

How Illegal Immigration Has Put Some Christians in a Bind

As the immigration battle rages on, there is now another polarizing event taking place in the U.S. Recently, the governor of Texas began bussing illegal migrants to sanctuary cities because the calls for support in dealing with the current border crisis have gone unanswered. This has led the mayors of Washington D.C. and New York City to also declare emergencies with the influx of migrants, but also condemn the governor for his actions.

All too often, these people who are, mostly, trying to escape poverty, war and other undesirable situations are no longer viewed as fellow humans. They get a label and are viewed as a problem, and the debate just spirals into partisan politics that ends up not solving anything. So, what is a Christian supposed to do in these contentious situations?

Discernment has always played a crucial role in living a Christian life. The Bible addresses some issues head on like being financially responsible, theft, murder and coveting things that belong to others.

Some issues are blurrier than others, and have led to a split among Christians on the “proper” way to handle a situation. Illegal immigration is a deeply complex issue, that has a wide array of beliefs in how it should be handled. With many people split along political party lines for or against open borders, taking a look at what the Bible says about people immigrating, obeying authority and how to treat others in these situations provides sound perspective.

So, what is the Christian way to handle it? How should immigrants who travel to a country, not just the U.S., be treated?

God was clear in telling Moses and the Israelites how to treat strangers and foreigners in their lands. Exodus 22:21 says that they must never be wronged or oppressed, while Leviticus 19:33-34 reiterates how foreigners should be treated when they are dwelling among the lands inhabitants. The New Testament echoes these statements in Matthew 25:31-35. These verses remain true to this day and should set the standard for how foreigners are treated in this or any country. That does not mean immigrants are not subject to a country's immigration laws.

There are just as many verses in the Bible that discuss the respecting and obeying of authority and laws as there are on how to treat foreigners in a country. Paul is explicit in Romans 13:1-7 about how every person must subject themselves to the governing authorities, because all authority comes from God. It does not say obey some or specific laws, but all laws.

Enforcing immigration laws is well within a sovereign nation's rights, and the Bible does not contradict that. Breaking those laws to escape a poor situation does not justify violating the Word of God. While we are instructed on how to treat the people trying to gain entry into a country, the Bible states it is both their and our responsibility to obey a standing law.

Thankfully, in the United States, if there are laws that are deemed unjust or perhaps can be made better, we have the ability to change them by voting in authorities to make such changes. There was order in everything God created, it was not chaotic, and by obeying the rule of order we are imitating God. This is not always the most expedient way of handling a situation, but it is the right way.

Caring for the poor (Prov. 19:17) and following the rule of law (1 Pet. 2:13-15) are not mutually exclusive. They can in fact be practiced together and were intended to go hand in hand by God. It is a Christian's place to pray for this

situation and people affected by it, and discern the best path forward according to the commands found in God's Word. {eoa}.

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