

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.

Verse Reference	Compare and Contrast	
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?