

# **Shadow of the Almighty Study Guide**

**Shadow of the Almighty by Elisabeth Elliot**

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# Plot Summary

Jim Elliot's biography is based on not only memories, but also extensive journal entries and letters to friends and family. It is the story of one young man's journey from birth, to following Jesus Christ at a young age that leads him on a journey of faith that eventually carries him to the mission field where he sacrifices his life for his faith. Intimate details take readers by the hand to witness what others see in the young missionary and what Jim Elliot himself thinks and feels as he chooses God's will over his own in everyday circumstances. *Shadow of the Almighty* is a love story between one man and his Savior and shows how that love and commitment overshadows all other relationships and every thought.

This story grants insight as to how God orchestrates his will on earth and opens with stories of how Jim Elliot's ancestors come to this country and lay the foundation of faith which is passed on to Jim Elliot and his siblings at an early age. His father reads Scripture to his children daily and teaches them to live according to God's Word rather than legalisms and man-made rules. Jim grows into an adolescent that is good looking, does well in school and is willing to help others with their studies. He is also brought up with a love for the outdoors and enjoys hunting and camping, which lay the groundwork for him to survive in the jungles of Ecuador as an adult.

His years in college lay the foundation of finding time for prayer and God's Word even amid tight schedules and social pressures. During this time, he hears the call of God to go and preach the gospel and feels the Lord leading him to Latin America. He visits Mexico, stays six weeks serving with missionaries over summer break, and returns to school where he adjusts his studies to help prepare him in the translation of God's Word into primitive tongues. During his sophomore year, he meets his future wife, Elisabeth Howard, who also has a heart to be a missionary. Both see no room for the entanglement of marriage but form a strong relationship with long talks and times of study together. Jim considers it all the more important to spend time in God's Word and keeps a notebook of what he learns and how God is working in his life. His ways are considered unconventional and yet his living faith convicts those around him.

Near misses with death as a young man include a hunting mishap as a bullet cuts through his hair, and a car stalls on railroad tracks that gets demolished. All this fits with the theme that God is in control and has his time, so that by the end of the book when Jim meets his death at the hands of the Auca Indians, the reader is satisfied that things are as they should be.

As Jim Elliot lives life, he finds comfort in the knowledge that faith in the Gospel is based on fact rather than how he feels. Whether in school, at play, or on the mission field, he prays for the Lord to make him like a fork in the road where people make decisions either to continue their own way or to follow Christ. Yet his trust rests in eternity, as he believes that even if he doesn't see results from his efforts now, he will see them in eternity. This "facts over feelings" mindset governs his entire life, even his love for Elisabeth as they agree in the Lord that it is better for each of them to serve the



Lord as single unless He shows them differently. Jim decides that if he is to learn native languages to work among the Indians in South America that he better do it while he is young, because the older you get the harder it is to learn new things. He is willing to go to the mission field without Elisabeth, claiming that God's grace is sufficient to see him through. He urges his parents to leave the matter with God, because they long to see him marry.

In his journal, Jim shares a prayer asking God either to glorify himself to the utmost through Jim or to slay him. This shows his sold out heart, which is evident in his actions as he finally reaches the mission field leaving Elisabeth behind. However, with this step of obedience, God sends Elisabeth to Ecuador—not to serve in the same place but nearby and thus laying the groundwork to have her in place when the time finally arrives for her to join Jim in his work with the Indians. Before they go into the field together, they marry. She helps him in his translation work as well as overseeing the work that needs to be done. They have a daughter named Valerie who is just learning to stand when Jim finally has the opportunity to make first contact with the Aucas. At first, plans for Elisabeth to come along are made but at the last moment, this door closes and she stays behind to learn of her husband's death while fulfilling God's purpose for his life.



# Prologue

## Prologue Summary and Analysis

Jim Elliot's biography is based on not only memories, but also extensive journal entries and letters to friends and family. It is the story of one young man's journey from birth, to following Jesus Christ at a young age that leads him on a journey of faith that eventually carries him to the mission field where he sacrifices his life for his faith. Intimate details take readers by the hand to witness what others see in the young missionary and what Jim Elliot himself thinks and feels as he chooses God's will over his own in everyday circumstances. *Shadow of the Almighty* is a love story between one man and his Savior and shows how that love and commitment overshadows all other relationships and every thought.

The prologue lays the foundation for this book and opens with Jim Elliot as a college student. In the brief first sentences, his willingness to live for Christ with a whole heart is condensed in a quote from him: "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose." (p. 15).

Seven years later, he stands on the shore of the Curaray River, deep within the Ecuadorian jungle with a handful of fellow missionaries. Anticipation fills the air. Their hopes to reach the natives for Christ were renewed with their first breakthrough in making contact two days previous when a young native male the missionaries nicknamed "George" stepped from the jungle on the opposite shore along with two Aucan females.

