Discussion Title: Fresh Start	**Category**: Character

Opening Question:
Have you ever had a "do over" / a "mulligan" in the past? Maybe a class or a game or a relationship? Share with the group…

Pick 3-5 individuals to share. 10 minutes total.

Lesson:

What does it take to start fresh?

Let Go of the Past - read Phil. 3:13

Q. What is Paul's opinion of himself in the first part of this verse? How did he express his feelings about his past? What are his feelings about his future?

Q. Name some "things from the past" that can really make it tough in making progress in the things of God.

Q. List and discuss some ways a person can "let go of the past".

Focus on the Goal - read Phil. 3:14

Q. Using the imagery of the track race, where does Paul picture himself in his spiritual life?

Q What prize is he after; what was his goal… how is he going to reach it?
(Additional scriptures for reference Heb.12:2, John 15:5; 2 Cor. 3:18; Gal. 5:22,23)

Q. If you had to compare your life in Christ right now to a track race, where would you be: Sitting on the sidelines? Warming up? At the starting blocks? Giving it your all?

Embrace God's Perspective - read Philemon 10-21
[Philemon, a member of the church at Colosse and led to faith in Christ by Paul, was the owner of a slave (Onesimus) who had run away from him. Somehow Onesimus got to Rome, met Paul and became a Christian. Runaways were considered criminals who were punishable by severe measures including death. This letter is Paul's attempt to persuade Philemon to forgive the crime and receive Onesimus as he would receive Paul himself. Paul admonishes Philemon to accept Onesimus as an equal, being one "family" in Christ. Historical writings appear to support that Onesimus became a leader in the church in Ephesus and provides vivid proof of how Christ can transform and use even a rebel runaway slave.]

Q. What radical changes was Paul asking Philemon to make: Economically? Socially? And Spiritually?

Q. From experience, who do you most identify with - Philemon or Onesimus? Why?

Application:

- Think of an area in your life you would like to have a "fresh start" in order to be more useful to Christ and others…

Pick 1-2 individuals to answer each question (Q).

Keep track of time during the discussion. Keep the discussion focused and on point. Avoid going off on a tangent topic.

Additional notes: