



LC STUDY GUIDE: DONE IN SYNC WITH
THE “ON MISSION” SERMON SERIES
The Passage – Acts 19:21-41
 For LCs meeting 11.17.13-11.30.13

Preface: *This is the last message and study in this fall’s “On Mission” series. These LC studies will complement the sermons, often using the same biblical texts, and will help your LC go deeper in personal understanding and application. These italicized portions are meant to resource and help you in leading and not to be distributed to the entire group (it limits conversation). Not all these questions need to be used in your LC meeting. Best to consider this a head-start and customize these for your LC study.*

Study’s BIG Idea: The same Christian message and practice that transforms lives can also create important cultural shifts.

Acts 19:21-41

21 After all this had happened, Paul decided to go to Jerusalem, passing through Macedonia and Achaia. “After I have been there,” he said, “I must visit Rome also.” 22 He sent two of his helpers, Timothy and Erastus, to Macedonia, while he stayed in the province of Asia a little longer.

23 About that time there arose a great disturbance about the Way. 24 A silversmith named Demetrius, who made silver shrines of Artemis, brought in a lot of business for the craftsmen there. 25 He called them together, along with the workers in related trades, and said: “You know, my friends, that we receive a good income from this business. 26 And you see and hear how this fellow Paul has convinced and led astray large numbers of people here in Ephesus and in practically the whole province of Asia. He says that gods made by human hands are no gods at all. 27 There is danger not only that our trade will lose its good name, but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis will be discredited; and the goddess herself, who is worshiped throughout the province of Asia and the world, will be robbed of her divine majesty.”

28 When they heard this, they were furious and began shouting: “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!” 29 Soon the whole city was in an uproar. The people seized Gaius and Aristarchus, Paul’s traveling companions from Macedonia, and all of them rushed into the theater together. 30 Paul wanted to appear before the crowd, but the disciples would not let him. 31 Even some of the officials of the province, friends of Paul, sent him a message begging him not to venture into the theater.

32 The assembly was in confusion: Some were shouting one thing, some another. Most of the people did not even know why they were there. 33 The Jews in the crowd pushed Alexander to the front, and they shouted instructions to him. He motioned for silence in order to make a defense before the people. 34 But when they realized he was a Jew, they all shouted in unison for about two hours: “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!”

35 The city clerk quieted the crowd and said: “Fellow Ephesians, doesn’t all the world know that the city of Ephesus is the guardian of the temple of the great Artemis and of her image, which fell from heaven? 36 Therefore, since these facts are undeniable, you ought to calm down and not do anything rash. 37 You have brought these men here, though they have neither robbed temples nor blasphemed our goddess. 38 If, then, Demetrius and his fellow craftsmen have a grievance against anybody, the courts are open and there are proconsuls. They can press charges. 39 If there is anything further you want to bring up, it must be settled in a legal assembly. 40 As it is, we are in danger of being charged with rioting because of what happened today. In that case we would not be able to account for this commotion, since there is no reason for it.” 41 After he had said this, he dismissed the assembly.

O – How would you describe Demetrius from the scene Luke describes in verses 23-27?

I – Even if Paul is causing these local merchants of pagan products to lose business, why incite a riot? Why not sue Paul or secretly attack him?

(Among other possibilities, those who profited from the pagan worship of Artemis’ temple needed a public humiliation of Paul and the Christian faith, a similar public humiliation suffered by the sons of Sceva and the public burning of the pagan scrolls).

A – Dream big here: How can the Christian faith have such an impact on our culture to unseat certain profit-making industries/enterprises—not for the sake of riots or loss of jobs but for the sake of the Kingdom?

(In case you need a headstart: A societal shift in truly following Jesus would impact the porn industry, drugs cartels, those who profit from violence, the abortion industry, those who profit from incarceration, and countless more. Note that not all of these are immoral industries; some exist as a response to the reality of the fallen human nature in mass numbers. Still, there will not be prisons in heaven or classifieds or door locks or passwords.)

O – What do you find personally interesting and/or disheartening about the riot as described in verses 28-35?

I – The instigators and rioters rushing into the theater meant they were demanding action from their governing officials. Why was this necessary in their minds?

(Paul being killed or cast away was not enough. The Christian message and witness was too powerful by this point. So they were desperate and needed a public humiliation to ruin the reputation of the Christian church and restore the name of Artemis.)

O – It’s interesting that the rioters grab Paul’s companions to lure Paul into the theater. And it is even more interesting that the town officials send word to Paul NOT to come. What do you see happening here?

(Paul has elite status here in Ephesus. In fact, it was these officials who had granted Paul access to lecture in the Hall of Tyrannus. Paul has nothing to gain from stepping foot in the theater—he would endanger himself and his friends.)

I – The City Clerk not only proclaims Paul’s innocence but threatens the mob with charges of rioting. Why is he taking Paul’s side?

(It is unlikely the clerk and many of the officials were Christians, though they did see Paul as part of the intellectual elite and a culture maker of Ephesus. Clearly, people were persuaded and influenced by him, his teaching, and the practice of their community. In so many words, they could see the Christian Gospel was good for Ephesus.)

A – What can Christians learn from Paul and the Christians in Ephesus living on mission and what can we put into application in today’s world as we strive to live on mission?

Key: O – Observation. I – Interpretation. A – Application

- a. **Please note that not all these questions are to be asked in a single meeting.** Take some time and select and reword the questions that best fit your voice and your LIFE Community group. Certain questions work better for certain groups. You are encouraged to prayerfully discern what will serve your LC the best.
- b. Complement OIA questions with “process questions” (what else? what more? what do others think?).
- c. When you ask questions, give people ample time to think and respond. Wait. Take your time; don’t rush people but encourage their participation. And avoid answering your own questions!
- d. Timing/pacing: allocate your time and move forward gently, with a steady pace.
- e. Application: Pace the study to conclude with “difference making” application.
- f. Secondary texts—use other texts sparingly, even if they are relevant. Such texts will push you into “teaching,” rather than facilitating. It can cause people to feel distracted or de-powered.