

**ECC Growth Groups – Term 2, 2014**  
**Study 1 – Galatians 1:1-10**

What are some statements or beliefs that most people today would consider to be politically incorrect?

Read Galatians 1:1-10.

In many of Paul's letters he follows his initial greetings by telling his readers that he is praying for them. What is different here?

What does that communicate about the situation in these Galatian churches?

What are some other ways that Paul communicates the importance of this issue?

How would you summarise what has actually happened in these Galatian churches?

What is the Gospel? How would you explain it to someone else?

How does the passage itself help us to understand what the Gospel is?

What is your immediate reaction to Paul's manner and tone in this passage?

What might be underlying that reaction for you personally?

What does this passage teach us about the Gospel?

What might tempt us to turn to a different Gospel?

**ECC Growth Groups – Term 2, 2014**  
**Study 2 – Galatians 1:10-2:10**

Think about a time when you were telling someone a message that was important or a message that they found hard to believe. How did you try and convince them that it was important or believable?

Read Galatians 1:10-2:10.

Think back to our passage from last week (1:1-10). What was the situation in these Galatian churches that Paul was writing to?

What questions might this have raised for the Galatians regarding Paul and his Gospel?

Look particularly at verses 10-12 in Chapter 1. How does Paul initially respond?

Paul continues his defence of himself and his Gospel right through to the end of our passage. Split your group into two smaller groups. Get one group to look at 1:13-24 and the other group to look at 2:1-10. Using the relevant passage, choose from one of the three options below:

- (i) ‘Mock’ interview. One person can pretend to be a news reporter and another can pretend to be Paul. Extra group members can help come up with questions and responses from the passage. Allow some time for the group to prepare their interview and then present it to the larger group.
- (ii) Drama. Have various group members act out the different characters, interactions and events mentioned in the passage. Allow some time for the group to prepare their script and then present their drama to the larger group.
- (iii) Investigation. Have the group read the passage and pretend that they are detectives compiling a dossier on Paul and his message. Allow some time for the group to prepare and then report their findings back to the larger group.

Paul mentions a lot of details about himself and various events in his life in this passage. What is his purpose in doing this?

*Please turn over*

How do all these details strengthen the claims that Paul made in 1:10-12?

In terms of receiving the Gospel, in what ways are we different from Paul?

Given that this is the case, how does our passage equip us to discern the various messages we might be taught?

How does this passage reassure you in terms of the truth of the Gospel?

**ECC Growth Groups – Term 2, 2014**  
**Study 3 – Galatians 2:11-21**

How would you define hypocrisy?

Why do we find hypocrisy so distasteful?

Read Galatians 2:11-21.

What does Peter do when he comes to Antioch?

What effect does Peter's action have on others?

What is underlying Peter's behaviour here?

How does Paul respond?

What does Paul see is at stake here?

In the verses that follow, Paul continues to explain exactly what was at stake in this incident with Peter at Antioch. Split your group into pairs or triplets. Have each pair/triplet complete the following table from verses 15-21.

	<b>At the start of the Christian life</b>	<b>Throughout the Christian life</b>
<b>The place of the law</b>		
<b>The place of faith in Christ</b>		

Bring your group back together. Share responses for each category entry in the table.

How do verses 15-21 relate to Paul's episode with Peter?

In what ways do verses 20-21 sum up Paul's position?

How does our whole passage contribute to Paul's overall response to the situation in these Galatian churches?

From our Activity we saw that faith alone is central both at the start and throughout the Christian life (It is faith in Jesus that justifies. Our new life is one that is lived by faith). What challenges pose a threat to this for us?

Think about your personal life. What additions to faith might others sense as being necessary in order to be right with God?

Think about our church life. What additions to faith might others sense as being necessary in order to be right with God?

**ECC Growth Groups – Term 2, 2014**  
**Study 4 – Galatians 3:1-18**

What are some rules and regulations that people say we should follow in order to be a ‘real’ or a ‘serious’ Christian?

Read Galatians 3:1-18.

What words does Paul use to describe what has happened to the Galatians?

Split your group into three smaller groups. Have each group complete one column (relating to one verse) from the table below.

	<b>Verse 2</b>	<b>Verse 3b</b>	<b>Verse 5</b>
<b>What is the question?</b>			
<b>What is being contrasted?</b>			
<b>What is the expected answer?</b>			

Bring the groups back together and have each one share their responses from the table.

In verses 6-9 Paul calls on his readers to consider Abraham. What does Paul say about Abraham?

Why do you think Paul refers to Abraham here?

