way of making us right with Himself depends on faith.”** What was most important to you before you surrendered your life to Jesus Christ? Work? Career? Money? Sex? Drugs? Alcohol? Ambition? Being right? Becoming famous? Having to be in control? Being safe? Peace? Whatever it was you used to prop up your self-esteem, it doesn't matter anymore. How do you know if you're really saved? I can tell you. Your values change. If your values haven't changed, then Jesus Christ isn't your Lord and Savior. Paul says, “Everything else is worthless compared with the infinite value of knowing Jesus Christ my Lord.” You cannot surrender your life to Jesus and not change. He changes your values. He changes how you now view God, yourself, others, and the world. But there is a pressure that is constantly trying to take control in your life.

This is our 2nd **trap: Pop culture.**

The values of our culture, which the serpent deceived Eve with clear back in the Garden, are laid out for us in 1 John 2:15-16, **“Do not love this world nor the things it offers you, for when you love the world you do not have the love of the Father in you. 16 For the world offers only a craving for physical pleasure (Hedonism), a craving for everything we see (Materialism), and pride in our achievements and possessions (Humanism). These are not from the Father, but are from this world.”** You must resolve to know and focus on what is most important. This is why you must be committed to God's purpose for your life. Jim Elliot, who is a well known missionary said, “The person is no fool who gives up what they cannot keep for that which they cannot lose.” Jesus is my magnificent obsession. He is King of kings and Lord of lords. Everyone here who has surrendered their life to Jesus will rule and reign and

live with Him in His eternal Kingdom. When you know what matter's most, all of the trivial things of life will not steal your joy or happiness.

III. Every day: Renew your commitment to know Jesus

The truth is that you need to get to know Jesus better every day. When your feet hit the ground, you want the first words out of your mouth to be, "I desire and hunger to get to know You a little bit better, and I want to demonstrate my love for You a little bit more today." As Gordon Fee has argued that Paul has taken up the O.T. theme of "knowing God" and applied it to Jesus Christ. To know Jesus first has to do with Him revealing Himself to you. The first way that happens is for you to read the Bible on an ongoing basis so you can get to know His ways. In learning His ways you get to learn His character that lies behind His ways. To truly get to know God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit—this takes obedience and loyalty to Him through behavior that conforms to His covenant love and faithfulness. To know Christ and experience the mighty power that raised Him from the dead is to know Him as children and parents know each other, or wives and husbands—knowledge that has to do with personal experience and intimate relationship. It is this kind of intimate knowledge that makes Jesus Christ trustworthy. Part of the intimacy of knowing Jesus Christ is to participate in His sufferings. It is as we suffer for and with Jesus that we learn part of how He suffered for us, and it draws us closer to Him, and we cry out to Him for His presence and power. The trap in this area is the same trap for all our four relationships.

The trap is: Busyness

We just get too busy, don't we? It is busyness that destroys relationships. It destroys relationship with your husband, your wife, and with your kids. It ruins friendships and it definitely robs you in your relationship with God. To get to know Jesus you've got to make time, and spend time with Him. It takes focused time. You can have focused intimate time with God in 15-30 minutes. If you have to start with 10 minutes then start there. Regardless of the amount of time you spend there's one thing you must do. Psalm 46:10 states it well. Read this verse out loud with me please, "**Be still and know that I am God.**" In our Life Development 201, Pastor Rick will help you understand how to be still before God and what that all involves. 201 is about how you can nurture your spiritual growth by being still and learning to know God by listening to Him.

IV. Every day: Review where you need to grow

This is an essential habit to grow in, especially this year where our theme is “2018: The Year of Breakthrough.” It is important that you take time every day to reflect on our acronym **SERFVIP**, which stands for your **Spiritual, Emotional, Relational, Financial, Vocational, Intellectual and Physical** aspects of your life. This is where you reflect with God on **“Lord, where do You want me to grow? What do I need to work on? Where am I weak? Where do You want me to be stronger?”** A great verse for this kind of reflection is Psalm 139:23-24 **“Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. 24 Point out anything in me that offends You, and lead me along the path of everlasting life.”** Lately in the morning on my four mile walk I like to quote this verse and ask God to do a spiritual EEG and EKG on me. Tell me what You want me to work on today? Where must I keep growing in these 7 areas of SERFVIP? This takes humility but, loved ones, it is a habit that will lead you to a lifestyle of happiness and joy. It brings an incredible amount of security to know that Jesus is personally, through His Holy Spirit, directing you on what and where you can change, grow and succeed in fulfilling His purpose and plan for your life. Philippians 3:12-13 says, **“I don’t mean to say that I have already achieved these things or that I have already reached perfection. But I press on to possess that perfection for which Christ Jesus first possessed me. 13 No, dear brothers and sisters, I have not achieved it, but I focus on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead,...”**