The missionaries know enough Aucan words to communicate that they have friendly intentions and offer the three gifts including food and water. George is curious about the missionaries' plane and wonders how the great creature flies. The missionaries take George up in the plane and give him his first sight of a bigger scope of where he lives. Later George and the two women return to their village and the next day the five missionaries wait with expectancy hoping for another visit but they do not come. The author lets the reader see into the heart and mind of the five missionaries including her husband, Jim Elliot, and balances it with insight into the natives' thinking. Her use of description sets the primitive scene as she draws the reader into the excitement experienced by the missionaries through dialog, private insights and words to a hymn that is sung.

This prologue lays the groundwork for the theme of the story of Jim Elliot's life. He's a man of God who not only lived for but also died for Christ. It opens with a handful of natives that dare to trust for a moment and others that didn't trust at all.

On the following Sunday, one missionary flying the plane reports the natives are on the way. He makes contact with his wife by radio to let her know what is happening and tells

her they will be in touch again at 4:30. Nevertheless, by 4:30, all the missionaries have been murdered.



# Strong Roots

## Strong Roots Summary and Analysis

Chapter 1 provides a brief but descriptive genealogical journey back in time and introduces the Elliot family ancestors who came from Scotland and settled in Ontario. The author establishes a theme of God is in control as she lays out cradle to current details from the past where God orchestrated the coming together of specific individuals from far away places at just the right times to meet, fall in love and marry. These unions lead to the birth and Christian upbringing of Jim Elliot, which paved the way for the missionary work to be done in the future. Two large families, the Elliots and MacAllisters meet at the Presbyterian "kirk" (church) and friendships that develop among the children lead to four marriages, as they grew older. One of these four couples is John and Margaret Elliot who had eight children.

Their oldest son, Fred, is forced to quit school early because of his mother's severe asthma. He becomes an avid reader and learns practical skills like carpentry from his father which he later passes on to his son. At age 13, he becomes a Christian, and at age 15 while working the fields of Saskatchewan with his younger brother, he sits under the teaching of Harry Ironside. "[. . .] he recognized that life was worth living only if given over completely to God." (p. 24)

This desire to live a practical faith foreshadows Jim Elliot's own desire as an adult to follow New Testament patterns and principles rather than practices propagated by the modern church

In a lateral time line matching John and Margaret Elliot's marriage, Emil Luginbuhl comes to the U.S. from Switzerland. His money carries him as far as Colorado where he works and saves to buy a homestead in the state of Washington where he marries Emma Maurer. Years later, when Mr. Ironside visits their home, Fred Elliot who is now an adult accompanies the preacher on his travels and meets 18-year-old Clara Luginbuhl. Three years later while she attends Chiropractic college the two meet again when Fred speaks at a small Baptist church.

They marry and have a family. "Fred Elliot read the Scriptures daily to his children, seeking to show them the glory of Christ above all else, striving always to avoid legalisms or a list of "don'ts." (p. 25) He prays for his children and teaches them the importance of praying themselves.

Fred and Clara are Jim Elliot's parents. At age six, Jim announces to his mother that Jesus can return any time now because he is saved and his younger sister is too young to be held accountable and would go to heaven along with the entire family. Even at this young age, he starts preaching to his friends from the porch swing. He grows up in a family that teaches obedience and honesty and who generate an appreciation for the outdoors and the arts.





# Orator and Garbage Collector

## Orator and Garbage Collector Summary and Analysis

The chapter opens with a Scripture that encapsulates Jim Elliot's mindset. "Whatever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." (P. 28) As an attractive young student in high school, Jim Elliot used his keen intellect to not only do well in school, but to also help other students understand the lesson. Along with schoolbooks, he carries his Bible and is readily willing to explain the Scriptures to other students if they are willing talk or have questions about God's Word. Faith is not a separate part of his life only practiced on Sundays, but is how he lives daily. His love of God's Word and desire to follow his will leads to a wariness of girls because he thinks they lure men from their goals. He also does not cave to peer pressure when pressed to buy a ticket for the school dance. These events reflect a heart set towards serving God rather than himself with a real living faith. His willingness to help others with their studies and his love of the outdoors including hunting and camping skills foreshadow life as a missionary in the jungles of Ecuador.

Wartime rations affect public transportation, and Jim, his friends Dick Fisher and Werner Durtschi (Dutch) enjoy time together playing football for the school, as well as hunting and camping. One day while trying to climb over a barbed wire fence, Dick's gun goes off and the shot cuts through Jim's hair, but Jim is unhurt. The incident generates a somber mood for a while as they contemplate what could have been. It wasn't his time. God is in control and has plans for Jim in the future. Sometimes Jim and his friends would be gone for weeks without their parents knowing where they were, but Jim often did not go along if the trip lasted over the weekend because of his responsibilities at the Gospel Hall.

