
BIBLE TALK

This week the question is: **According to the Bible, what is the proper way to riot?**

On May 25, 2020 a black man named George Floyd, in Minneapolis, MN, was being arrested. In the process of the arrest Mr. Floyd ended up on the ground beside the police car. A white police officer knelt down with his knee on Mr. Floyd's neck and ended up choking Mr. Floyd to death. The white officer, Derek Chauvin was charged with murder. As a result of this incident, riots broke out in Minneapolis with cries of racism and police brutality. The rioting spread across America to Portland (OR), Chicago (IL), New York City (NY), Los Angeles (CA), and other cities. As a result of the riots buildings have been burned, businesses have been looted, statues of Civil War Confederate leaders have been torn down or defaced, and in the process of all this rioting both police officers and rioters have died. A group calling itself "Black Lives Matter" has been at the forefront of the rioting. There have been demands that police departments should be defunded—and I'm supposing from this the rioters want the police departments dismantled and removed.

Now, what this present study is asking is this: **What does the Bible about how to riot properly in the sight of God?** Does God speak in His word about how to behave when we have been treated unjustly? Does the Bible speak about how we should react when the government is corrupt and oppressive? If Jesus were on the earth today, would He be joining up with the "Black Lives Matter" organization and join in the protests—helping to burn down buildings, tearing down statues of Confederate officers and demanding the dismantling of police departments?

So let's get started in trying to find some Bible answers about how to properly riot.

1) God's instructions to Israel.

First consider what God told Israel to do. They had been slaves in Egypt for about 430 years. They were treated very harshly. Many of them died at the hands of their Egyptian slave-masters. What did God say to Israel?

Deuteronomy 23:7

⁷ "... You shall not abhor an Egyptian, because you were an alien in his land.

The word "abhor" means "to regard with disgust or hatred." So, although Israel suffered greatly as slaves in Egypt, they were instructed not to hate or be disgusted with the Egyptians.

2) **Should we rejoice when something bad happens to our enemy?**

In other words, someone may have oppressed us and now they're being oppressed and they're suffering. Should we rejoice and enjoy the fact that they are now miserable?

Proverbs 24:17-18

¹⁷ Do not rejoice when your enemy falls,
And do not let your heart be glad when he stumbles;
¹⁸ Lest the LORD see it, and it displease Him,
And He turn away His wrath from him.

3) **Should we return evil for evil?**

1 Thessalonians 5:15

¹⁵ See that no one renders evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is good both for yourselves and for all.

4) **What if we are actually slaves with extremely hateful masters who abuse us?**

1 Peter 2:18-23

¹⁸ Servants, be submissive to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh.

¹⁹ For this is commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully.

²⁰ For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God.

²¹ For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps:

²² "Who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth";

²³ who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously;

5) **Should we riot in the streets, overthrow the government and rule ourselves?**

Romans 13:1-2

¹ Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God.

² Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves.

6) **How should we treat those who are racists and hate us and treat us terribly?**

Matthew 5:43-48

⁴³ "You have heard that it was said, '*You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.*'"

⁴⁴ But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you,

⁴⁵ that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.

⁴⁶ For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?

⁴⁷ And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so?

⁴⁸ Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.

Matthew 7:12

¹² Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.

Conclusion

In conclusion, if Jesus were on earth today, would He support groups like "*Black Lives Matter*"? Would He support the destruction of other people's property, call for the overthrow of the government, demand the defunding of police departments, burn buildings, loot businesses, and call for justice by using violence?

My friend, the passages we just read came from the Lord Jesus—every one of them. The Lord Himself knows what injustice is—for He more than anyone else who ever lived or ever will live—suffered injustice.

I cannot control what other people are doing. I cannot stop other people from being racists and slave-owners and hateful. But I can control myself. In fact, I am the only person I can control. The difficulty is learning how to act the way I should act in spite of how others are acting toward me.

Our original question was: **According to the Bible, what is the proper way to riot?**

The answer is: **There is no proper way to riot. Christians shouldn't riot nor support and encourage it.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Well ... thanks for listening to our message this week. We invite you to visit our website www.WillOfTheLord.com. There you may download the notes and the audio file of the message you just listened to.

Call again next week when we consider a new subject on *Bible Talk*.