

# How To Start A Riot

Acts 20:17–21

## INTRO – CELEBRATE & CONTEXT

- 15-Year Anniversary weekend → God gathered 1200–1500 people as one church.
- Momentum brings **responsibility**—favor requires faithfulness.

### Acts 19 Recap

- Paul proclaims Jesus in Ephesus → lives changed, idols lose power.
- People burn demonic books; culture begins to shift.
- *“The word of the Lord increased and prevailed mightily.”*
- When idols are threatened, they fight back → a riot erupts.

### Acts 20 Setting

- Paul leaves Ephesus; stops in Miletus (30 miles away).
- Calls the church leaders for final words—he knows he won’t see them again.
- These are **legacy instructions for leaders**.

Leadership = influence.

If someone watches your faith, you are leading.

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## TEXT – Acts 20:17–21

Paul reminds them how he lived, served, and preached:

- With humility
  - With tears
  - Through trials
  - Publicly and house to house
  - Calling all people to repentance and faith in Jesus
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## 1. GODLY PEOPLE TAKE INITIATIVE

### Acts 20:17

- Paul doesn't wait—he **initiates**.
- Following Jesus means stepping forward:
  - Reaching out
  - Reconciling
  - Inviting
  - Speaking first

### Gospel Pattern

- God initiated with us:
  - *While we were sinners, Christ died.*
  - We love because He first loved.

### Application:

Initiate reconciliation, pursue the drifting, apologize first, take the step.

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## 2. YOUR LIFE PREACHES LOUDER THAN YOUR WORDS

**Acts 20:18**

- Paul appeals to how he **lived**, not just what he taught.
- The greatest sermon you'll ever preach is your **character**.

### **People Are Watching:**

- How you handle stress
- Conflict
- Correction
- Integrity at work and home

### **Application:**

Get close to people whose lives you want to model—don't follow voices, follow fruit.

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## 3. SLAVERY TO JESUS IS TRUE FREEDOM

**Acts 20:19**

- Paul calls himself a **servant/slave** of Christ.
- The Kingdom is not a democracy—Jesus is King.

### **This Means:**

- Jesus rules:
  - Time
  - Money
  - Relationships

- Future
- Sexuality & career

We don't ask Jesus to bless our plans;  
we lay our plans at His feet.

**Romans 6:22** – freed to serve the right Master.  
**1 Cor 6:19–20** – bought with a price.

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## 4. GODLY PEOPLE SHED TEARS

**Acts 20:19, 31**

- Paul served with tears—emotionally invested.
- Scripture shows tender leaders:
  - Jesus wept
  - David, Jeremiah, Moses, Paul

**Truth:**

- Tears aren't weakness—they are evidence of love.
- If you can't feel, get curious—not ashamed.

**Application:**

Ask God for a soft heart toward people and their pain.

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## 5. CHRISTIANITY IS CONVERSION, NOT SELF-HELP

**Acts 20:21**

- Same gospel for all—Jews and Greeks alike.

- Message:
  - Repentance toward God
  - Faith in Jesus

### **Christianity Is Not:**

- Behavior improvement
- Moral therapy
- Better version of you

### **It Is:**

- Becoming **new creation**
- One cure for one disease

**Romans 1:16 – 2 Cor 5:17 – John 3:3**

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## **CLOSING CHALLENGE**

- The gospel shapes cities when it first shapes leaders.
- Depth must match growth.
- Say with Paul:  
“**Here I am, Lord—send me.**”