



**“Hot Topics: Immigration”**  
*Selected Passages*

**Main Point:** When it comes to immigrants, we are commanded to love them and to share the gospel with them.

A few commands that should command our attention when it comes to our position on immigration:

**Israel was commanded to love the sojourner (Dt. 10:18-19).**

- *Because God loves them (18)*
- *Because they were once sojourners (19)*

In the book of Deuteronomy, Moses prepared the second generation of exiles to enter into the Promised Land through the sermons or speeches that make up the bulk of the book. Deuteronomy means “the second law.” The title points not to a new law — a literal second law — that God gave to his people; rather, it points to a restatement and reaffirmation of the law, the Covenant, that God gave to His people. Verses 18 and 19 in chapter 10 are found in a section in the book that calls for God’s people to respond to His law in their lives. Verse 12 states clearly that what follows was what “God require[s] of you.” While the “you” is directed to the people of Israel, one of the underlying requirements was to “love” the “sojourner.” This word for sojourner, which could also be translated immigrant, is a word that points to someone is in an area outside of their homeland. God made this understanding clear in His reason why Israel must love the sojourner, which is because they themselves were once sojourners in Egypt. While love was the basic heart attitude that God required towards the sojourner, the ways that Israelites should express their love for the sojourner were connected to the many ways that God explicitly commanded them to treat sojourners in their territory (see Ex. 20:10; Lev. 19:34; Deut. 24:14-15; Ps. 146:9; Zech. 7:10; Jer. 7:6; etc.).

1. Take time to read and discuss the passages in parentheses above. Make a list of the qualities God called for in regards to treatment of sojourners among the Israelites.
2. Read Dt. 10:18-19. Why did God give this command to His people at this point in their history, with a generation that was poised to enter and settle the Promised Land?
3. What aspects of this command to Israel still applies to believers today?

**We are commanded to love our neighbor (Lk. 10:27-28).**

A lawyer asked Jesus a good legal question: “What must I do to inherit eternal life?” Jesus, the master teacher, responded with a question of His own, requiring the lawyer to do some thinking and to respond with an answer from Scripture. His response was good, as he pointed to the two great commandments regarding the loving God and loving one’s neighbor. However, the lawyer needed more information, so he asked Jesus to define a neighbor. Jesus gave the definition for a neighbor using a parable, and the parable He used — the parable of the Good Samaritan — defined a neighbor in an incredibly powerful way. The definition of a neighbor in the parable of Jesus cut through geographic, cultural, ethnic, and racial boundaries. The definition of a neighbor in the parable Jesus used cut right to the heart of the matter. The Samaritan was the real neighbor in the story. Although separated by geography, culture, etc., the compassion in the heart of the Samaritan towards the injured man displayed a heart of a true neighbor. Jesus commanded the lawyer to “go and do likewise.” Jesus demands that love for our neighbors doesn’t stop at the geographic, cultural, ethnic, and racial boundaries, but that love extends to those that our paths cross.

1. Read the entire passage, including the parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk. 10:25-37). How — and why — is loving God connected to loving others?
2. What the geographic, culture, ethnic, religious, etc. barriers that are crossed in this parable? Why is this important in defining a neighbor?
3. Read verse 37. What is the significance of the lawyer's answer in regards to the definition of a neighbor? What is the significance of Jesus' command in this verse for believers today?
4. In what ways does this parable apply to immigrants today who are already in our country?

**We are commanded to be subject to governing authorities (Rm. 13:1-2).**

In the church in Rome, there were no doubt many immigrants. There were certainly Jews in the Roman church, and there were doubtless others gathered in Rome from many other countries throughout the Roman empire. In chapter 13, Paul writes to this diverse group of believers to remind them of God's design for government and of God's demand that His people recognize the role and position of government in their lives within the place where they live. In the issue of immigration, this truth points not only to the biblical call for immigrants to follow the laws of the land in which they live, but also to the biblical call for national believers to respect the laws of the land and to seek to change those laws through the democratic processes provided under the law. In the heart of the believer, however, citizenship in this world must never usurp citizenship in heaven. In Philippians, Paul reminded believers that they were citizens of heaven (Phil. 3:20), and in 1 Peter, Peter reminded believers that they were only sojourners in this world (1 Pet. 2:11). Within the context of all of these truths related to government, here is a big take away for the believer. We should not let laws — or the lack of laws — that we want or don't want to affect our hearts toward the sojourner. We should be able to agree and disagree on immigration policy while not compromising our genuine love and heart for the people of all the nations.

1. Discuss these verses (and the verses that follow) in Romans 13. How do these verses apply to U.S. citizens in regards to immigration policy? How do these verses apply to immigrants seeking refuge and/or employment in the U.S.?
2. How do we as believers balance our dual citizenship? What are some passage that speak into this question of practice in our faith?
3. Should our citizenship in heaven, and our spiritual status as sojourners impact our view of immigrants and immigration? How, and why?

**We are commanded to make disciples of all nations (Mt. 28:18-20).**

Ultimately, as citizens of heaven, believers live in this world under the kingdom of heaven and for the work of the kingdom. King Jesus gave clear instructions on the priorities for His kingdom. In His final command to His followers, Jesus commanded His disciples to "make disciples of all nations." God's heart for the nations is clear, and God's plan to redeem men and women from all nations is unquestionable. The question is, what does immigration have to do with any of this? If the last command of Jesus is our first priority, then immigrants who are here in the United States are either souls that are brothers and sisters in Christ, whom we must treat appropriately, or they are souls that need Jesus Christ, to whom we must share the gospel. If nothing else, the church must see immigration as an opportunity to grow the kingdom of God. God is bringing some people to the United States from places that aren't easy to reach with the gospel. Regardless of what direction you would like to see immigration policy move in our country, Christians should see immigrants who are here through the lens of our gospel call. Rather than looking at immigrants with disdain, the church should look at them with desire, with hearts that hope to connect with brothers and sisters in Christ and to reach the lost with the Good News of Jesus Christ.

1. Regardless of immigration policy, what should drive how Christians view and interact with immigrants?
2. How can and should our church respond to immigrants in our community?
3. Is your view of immigrants and immigration driven primarily by national/personal interests or by the gospel? How can we as believers balance these two issues?
4. Pray for churches and believers in our nation that God would help us take advantage of the opportunity to bring the gospel to the nations that are now on our doorsteps.