

# How to Lead People Toward Grace and Peace in An Anxious Time

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This is an unsettling time we live in.

- Uncertainty in our business
- Conflict in our communities
- Division in our country

I often hear this phrase, “It’s getting kinda crazy out there.” The unsettling nature of our current culture, after time, affects the disposition of your soul. It wears you down. We can barely notice it at times because it’s nearly a constant. It’s most often described as subtle low-grade anxiety of the soul. And some would say it’s not so subtle.

Yet we are called to lead people into the love of God and the unity of peace. How do we do that with so much division? The Apostle Paul introduces his letter to the church in Ephesus with, “*Grace and peace to you...*”

That doesn’t always seem so easy to access if we are honest about it, and even more difficult to draw people into living it out. But we know “grace and peace” is possible because Jesus makes it possible.

## 5 steps to leading with grace and peace:

### 1) Let God carry what you can’t carry.

Most leaders today acknowledge some level of inner unrest, an uneasiness within them. It’s not the normal everyday stress that comes with solving problems and making progress. It’s something deeper. Some leaders go farther and say they feel “*powerless*” right now like they really can’t change anything.

I certainly understand that feeling; I’ve felt it at times too. The good news is that we are *not* powerless as leaders to affect change right now. Your voice and leadership absolutely matter. It’s all about the source. On your own, you can’t effect change that matters for eternity.

But look at Ephesians 1:2...

*Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

The source is God, our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ, which is the source of your spiritual power. Sometimes we run so fast we forget the source of grace and peace and must remember to let God carry what we can’t carry. God wants us in the game, but He brings the power. God carries what we can’t carry.

## 2) It's necessary to live grace and peace before you lead it.

When you stay connected to the source, God himself, you can then experience grace and peace yourself. That is the foundation of your spiritual leadership.

Paul gives us a glimpse of what that looks like practically.

*Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. Ephesians 4:2-3*

Living out God's grace with peace in your soul isn't easy while you are leading a business today.

- You are under pressure.
- Expectations are unclear.
- And the new normal isn't here yet.

However, God's grace and peace overcome all that. It requires three things:

1. **Slowing down** – taking time to be quiet, to think, and pray is essential.
2. **Trusting deep** – It's vital to trust now more than ever that God is with you, regardless of what you face.
3. **Taking risks** – stepping out, speaking up, and taking action brings God's power into your leadership.

God's grace and power within you enable humility, gentleness, patience, and love. This can influence unity and peace among those you lead.

## 3) Pre-determine that no matter what happens around you, you will hold firm to your spiritual character.

I don't know what will happen tomorrow. My hunch is you don't either.

And we all face things like:

- Financial problems.
- People conflict.
- Unrest in your business.

But before tomorrow's problems arrive, you can commit to grace and peace today. You can choose today that no matter what happens tomorrow, you will hold firm to your spiritual character. The Enemy wants to attack your character much more than your talent and skills. If he can crack your character, your skill level doesn't matter very much.

If the devil can trip you up at a character level, it's easy to knock you down at a skill level. The responsibility to solve these problems tends to "squeeze" you and therefore add pressure and stress to your life.

The Enemy can use all this to cause you to drift from your spiritual standards (in an often unrealized) attempt to relieve pressure, but you can hold steady by staying connected to God. Distraction, busyness, and isolation will often break your connection with God. The key is you must pre-determine that choice.

#### **4) Understand the problem before you offer a solution.**

You and I can quickly grasp the larger idea of grace and peace. But the person you are dealing with who is upset, confused, hurting, or angry is not connected, at least in the moment, the way you are.

As the leader, you must absorb some of the heat of the moment to understand and connect with the person and what is upsetting them before you present a solution. Even if you disagree with their position or sense you know the solution, it's important to extend grace before attempting peace.

If you jump to the solution, even a correct and biblical solution, before the person feels you understand, you risk the possibility of making the problem worse, not better. Again, even if you disagree, you may learn something that helps increase your compassion, which always makes the truth easier to accept. Culturally speaking, even the definition of grace and peace is up for grabs. Don't assume anything; establish understanding first.

#### **5) Choose your words wisely.**

*Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone. Colossians 4:5-6.*

This is great wisdom again by Paul. Take a look at four key ideas in these two verses:

a. **Wisdom**

We are invited into the very wisdom of God, who, in His kindness, makes that available to us through His spirit. We only must ask.

b. **Opportunity**

We must ask for wisdom and look for opportunities. Sometimes, it seems like opportunities to advance the gospel just "appear." But more often, opportunities are consistently before us, and we tend to find what we are looking for.

c. **Grace**

*"Let your conversation always be full of grace, seasoned with salt."* How incredibly appropriate for where we are all living today! Each word you choose can make the difference between someone experiencing grace and knowing peace.

d. **Response**

In the end, we do have an answer, as guided by biblical principles and the Holy Spirit's prompting. That's at the core of spiritual leadership.

You get to influence each person for their good and God's glory.