

Law vs Grace

"For sin shall not be your master,
because you are not under law, but under grace." Romans 6:14; 7:6

Law: An Achieving System		Grace: A Receiving System
"Do"	says	"Done"
What man does	emphasizes	What God does
The flesh (self-life)	lives out of	The Spirit (Christ-Life)
Man's resources	draws on	God's resources
External rules, regulations	deals with	Inner heart attitude
Ought to's, should's, have to's	primary focus	want to's
Bondage, duty, obligation	creates	Freedom
From the outside - in	lives life	From the inside - out
Do...in order to be	declares	Be...in order to do
Condemnation, guilt, defeat	produces	Acceptance, victory, security
Try harder, work, self effort	operating principle	Receive, trust, rest, abide
Detailed compliance	summary*	Love God and others
Imitation	ideal*	Participation
Operate	relationship*	Cooperate
Fear of condemnation	motive*	Gratitude for justification
Servants of God	role*	Sons/daughters of God
"For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all." James 2:10		"For we through the Spirit eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness by faith." Galatians 5:5

Situation	Sample Law response	Sample Grace Response
Temptation to yield to an immoral sexual opportunity	God says I shouldn't do this. Even though I want to do it, I must say no to my desires to yield and grit my teeth and obey God. Holiness demands that I resist this temptation. I have to say no to this situation or God will punish me.	Even though I feel like I want to sin, I choose to agree with God that I have been crucified with Christ and have died to sin's authority. Therefore, these thoughts and feelings are not coming from me, but from the power of indwelling Sin. I am a righteous, holy, child of God who is secure and significant, and who really [in my spirit] does not want to nor need to yield to this temptation. Since I know who I am in Christ, I'm free to say yes to my new self. I chose to believe that God will meet my emotional needs for intimacy as I trust Him.
Personal failure, or mistake at a task	Why did I do that? What is wrong with me? I'm so worthless! I always mess things up! I'm such a failure! I need to do better. I'm not measuring up to what God expects of me and I know He is angry with me. I ought to do a better job so God will be glorified. My failure is a poor witness for Christ. I should be further along in my experience so I don't mess up like this.	That hurts! I wish I hadn't have done that. But I choose to agree with God that this is not an expression of my life. Since everything I have and everything I am belongs to Christ (including my reputation), I have given up the right to be perfect and am willing to make mistakes. I'm free to fail. My self-esteem is not based on my performance but on Christ who is my life. It is good to be humbled. God gives grace to the humble. A proper response to failure can be a better witness for Christ than flawless performance. This is an opportunity to learn and grow, and exhibit to others the peace and joy that is mine in Christ. Even though I failed, I'm still accepted in the Beloved! I'm going to see myself as God sees me and forgive myself. "Failure" is not my identity; I'm a saint who temporarily failed.

Situation	Sample Law response	Sample Grace Response
A family member or work associate who repeatedly hurts and irritates me	This person really bugs me! I don't know why God doesn't change this person. I've got to hold my temper and try to forget about it. God requires me to forgive 70x7, so I guess I have no choice but to ignore what is me happening to me. I should act like a loving person in order to be a good Christian.	I'm angry over what this person has done to me. This hurts! I feel humiliated, misunderstood, and rejected. But I choose to welcome this situation as an opportunity to let Christ express His Life through me. I receive this negative situation as a blessing in disguise. Since I am a new person in Christ, spiritually I am a forgiving person... even when my soul doesn't feel like forgiving. Not to forgive would be inconsistent with my essential [spiritual] nature. After I forgive, I'm free to ask God to cause me to see this person with His eyes and to discover the hurt inside this person that is contributing to the negative behavior. I'm going to look for an opportunity to bless this person and will ask the Lord if and when I might need to confront this person in love about this negative behavior.

Adapted from *The Marvelous Exchange* by Dick Flaten
(Texas: Exchanged Life Ministries).
Available through abundantlivingresources.org
*additional material by John Woodward