

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

**Big Idea:** Paul continues to fill out what the life of freedom looks like, this time expressing it in terms of the Galatians' relationships with others

**Study Aim:** That group members will see, grasp and live out their new life of freedom as they engage in the relationships that they have with others

**Sharing**

Have one/two people share their story of how the Gospel changed their life and how they've been challenged and encouraged in their Christian life to stick with the Gospel.

**Discussion Starter**

What do you love about being part of a church?

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

**Bible Reading**

Read Galatians 6:1-18.

**Activity**

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<sup>1</sup>.

*Restore the one caught in sin (v 1). Carry each other's burdens (v 2). Share all good things with our instructors in the Word (v 6). Sow to please the Spirit (v 8). Do good to others (vv 9-10).*

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<sup>1</sup> The key here is to avoid the tendency of some members of our groups to go into detail on each of these aspects. There will be opportunity in the study to do this. The aim of this particular Activity is merely to orient people to the details of the text – observing what is there. You may need to be quite directive to ensure that your group stays on task here.

## Passage Questions

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

*The restoring of those caught in sin should be done gently (v 1). As we engage in this restorative process we need to also watch ourselves (v 1). We should beware of deceiving ourselves by thinking that we are something when we are nothing (v 3). We must remember that God cannot be mocked (v 7). There is the warning that destruction comes from sowing to please the sinful nature (v 8). And the temptation to give up when doing good (v 9).*

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?

*We are to reach out in love and share the burdens of fellow-Christians but ultimately each is responsible and accountable for their own life under God.*

*Some of us need to be pushed in the first area to be less self-centred and look more to the needs of others. Others of us are overly and unduly burdened by the needs and concerns of others and need to remember that there is a limit to our responsibility towards others – we cannot live their life for them. God is the only one who is ultimately able to change hearts and minds.*

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?<sup>2</sup>

*(This is a key question to help people think through the practical implications of the passage. You could explore any number of issues here – e.g. responding to sin in the life of fellow believers; supporting brothers and sisters in Christ through the struggles of life; supporting those in Gospel service in our midst; how we can sow to please the Spirit rather than the sinful nature; the interplay between doing good to believers and non-believers).*

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

*This is the topic of concern for Paul regarding the situation in the Galatian churches. Evidence for this can be seen in the number of times that he has referred to this issue. Circumcision (as people rely on it for their standing before God) is a short-hand way of referring to the false gospel of works. Even as he finishes his correspondence he wants to leave his readers in no doubt as to “what counts” (v 15).*

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<sup>2</sup> As with the previous study, the nature of the passage lends itself to placing Application questions like this throughout the Study rather than leaving them for the end.

It would be fruitful to allow a significant amount of time for your group to think through this question together. Make sure you keep prompting members to be specific rather than the more comfortable general responses that come to us more easily but end up ‘letting us off the hook’ when it comes to putting God’s Word into practice.

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

*They are seeking to make a good impression outwardly (v 12). They are trying to avoid being persecuted for the cross of Christ (v 12). They want to “boast about your flesh” (v 13).*

What are some modern day varieties?<sup>3</sup>

*Any group/religion/sect that seeks to (blatantly or covertly) establish relationship with God on the basis of what we do. (Try and help your group think through specific examples).*

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

*Paul helpfully ‘blows their cover’ (see the discussion under the question-before-last), pointing out what they’re really on about – i.e. their motives. He reminds his readers that his only boast (and ours) is in the cross of Jesus (v 14). As he has done previously (5:6), he maintains that circumcision or uncircumcision is not the key issue – what counts is a new creation (v 15). Although outside this passage we ought to also remember his key statement in 5:1 – “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”.*

How does verse 15 provide a helpful summary for this Chapter?<sup>4</sup>

*In terms of the discussion regarding circumcision in the second half of the Chapter, it demonstrates that the life that God calls us to is about this new creation rather than circumcision and uncircumcision. In terms of the first half of the Chapter, it outlined various ways in which this new creation is to be lived out relationally.*

### **Prayer Points**

Praise God for the freedom that is now ours through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Praise God that this means that we can serve one another in love in a variety of different ways.

Ask for God’s help as we seek to love those we are in relationship with.

Ask that God would help us to boast in nothing except the cross of Christ.

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<sup>3</sup> Again, keep prompting your group to think through this specifically rather than generally. Otherwise the question can easily descend into an abstract and theoretical discussion rather than the more useful specifics that we actually encounter from day-to-day.

<sup>4</sup> Because the Study has been broken up into two halves, and the Application questions spread throughout, there is a need for a question at the end to tie the discussions together. If you can come up with one that you feel works better, please feel free to use that instead.