In verses 10-14 Paul switches from talking about blessing to talking about curse (note the contrast between verse 9 and verse 10).

Split the group into the same three smaller groups from the first activity. You can either assign one of the following activities to each group (i.e. each group does a different activity) or have all the groups do the same activity for the particular section they are given.

Group 1 – Verse 10; Group 2 – Verses 11-12; Group 3 – Verse 13.

- (i) Paraphrase the verse(s) into your own words; or
- (ii) Create a drawing of the verse(s); or
- (iii) Produce a newspaper headline from the verse(s).

Allow the groups sufficient time to complete the activity and then have them come together and share with the other groups.

Why do you think Paul refers to the Old Testament so much here?

How does verse 14 act as a good conclusion to this first section of Chapter 3?

Verses 15-18 sound quite complicated but how does this human example further strengthen Paul's argument?

Split your group again into the same three groups as earlier. Have them revisit the table that they filled out in the first activity and discuss the following:

Having now looked at the whole passage, how has Paul responded to the questions that he raised at the beginning?

What do we find attractive about relying on what we do for acceptance with God?

What do we find offensive about needing to trust the Gospel for acceptance with God?

How has this passage helped you to see that continuing to live by faith is the right move?

**ECC Growth Groups – Term 2, 2014**  
**Study 5 – Galatians 3:19-4:11**

Divide your group into three smaller groups and give each one a piece of paper with one of the following three scenarios:

- i) You are in prison – You are free
- ii) You are a slave – You are a son
- iii) You are a child – You are an adult

Get each group to discuss the following question:

What are some of the differences between the two people in your scenario?

Bring the groups back together and have them share what they discussed with the other groups.

Read Galatians 3:19-4:11.

Think back to our previous studies. Why do you think Paul starts this passage with a question about the purpose of the law?

How does Paul answer his own question about the purpose of the law?

In verse 21 Paul is careful to not be misunderstood. The law is certainly *not* opposed to God's promises, he says. In the rest of the chapter he uses three images to help the Galatians further understand the relationship between law and promise and how this relates to them and their situation.

Split your group into three smaller groups that will each focus on one of the following scenarios:

- i) A prisoner and a free person (3:22-23)
- ii) A slave and a son (3:26; 4:3-7; 4:8)
- iii) A child and an adult (3:24-25; 4:1-3)

Have each group read the relevant sections of the passage that refer to their particular scenario and, using these, work together on a creative way of communicating what the passage says. If they need prompting, here are some suggestions:

- i) A short drama
- ii) A drawing
- iii) A timeline
- iv) A flow chart/logic diagram

When the groups have had sufficient time, bring them back together to share their creativity with the larger group.

Hand out a small piece of paper (e.g. A5 size) to each person. Give group members around 5 minutes to personally reflect and write down some thoughts on the following question:

What surprised you about what Paul said in your scenario?

Invite members to share their personal reflections with the group.

Remember again the situation that Paul is addressing in Galatians. Why might Chapter 3 verse 28 be a precious truth to the Galatians?

The Gospel has given the Galatians a new identity. This has been powerfully communicated through the images that Paul has used in this passage. How does this help us make sense of his astonishment and disappointment at the end of the passage?

In what ways are we in danger of going down the same path as the Galatians?

How does our new Gospel identity help us to respond in these situations?

**ECC Growth Groups – Term 2, 2014**  
**Study 6 – Galatians 4:12-5:12**

The late Nelson Mandela, formerly President of the Republic of South Africa, spent 27 years in prison, most of which were on Robben Island. The title of his autobiography, now a movie, is *Long walk to freedom*. How do you think his experience of life was different after he was freed compared with before?

Read Galatians 4:12-5:12.

Chapter 4 verses 12-20 sound quite confusing in parts and seem to rely on particular interactions between the Galatians and Paul that we are now unaware of. However, using the following questions, discuss what we are able to learn from these verses.

In what ways does Paul describe the early relationship between the Galatians and himself?

How does Paul express the change that has now occurred?

We have seen on a number of occasions that Paul is very abrupt and forceful with the Galatians in this letter. How do these verses help us to better understand why Paul has been like that?

From verse 21 we again see Paul responding to those who would rely on the law rather than on faith in God's promise for their justification. He directs his readers to consider what the law actually says. (If you have time, Genesis 16 and Genesis 21:1-21 form the background to Paul's argument here). Using a whiteboard or a large piece of butcher's paper/cardboard, work together as a group to complete the following table by identifying the various contrasts in verses 22-31.

