

What Should I Think About Immigration?

Sunday Evening Bible Study

February 28, 2016

Immigration is the movement of people from their native country to another country in order to reside and work there, usually driven by poverty, famine, war, and persecution.

1. There are over 41 million immigrants in the United States (13% of total pop. 318m)
2. Adding immigrant children born in US, 80 million (26%) people are first or second generation immigrants.
3. 20% of the world's international immigrants come to the U.S.
4. The U.S. represents 5% of the world's population
5. Of the immigrants in the U.S., 11.3 million are here illegally
6. Illegal immigrant households in 2002 cost the federal government 26b and paid \$16b in taxes, leaving a deficit of over \$10b going to Medicaid, medical treatment, food assistance, prison.
7. Mexicans make up half of the illegal immigrants.
8. Six states account for 60% of illegal immigrants (CA, TX, FLA, NY, NJ, IL)
9. Illegal immigrants comprise 5% of the workforce.
10. About 7% of K-12 students have at least one parent who is an illegal immigrant
11. Decatur's population is 13% Hispanic; DCS spends \$1million a year on teaching students English as second language and after-school programs.
12. Hispanic students in DCS in 1991: 1%; in 2014: 24%.

What are governing principles that should guide my thinking about immigration?

1. The second greatest commandment: Love your immigrant neighbor as yourself (Mt. 22:39).
2. The Golden Rule: Do to immigrants as you would have them do to you (Mt. 7:12).
3. The *imago dei*: Immigrants made in the image of God are of equal worth (Gen. 1:27).
4. Hospitality: Kindness to strangers is the mark of a mature Christian (1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:8).
5. Inclusion: Christians look beyond barriers of race, ethnicity, language, customs (Gal. 3:28).

What does the Bible say about immigrants?

1. Adam: The First Immigrant (Gen. 3:23,24).
2. Abraham: The Father of Immigrants (Gen. 12:1; Heb. 11:8-10).
3. Joseph: The Child Immigrant (Gen. 37:28).
4. The Law of Moses (sojourner=immigrant)
 - Lev. 19:34 You shall treat the stranger who sojourns with you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.
 - Deut. 24:14 "You shall not oppress a hired worker who is poor and needy, whether he is one of your brothers or one of the sojourners who are in your land within your towns.
 - Deut. 24:15 You shall give him his wages on the same day, before the sun sets (for he is poor and counts on it), lest he cry against you to the LORD, and you be guilty of sin.
 - Ex. 20:10 but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates.
 - Deut. 14:21 "You shall not eat anything that has died naturally. You may give it to the sojourner who is within your towns, that he may eat it, or you may sell it to a foreigner.

For you are a people holy to the LORD your God. “You shall not boil a young goat in its mother’s milk.

Ex. 12:49 There shall be one law for the native and for the stranger who sojourns among you.”

Psa. 146:9 The LORD watches over the sojourners; he upholds the widow and the fatherless, but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin.

Zech. 7:10 do not oppress the widow, the fatherless, the sojourner, or the poor, and let none of you devise evil against another in your heart.”

5. The commands and example of Jesus (Mt. 22:39; Luke 10:27-37).
6. The teaching of the apostles (Ro. 13:9; 1 Tim. 5:10; Heb. 13:2)
7. The experience and makeup of the early church (Acts 8:1; 13:1).

What does it mean to balance competing goods?

To balance competing goods is to acknowledge that many important issues are complex, not simple. Many precepts and principles in Scripture are limited and defined (not contradicted) by other precepts and principles in Scripture. While it is easy to err on the extremes, thoughtful Christians aim to rest in “the center of Biblical tension.” How this might look in the immigration debate:

Mindless Liberalism	>Thoughtful Biblicism<	Heartless Conservatism
Welcome all strangers	Love all strangers	Fear all strangers
Build bridges	Build walls with bridges	Build walls

The application of these principles to particular situations is fraught with complexity due to mitigating circumstances. For example:

1. The God-ordained establishment of sovereign nation-states with clear borders (Gen. 11; Dt. 32:8; Acts 17:26).
2. The duty of governments to secure borders, restrain evil, protect citizens (Ro. 13:1–7)
3. The duty of immigrants to assimilate, renounce allegiance to former country, and swear allegiance to the new country (Ro. 13:7).
4. The duty of Christians to submit to governments (1 Peter 2:13).
5. The rise of terrorism. There is no Christian duty to welcome sworn enemies, only to love and pray for them (Mt. 5:44; Lk. 6:27; Ro. 12:20). I must balance my love for Syrian neighbors with my love for my next-door-neighbor.

What are we certain we can do right now?

1. Pray for immigrants and refugees, their nations, and the Great Commission. There is a reason immigrants generally stream toward nations most influenced by the Protestant Reformation.
2. Avoid the heartless or mindless extremes of conservatives and liberals.j
3. Educate yourself on immigration issues. Start here: <http://erlc.com/article/immigration-overview/>
4. Be humble and teachable in your discussions and debates on this questionable matter.
5. Obey the law. It is intended to discourage illegal immigration and protect legal and illegal immigrants from exploitation.
5. Work for just and loving immigration reform.
6. Love (reach out, befriend, take initiative with) the immigrants God has sovereignly placed in your life. Sometimes you go to the mission field