

The West Meadow
By Pastor Wes Higgins

There is a common conception that the law and grace are opposite ends of the spectrum. The understanding is that the law kills but grace gives life. To fine tune, it is not the law (in this case the Ten Commandments) that kills, but the breaking of them. 1 John 3:4 tells us that “sin is the transgression of the law” (KJV), and Romans 6:23 states “the wages of sin is death”. So yes, the breaking of the law brings death automatically. Romans 6:23 concludes “But the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord”.

Eternal life is not the natural result of anything, it is a gift given by God's grace to those who have Christ Jesus as their Lord and Master. There is nothing in scripture that implies that law and grace are opposed to each other. In fact, just a casual reading of the Bible shows that law and grace go hand in hand. God first revealed Himself to Israel in grace as their Savior Redeemer by hearing their prayers and bringing them out of bondage through the plagues on Egypt and the parting of the Red Sea. Then He brought them through other graceful acts – giving of water, giving of mana, giving of the Sabbath rest – to Mount Sinai where He gave them His law. The giving of the law was another act of grace, Exodus 20:1-17, making it possible for the people of Israel to have a relationship with Him and to live happy, fulfilled lives. God is Holy, therefore His people must be Holy to have a relationship with Him. “For I am the Lord your God. You shall therefore consecrate yourselves, and you shall be holy; for I am holy.” (Leviticus 11:44, NKJV).

It works the same way for Christians also. God calls us – that in itself is an act of God's grace (John 6:65, Romans 5:8) – then at the repenting of our sins He redeems us (Acts 2:38). After we receive His grace, He reveals to us through His word what He expects of us. “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them” (Ephesians 2:10, NKJV). God's word includes not just the New Testament, but the entire Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17). God gives us His grace, then He gives us His law that we may live in grace with Him. The New Covenant version of Leviticus 11:44 is “Be holy for I am holy” in 1 Peter 1:16.

If we try to enter God's presence by our obedience to the law we will fail. “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23, NKJV). On the other hand, if we continually break God's law and expect His grace to cover us, Christ says He never new us, “depart from Me...you who practice lawlessness” (Matthew 7:23, NKJV).

God's grace and His law have always existed together – “And of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace. For law through Moses was given. The grace and truth through Jesus Christ came” (John 1:16-17, Interlinear Bible) – and grace was there before time began – “The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Revelation 13:8, NKJV).

Thank God for His grace and His law, that we may live.