

## EXCERPT



### ***Savoring Childhood*** *Practical Wisdom for Slowing Down*

March 10, 2026 | \$21.99, 224 pages, paperback | 978-1-5140-1116-4

## Sowing Seeds of Patience in a Fast-Gratification World

*How have things become more instant in your lifetime?*

When I ask this question in group settings, we all laugh a little as we recall listening to the hiss and hum of the modem while waiting on a dial-up internet connection, watching TV shows one episode at a time with a whole week between installments, and spending months hoping a catalog order will finally arrive in the mail.

Now we feel impatient with an internet connection slower than 100 megabits per second. (The fact that we even have the phrase “megabits per second” in our vocabularies should tell us something!) And it isn’t just the speed of our internet connections that has accelerated.

Someone can “dash” food or supplies to our doors at any time, day or night.

Companies compete to offer you the fastest way to reach your goals—from weight loss to master’s degrees.

You can skip the line with early check-ins, and you can transfer money with a thumbprint.

Haven’t we all marathon-watched a show—viewing all the episodes of a series in instant succession thanks to on-demand viewing?

Simply command your device, and you can get directions, play music, and have your queries answered in a matter of seconds.

It’s wild to think how pervasive this easy-button approach to life has become, especially in the past ten to fifteen years. It might sound like paradise, but it comes at a cost. Have you noticed any of these problems in your kids, yourself, or the broader population?

- fragile or aggressive responses to even the smallest delays and inconveniences
- anxiety and avoidance in difficult tasks
- low endurance or fear of commitment (in long-term relationships, jobs, projects, etc.)
- entitlement and lack of gratitude

Speeding up the wait between *wanting* and *getting* makes our days less toilsome and more efficient, but it also stunts the growth of patience, perseverance, and self-control. These qualities, which develop slowly by God’s help and our cooperation, make us people who are a blessing to be around, able to think of others, not just ourselves. And they make our contentment robust, less likely to crack when things are hard.

This is the quality of life Jesus had, and it blossomed out of the life he cultivated. Jesus came into the world through the unrushed process of developing in his mother’s womb and being born, being a child, and growing up. He embraced the limitations of human existence at a particularly tough time in history. His life was rustic and slow. He walked places, worked hard to earn a living, experienced hunger and thirst, disappointment, temptation, and pain, always choosing the most loving way rather than the most expedient way.

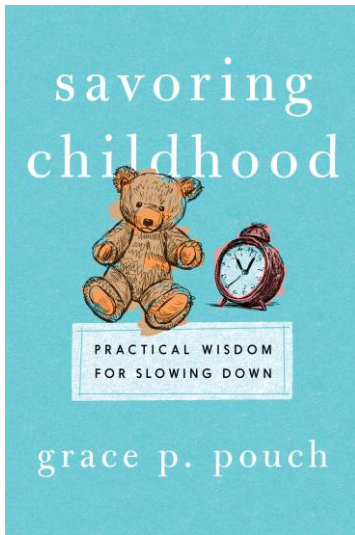


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All this non-instant, effortful living, and yet Jesus *flourished* as a human being. He savored beautiful friendships with people and with God. His words “not my will but yours be done” (Luke 22:42) display his patience and his freedom from having to get his own way. People were drawn to Jesus’ wise, kind, and non-anxious presence. He was fully, radiantly, responsibly alive!

This is how it can be for us, too. Richard Foster’s classic *Celebration of Discipline* explores how a person can grow into the inward character and quality of life that Jesus had. Foster opens with these words: “Superficiality is the curse of our age. The doctrine of instant satisfaction is a *primary* spiritual problem.” Impatience isn’t a side issue when it comes to our spiritual health. It is perhaps the most pernicious barrier to that glorious earthly existence that author Rich Villodas calls “the deeply formed life.”

The more we choose instant and easy, the harder it becomes to engage constructively, not to mention joyfully, in daily activities where magical, easy-button solutions don’t exist. The harder it becomes to maintain friendships and family ties that take hard work and dedication. And the harder it becomes to sit with and savor one of life’s slowest journeys: a gradually unfolding and ever-deepening relationship with God.