<b>Verse Reference</b>	<b>Compare and Contrast</b>	
Verse 22		
Verse 23		
Verses 24-28		
Verse 29		
Verse 30		
Verse 31		

From these verses (21-31), how would you sum up what Paul wants the Galatians to understand?

How do you think understanding this will help them in their current situation?

In verses 2-12 of Chapter 5 Paul focuses on circumcision – perhaps *the* key way in which obedience to the law was to be expressed. What are some of the consequences of relying on circumcision that Paul mentions?

In verses 5 and 6 Paul puts forward an entirely different approach to life. What is this alternate way of life?

Why is Chapter 5 verse 1 a good conclusion for this passage (and perhaps for the whole book)?

Paul says, *“It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery”* (5:1).

What robs us of this reality of freedom that Paul says is ours?

What will help us to stand firm in this freedom?

We are now free to express our faith through love (5:6). What are some practical ways that we can be doing that?

**ECC Growth Groups – Term 2, 2014**  
**Study 7 – Galatians 5:13-26**

After sharing the Gospel with a friend, he/she replies, “So you’re telling me that it doesn’t matter what I do?”

What is *good* about your friend’s question?

How would you respond to your friend?

Read Galatians 5:13-26.

Place the title/heading cut outs (“Acts of the sinful nature” and “Fruit of the Spirit”) face up at different ends of the room, preferably where all group members can still see them. Then mix up the acts/characteristics cut outs (e.g. “idolatry”, “faithfulness”) and place them face down together somewhere in the middle of the room. One by one, have group members turn over an act/characteristic and, as a group, decide together which title/heading to place it under.

Paul tells his readers that they were “*called to be free*” (v 13). How has this freedom come about?

What is this freedom to be used for?

Why do we find it so difficult to use our freedom in this way?

From verses 16-18, how does Paul explain why we find this difficult?

How is this picture of the Christian life different from how some people see it?

Re-read verses 19-23.

Give group members a few minutes to individually reflect on the list of the “acts of the sinful nature” and the “fruit of the Spirit” (these should still be visible from the earlier Activity). Have them choose one act and one fruit that they would like God to help them with in their Christian life. Allow time for group members to individually commit this to the Lord in prayer.

People are often quite troubled by what Paul says in verse 21. Given what we’ve seen in this passage, and in the rest of Galatians, what must this verse *not* mean? What then *does* it mean?

What does Paul mean when he says in verse 23 – “*Against such things there is no law*”?

Paul says on a couple of occasions that we are to “*live by the Spirit*” or “*keep in step with the Spirit*”. Why is this a great way to sum up how we are to live as Christians?

Sexual immorality	Envy
Impurity	Drunkenness
Debauchery	Orgies
Idolatry	Love
Witchcraft	Joy
Hatred	Peace
Discord	Patience
Jealousy	Kindness
Fits of rage	Goodness
Selfish ambition	Faithfulness
Dissensions	Gentleness
Factions	Self-control
<b>Acts of the sinful nature</b>	<b>Fruit of the Spirit</b>

**ECC Growth Groups – Term 2, 2014**  
**Study 8 – Galatians 6:1-18**

What do you love about being part of a church?

What do you find difficult about being part of a church?

Read Galatians 6:1-18.

Paul has made the following two significant statements in the second half of his letter: *“For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love”* (5:6). *“You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love”* (5:13).

Concentrating on 6:1-10, and using a whiteboard/butcher’s paper, list the different ways in which this love is to be expressed.

What warnings does Paul give as we seek to live this life of love?

Paul says, *“Carry each other’s burdens ...”* (v 2) and *“... each one should carry his own load”* (v 5). These statements sound contradictory. How do you think they fit together?

Look at the list compiled during the earlier Activity. What are some practical ways that we can be living this out in our own church context?

Interestingly Paul returns to the topic of circumcision yet again at the end of his letter. What does this suggest to us?

What does Paul tell us about the underlying motives of these other people?

What are some modern day varieties?

How do you think Paul would advise us to respond as we relate to such groups?

How does verse 15 provide a helpful summary for this Chapter?

**ECC Growth Groups – Term 2, 2014**  
**Study 9 – Review**

Read Galatians Chapters 1-6.

Give group members around 10 minutes to complete one of the following activities:

Come up with a 3 or 4 word title for the book of Galatians.

*or*

Come up with a 1 or 2 sentence summary of the book of Galatians.

Bring your group back together and have them share their titles/summaries.

What major lessons stand out to you from our studies in Galatians?

Share one or two favourite verses from Galatians and why they are significant to you personally.