What is the Trap? **Pride!**

Pride will keep you from growing in Jesus and a lifestyle of breakthrough. Why? Because the necessary breakthroughs most of us so desperately need have to do with our character, and usually pride, arrogance and hubris is at the core of our defects and sinful habits. Proverbs 11:2 says, **“Pride lead to disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom.”** Proverbs 13:10 says, **“Pride leads to conflict; those who take advice are wise.”** Breakthrough people never stop growing and learning. They never stop discovering, stretching and changing. If you’ve stopped growing I can tell you if you’re not miserable you are most likely bored with your life. Growth, maturity, breakthrough, and humility go hand in hand. This is what Paul says in 2 Corinthians 13:5, **“Examine yourselves to see if your faith is genuine. Test yourselves. Surely you know that Jesus Christ is among you; if not you have failed the test of genuine faith.”** One of the resources we use here in CR is what is called a spiritual inventory. You can check with our CR team and get a spiritual inventory. It’s a checklist that helps you discern “What do I need to work on?” “Where do I need a breakthrough?”

V. Every day: Reach for the future, and forget what can't be changed

This is an extremely important habit to experience the breakthroughs you're looking to Jesus for this year. Every day, forget what can't be changed and focus on the future. Not on the past. Your past is past. It's over. It's done. Forget what can't be changed and focus on the present and the future. I know that you have been hurt a lot in your past. Spiritual, Emotional, Relational and Mental health requires learning to let your past hurt go by learning to set boundaries on yourself and learn to forgive those who have hurt you. You can hold on to your pain and the memory or you can choose to be free and focused on the present and the future by forgiving and letting it go. Paul says in vv. 13-14, "**No, dear brothers and sisters, I have not achieved it, but I focus on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, 14 I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us.**" When Paul says, "forgetting the past", he isn't promoting a denial of our past, but it is reckoning our past as not having any power over me now. In Paul's case forgetting means that what he once thought was so important he realizes that it was worthless. When it comes to holding grudges, it is one of the worst strategies you can utilize, because they sabotage your focus, strength, joy, and love. Please circle the phrase, "**I focus on this one thing...**". Since you have a limited supply of energy I recommend you not waste any of it on the past and you channel all of your energy on the future that God has for you.

There are three traps to be on guard of in order to live a life of joy and happiness:

1) **Regret**. This is where you say I wish I had done things differently. Just don't get stuck in your past. Learn from your mistakes and make the adjustments now. 2) **Resentment**. Holding on to resentment is a very foolish behavior. It doesn't hurt anyone but yourself. For your own sake you must learn to forgive them. The trap of 3) **Tradition**. It's the famous seven last words. **We have always done it this way**. If you haven't noticed, things are changing around you at an alarming rate. Every day things change. In this year of **BREAKTHROUGH** one of the things every one of us have to be able to do is to be flexible and learn to lean into change, because it is coming. To experience **BREAKTHROUGH** is a choice. As you put these five habits into practice you will notice yourself gaining in your ability to experience the breakthroughs that you are believing for and praying for. This next Sunday we start our first Sunday of our 40 Day Spiritual Growth campaign for prayer. If you have not signed up

for a small group I encourage you to do so today. Please don't put it off one more day. Signing up for a small group is the beginning step for the breakthroughs you need. Secondly, if you haven't signed up to host a group yet, today is the day. Please sign up today so Roberta can contact you and give you the material and discuss with you what you need to help you have the most successful group you can have. This is what 2018: THE YEAR OF BREAKTHROUGH is all about. It is every one of us choosing to become a man and a woman of God's Word, and many of you have already taken up my challenge to read through the Bible once and the N.T. twice with me by reading through our bookmark every day. The second challenge I am giving you is to get in a small group and learn with us how to pray for Breakthroughs. This coming Saturday at 6:00 p.m., you're invited to watch the movie WAR ROOM with your CV family. Please feel free to invite your family and friends. Beth Krausse small group is going to make us popcorn and have water for us to drink. What a great opportunity to watch this powerful movie with your family and friends. If you're single this is a great date night idea. Come and bring your date and spend time with your CV family.