If we want our children to share in Christ’s radiant aliveness, we need to help them experience *slow gratification*.

Of course, we all know that our world isn’t going to revert back to slower ways. Slow gratification used to be as natural and unavoidable as waiting on the sun to come up. Now, immediacy is on tap everywhere we turn. Not only can we skip the slow stuff if we so choose, in many cases the choice has already been made for us in the products and technologies we use. In this fast gratification landscape, we need God to point us to the settings where kids can work hard and endure, collaborate and wait—so that the seeds of patience and contentment can mature and bear fruit in their lives.

I intentionally chose to make slow gratification our first stop on the *Savoring Childhood* journey because nothing is more likely to halt our progress than the illusion of instant success. Our society runs on the currency of shortcuts and “guaranteed results in three days, or your money back.” That sort of mentality affects the way we approach complex issues, like the ones in this book. We want the tide to shift so that childhood is slow and wonderful . . . and we want it to shift *now*. We want things in our homes and schools to be better, and we want that change to be quick and painless. But there are no shortcuts in a child’s character development and there are no overnight solutions for the problems that stand in the way of that formation. The lessons in the following chapters aren’t just for our children. They are also for us, so that we will be ready for the slow work of renewal ahead.

As we root out our own impatience, we will strengthen our ability to go the distance in helping our children with theirs.

So let’s begin. Freedom ahead!

—taken from part one, "Slow Gratification"



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## Q & A



### ***Savoring Childhood*** *Practical Wisdom for Slowing Down*

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**Grace P. Pouch** is content manager for *Renovaré*, where she curates and produces resources for spiritual renewal. She previously served as a seminary professor and Christian education specialist for elementary school children. Grace and her husband, William, live with their two children, Charlotte and Henry, in Greenville, South Carolina.

## Small Steps to Help Children Slow Down and Flourish in a Hurried World

### Why do we need a book on savoring childhood and slowing down? What's too fast about life for kids today?

**Grace P. Pouch:** I think we all sense that kids today are being rushed past formative experiences and relationships.

Some of the reasons are more obvious. For instance, kids are often victims of being overbooked with activities and hurried from one thing to the next. The part of *Savoring Childhood* called “Slow Schedules” looks at how to simplify the family calendar to make space for deep connection with God and each other.

Another speed-related problem heavy on everyone’s hearts is the constant rush of addictive digital media. While I was writing this book, Jonathan Haidt released *The Anxious Generation*, which has helped the whole world wake up to the way high-speed media harms young people. In my section called “Slow Media” I get very specific about how to protect kids from that mad rush of digital content so that their eyes and ears are free to engage with the world and with God.

Slow schedules and slow media are essential for a wholesome childhood, but they aren’t the only ingredients our kids need to flourish.

Readers might be less familiar with the other three ways of slowing in *Savoring Childhood*, but as I’ve shared them with others, I’ve found that the pain points really resonate. “Slow Gratification” is the section of the book that focuses on pushing back the malforming influence of instant gratification so young people can develop patience and break free from having to get what they want exactly when they want it. “Slow Consuming” is about helping kids cultivate contentment and gratitude and step into the delight of being a contributor rather than just a consumer. And “Slow Growing Up” is about giving kids the time and space to soak up life lessons and encounters that they need to form a healthy identity and deep roots, explore big questions, and engage in the most important form of savoring—to “taste and see that the Lord is good” (Psalm 34:8).

### What is distinctive about your approach in *Savoring Childhood*?

**Grace:** My advice is practical and doable—not for super-Christians only. There are others out there who are radical #SlowLiving heroes, and extreme examples can be inspiring. But I think it’s also encouraging to know that an average person can take small steps and still make a difference. If my family can savor childhood, yours can too.

