Slow Ground — Children, Fields, and Letting Go

Disciple copy · Women's Jail Ministry · Pleasant Springs Church

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Read this lesson online: https://ps-church.com/discipleship/jail-ministry/slow-ground

The whole lesson in one sentence

➤ A child and a field are both slow _____. You cannot _____ either one. "Be still" means open your _____ — because I am not in _____, and God is.

Words to know

- **Toil** — hard, long work that wears you down and cannot be hurried.
- **Rear** — to raise a child from small to grown.
- **Patience** — being able to wait a long time without giving up or blowing up.

Who wrote it, and who heard it first

Genesis was written for **Israel** — slaves set free from Egypt, on their way to a land where they would farm and raise families. Two things filled every day: the _____ and the _____.

One word for the mother and the farmer

> **Genesis 3:16 (ESV)** — "I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children."
>
> **Genesis 3:17 (ESV)** — "cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life;"
>
> **Genesis 5:29 (ESV)** — "Out of the ground that the LORD has cursed, this one shall bring us relief from our work and from the painful toil of our hands."

The mother's "pain" and the farmer's "pain" are the _____ word. The whole Bible uses it only _____ times.

The word our Bibles translate "childbearing" really means being _____ — carrying a child. It is not the word for labor. God is talking about the whole long work of bringing children into the world and raising them.

Raising a child and working the ground are the same kind of slow _____.

You plant, and then you wait

> **Deuteronomy 11:11–12 (ESV)** — "a land of hills and valleys, which drinks water by the rain from heaven, a land that the LORD your God cares for."
>
> **Mark 4:27–28 (ESV)** — "He sleeps and rises night and day, and the seed sprouts and grows; he knows not how. The earth produces by itself,"

The farmer does his part. Only _____ makes the seed grow.

> **James 5:7–8 (ESV)** — "See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains. You also, be patient. Establish your hearts,"

Then and now

	Then — the people who first heard it	Now — our world, and this room
The work	Farming and raising children filled every day	Instant food, instant answers, next-day delivery
Who was in control	Nobody could make it rain or stop a fever	Someone else decides when I eat, sleep, and see a judge
Waiting meant	Normal life — plant, then wait on God's rain	"Something has gone wrong"
Psalm 46	A city behind walls, trouble outside	Women behind walls, trouble outside
"Be still"	Let go — God sends the rain	Open my hand — give God what I am squeezing

Be still — open your hand

> **Psalm 46:1–2 (ESV)** — "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear though the earth give way,"
>
> **Psalm 46:10 (ESV)** — "Be still, and know that I am God."
>
> **Psalm 127:2–3 (ESV)** — "It is in vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil; for he gives to his beloved sleep. Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD,"

Toil, then children, then rest. Instead of worry, God gives His beloved _____.

"Be still" does not mean "calm down." It means let _____ — drop it — open your hand.

I am not in _____. God is. That is the best lesson I can learn.

The one thing I am squeezing that I cannot control from in here:

Who learned patience with you?

> **1 Corinthians 13:4 (ESV)** — "Love is patient and kind;"

The word for "patient" here is the same word James used for the _____. Patience is _____ working slow ground.

Name the men or women in your life who learned patience with you:

God is patient with me too.

> **Acts 8:3 (ESV)** — "he dragged off men and women and committed them to prison."
>
> **1 Timothy 1:16 (ESV)** — "that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example"
>
> **2 Peter 3:9 (ESV)** — "The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you,"

Take it with you

1. **Open your hand.** Give God the thing you cannot control.

2. **Be somebody's patient one.** Don't give up on the woman who is hard to be around.

Being patient with someone never means going back to be hurt.

> **Galatians 6:9 (ESV)** — "And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up."

Questions to think about

1. What is one thing you are holding onto that you cannot control from in here?
2. Why do you think God put raising children and working the ground side by side?
3. Who was patient with you? What did they put up with?
4. Is there someone in here you could be patient with this week?

Closing prayer

Father, we come to you with our hands full and our fists tight. We are holding things we cannot fix. Teach us to be still. Help us open our hands and let go.

Thank you that the ground is yours and the rain is yours. Thank you for every person who was patient with us — the ones who waited on us when we would not listen. Bless them tonight, wherever they are.

Thank you that you are patient toward us, and that you have not given up on the ground you planted. Grow patience in us here, in this slow place. Make us the kind of women who wait well and love long.

In the name of Jesus, **Amen.**

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