

**INTERNATIONAL HOUSE OF PRAYER ATLANTA**  
**CRITICAL CONVERSATIONS, PT. 4**  
**SEPTEMBER 17, 2017 – BILLY HUMPHREY**

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**I. The Current Context in America**

A. Many people are aware that DACA has been a hot topic in the news the past few weeks.

1. President Trump announced two weeks ago that he is ending the benefits to those who qualify for the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals executive order that President Obama signed back in 2012.

2. The executive order applies to those who were brought to the United States before they turned 16 years old and were unaware of the proper immigration processes.

3. Many people who fall into this category have lived in the U.S. for many years unaware that their immigration status was in jeopardy.

B. President Trump has said he is giving congress six months to act in order to create a law to solidify the necessary actions to provide for those who have been covered by DACA.

**II. The Topic of Immigration**

A. On one side of the conversation there are people who want open immigration into the U.S. with some advocating for an open borders policy and full sanctuary for anyone who is in the country illegally. They emphasize that the U.S. should be compassionate toward immigrants since America is a nation of immigrants. Opponents to this view point to security risks and rule of law as deterrents.

B. On the other side of the conversation there are people who want very strict guidelines for immigration including deportations of all those who are in the country without proper documentation. Detractors to this position label this action as compassionless and cruel towards people who have immigrated to America without following the proper legal paths to residency.

C. There is injustice on both sides of this conversation.

1. The Scripture strictly forbids mistreatment and injustice towards foreigners. Mass deportations without consideration of an individual's living context would fall outside of God's commands for compassion.

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2. At the same time, what appears to be compassion may not actually be what it appears. As one of my friends who is here from another nation pointed out, “America has happily looked the other way on immigration in the name of compassion because the labor force that has become available through undocumented workers is extremely inexpensive. Many times the people who are here without proper documents are treated and paid very poorly. It’s almost another form of slavery.”

D. Because the issue can be so complex with many nuances and impacts the lives of many people, we must engage God’s heart on the matter so that we can anchor ourselves to a biblical worldview.

### **III. God’s Mentality About Justice**

A. When the Lord describes how He wants His people to treat “foreigners” it’s part of a broader biblical topic: justice.

B. God loves justice. His throne is established on righteousness and justice (Psalm 89:14). Jesus is the One who is going to bring justice to the nations (Isa 42:1). Throughout the scripture God has much to say about justice and injustice.

C. A simple definition of justice is a judgment against unrighteousness causing a release of righteousness and equity. Throughout the Bible God identifies justice as judging in favor of the widow, the orphan, the foreigner, the poor, and the oppressed.

D. Some may think of God’s justice as being in opposition to His mercy, yet God’s justice is expressed as an action of His mercy. God’s justice means the removal of oppression for the oppressed and relief given to the needy.

E. Psalm 146 gives us the clearest description of justice in the scripture:

**Psa 146:6-9** Who made heaven and earth, The sea and all that is in them; Who keeps faith forever; 7 Who executes justice for the oppressed; Who gives food to the hungry. The LORD sets the prisoners free. 8 The LORD opens the eyes of the blind; The LORD raises up those who are bowed down; The LORD loves the righteous; 9 The LORD protects the strangers; He supports the fatherless and the widow, But He thwarts the way of the wicked.

1. Judgments in favor of the oppressed
2. Food to the hungry
3. Liberating those who are unjustly imprisoned
4. Opening the eyes of the blind
5. Encouraging the discouraged and depressed

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6. Protecting foreigners
7. Supporting the fatherless
8. Supporting the widow
9. Thwarting wickedness

#### **IV. The Biblical Mentality of How to Treat Foreigners**

A. The bible gives clear guidelines as to how God's people are to act toward those who are from other nations.

**Deu 10:17-19** "For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality nor takes a bribe. 18 "He administers justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the stranger, giving him food and clothing.

**Deu 24:17-19** "You shall not pervert justice due the stranger or the fatherless, nor take a widow's garment as a pledge. 'Cursed is the one who perverts the justice due the stranger, the fatherless, and widow.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen!'

**Zec 7:9** "Thus says the LORD of hosts: 'Execute true justice, Show mercy and compassion everyone to his brother. 10 Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, the alien or the poor. Let none of you plan evil in his heart against his brother.'

B. God desires His people to love those who are strangers, and at times to provide food and clothing for them. In no way are His people ever to deal treacherously with or oppress foreigners.

#### **V. God's Mentality about Governing Authorities**

A. God calls His people to be subject to the governing civil authorities, as ones who have been appointed by Him.

B. Those who resist the authorities resist God and will bring judgment upon themselves.

**Romans 13:1-7** 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. 3 For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. 4 For he is God's minister to you for good.

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C. The only time the bible allows disobeying the governing authorities is when the governing authorities make laws against practicing righteousness (Acts 4:18-19).

**VI. Hospitality**

A. The Greek word translated “hospitality” in the New Testament is *Philoxenia*. It literally means, “love of strangers.” God’s call for mercy toward strangers is most specifically summed up in His directives toward the church to practice hospitality.

**Hebrews 13:1-2** Let love of the brethren continue. 2 Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it.

**Romans 12:13** distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality.

B. In 1 Timothy 3:2 and Titus 1:8 Paul explains that God’s requirements for overseers is that they must be hospitable.

**VII. Summary**

A. God commands mercy and compassion toward strangers. It is His nature and how He expects His people to act toward those who are outside. This in no way cancels God’s holiness and purity; instead His compassion is an expression of His holiness and purity.

B. At the same time God calls His people to respect the governing authorities and the laws of the land. (Rom 13:1-7).

C. It should be expected that if people break the law that they would be subject to the consequences that go with it. This includes illegally entering a country.

D. It’s the responsibility of the church to pray for a nation to enact just laws that reflect the nature of God.

E. However, even if a nation does not enact just laws, like Rome in the 1<sup>st</sup> century, God’s directions for believers remain the same, honor the governing authorities.