I tell lots of stories in *Savoring Childhood*—stories about my own childhood, about raising my kids, and things I’ve learned as a teacher and children’s ministry specialist. They aren’t all success stories, but they help me paint a picture for readers of what is possible. I also draw on the life of Jesus and wisdom from the past to lay out a path to a slower, deeper way of life.



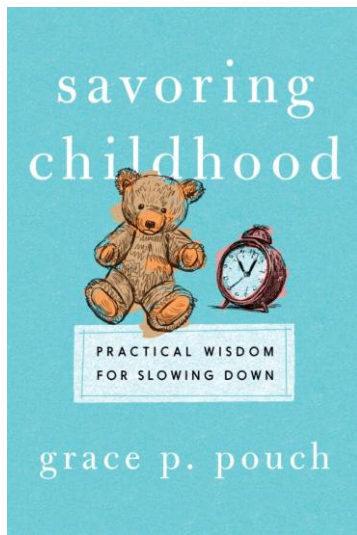
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*"Savoring Childhood by Grace P. Pouch is a book written out of the crucible of lived experience. This makes it of enormous value, not only for our children but for us as well. There is a gentleness in the words that calls us to a deeper, fuller life of unhurried peace and power. I recommend it highly."*

—Richard J. Foster, author of *Celebration of Discipline* and *Streams of Living Water*

*Savoring Childhood* is designed so that readers can read straight through or skip to the section that fits their specific needs. The chapter tabs and illustrated symbols help you navigate the different invitations that go with each way of slowing down. And the beautiful pen-and-ink illustrations that go with each section are dear to my heart because my daughter Charlotte made them!

#### **What are some of the biggest challenges parents might face as they start to implement your ideas?**

**Grace:** It is always challenging to go against cultural norms, and shifting hard-baked habits can take a long time. I intentionally start the book with the section on "Slow Gratification" because nothing is more likely to derail us than the illusion of instant success. Our society runs on the currency of shortcuts and "guaranteed results in three days, or your money back." That sort of mentality warps the way we approach complex issues, like the ones in this book. We want to give up when things are hard or slow. So the lessons in "Slow Gratification" are for us just as much as for our kids, so we can build up the patience and endurance we need to implement every way of slowing down that God invites us into.

One other big challenge: In order to help kids have a gentler pace of life, we have to embrace a slower way ourselves. So I've woven into each chapter's "How To Practice" section a few tips for grown-ups, so that we can grow more patient, less distracted, calmer, and more intentional. Seeing us slow down helps our kids envision the good life God has for them.

#### **Is the book just for parents? What ages of childhood does it cover?**

**Grace:** Parents have the greatest potential to set a healthy pace for children, but they shouldn't have to do it alone. Being part of the family of God means all of us have a part to play, so while I gear much of my advice toward parents, I've included stories and tips to inspire and equip readers of all types. Whatever little corner of the world is within your effective control—your home, your classroom, your carpool, your night to have the grandkids over—it's a golden opportunity to partner with God in creating the conditions where kids can flourish.

My kids are 12 and 15, but I include tips for all stages of childhood with a heavy focus on ages 3-15. One question I hear a lot is "What if I'm too late?" (as in, my children are grown up and suffering from the wear and tear of a fast childhood). It's never too late. All of us, no matter how old we are, are called by Jesus to "become like children" (Matthew 18:3). While my hope is to empower readers who can slow down childhood for kids who are in that uniquely formative season of life, the book's invitations can help anyone at any age to cooperate with the processes God uses to shape healthy and beautiful souls.

#### **Do you have any encouragement for readers who are coming to this book worried or confused about what's going on with their kids (or grandkids, or students)?**

**Grace:** I am so glad that your desire to understand the issues and to make a difference has brought you here! Your concerns are valid; the fast-childhood problems we will look at together have the potential to do great harm to young people. But I can assure you that it is possible to cultivate a wholesome and wonderful childhood, even today. I can say that with confidence because I'm the mom of two joyful young people who know themselves to be beloved children of God and who have a deep capacity to give and receive love and to do hard things when it matters.



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