Jim's older brother Bert owns a garbage business, and Jim and Dick help him out on Saturdays. They scrounge bottles to return for deposit along with other items they consider useful. Jim, Dick and Dutch have many good times together, but Jim does not lose his focus. Dutch recalls Jim spending time running the track to train for missionary life.

When Jim is asked to buy a ticket for the school dance, he declines because as a Christian he is not to be "in the world" that way. He doesn't let peer pressure change his stance. In fact, as a member of the public-speaking club that he loves, he is willing to face expulsion from the club rather than give a political speech. The club president is horrified at losing Jim as a member, so when Jim offers to take three minutes to tell him why he wouldn't do a political speech based on principles in the Bible, the young man is happy to listen and Jim does not lose his membership.

Jim's unpopular stands for God's Word and his views on the war diminish his popularity. Although he is never drafted, he makes it clear that he would take a conscientious objector stance based on Jesus' non-resistance when he went to the cross.



# Degree of A.U.G.

## Degree of A.U.G. Summary and Analysis

The title of this chapter sums up the theme. A.U.G. stands for "approved unto God." Young Jim Elliot enters Wheaton College in 1945 with clear goals to stay wholly committed to God. His singleness of purpose includes a regular prayer life and time in the Word even amid classes and assignments. Even his eating habits reflect his goals. He chooses fresh fruits and vegetables and limits his starches and desserts. His reason is not only to prepare for wrestling but also to "preserve a rugged body for missionary work in the future." (p. 38) He greets workers in the cafeteria in a friendly manner, but considers social events to be a distraction from his purpose. In a letter home, he exhorts his sister to begin each day with prayer and time in the Word as she enters high school. He tells her to use her time wisely and offers tips like using her time on the streetcar to memorize Scripture. This is how he lives his own life. He sets his alarm to make sure to have time for prayer and time reading the Bible before classes.

However, the author introduces conflict through Jim's education process. He believes God has called him to attend Wheaton College and yet the more classes he takes, the more he feels that most of his "education" is useless for God's purposes. He makes a choice and let's his grades drop a little, so as to have time for reading the Bible and prayer which is another example of his active faith. When he tells his parents of his lower grades he says, "[...] I make no apologies, and admit I've let them drag a bit for study of the Bible, in which I seek the degree A.U.G., 'approved unto God.'" (p. 43)

While in college, Jim experiences a new sense of gratitude for his family and home life. In a letter written during his first year away he says, "Slowly I have come to realize that my arrival at this point is not of my own efforts, nor merely by the sure ticking of this winged racer called Time, but by the quiet, unfelt guidance of a faithful mother and a father-preacher who has not spent so much time rearing other people's children that he hasn't had time for his own." (p. 39) Jim equates a profitable year with one in which he has drawn closer to his Savior while growing and learning through reading the Bible.

That summer Jim hitchhikes home from school from Illinois to Oregon. He never waits more than 15 minutes for his next ride and arrives home sooner than if he had taken the train. He accredits this success to the Lord's provision.

The following fall when he returns to school, he is troubled by how little his classes really matter in regards to what is important. Then the school offers him a position as business manager of The Tower. Accepting this position would mean free tuition for a year, plus six grade points. However, he weighs the cost. Late nights, a reduction in his class schedule and required attendance at social functions that he considers foolishness lead him to turn down the opportunity much to his parents' chagrin.



Because his father had to drop out of school at a young age, he deems his son's education as very important. However, Jim addresses this issue in one of his letters because as he sees it, his education seems more to pertain to philosophy, culture, politics and the like. He not only questions the value of education in a Christian's life, but also actually thinks it can be dangerous filling the head with things that are not true. His class load keeps him up until 11:00 at night and finds him drowsy in his 7:30 class while he still tries to find time for prayer and God's Word. Prayers from home sustain him and he tells his parents that he seeks "the degree A.U.G., 'approved unto God.'" (p. 43)

He becomes involved in the Student Foreign Missions Fellowship and enjoys time-sharing with other Inter-Varsity groups. He learns through other speakers of the need for men in the mission field. The ratio of women to men is 18:1. Emotionally he struggles with ups and downs as his class load takes its toll. He feels a lack of fervency and vitality in his prayer life and feels the same in the prayers of others as well. However, by the end of his sophomore year he is praising God for delivering him from a life of frustration. He decides that Jesus' command to go and preach the gospel is directed at him, and he begins plans to become a foreign missionary. That summer he visits Mexico with his friend Ron Harris whose parents are missionaries there. Jim falls in love with Mexico and stays for six weeks. During this time, he starts to learn Spanish and uses his limited skills to teach 150 kids. As he hitchhikes home, he is sure that God is calling him to Latin America foreshadowing his life as a missionary in Ecuador.



# Straight for the Goal

## Straight for the Goal Summary and Analysis

Jim returns from Mexico and learns that funds have been provided for him to continue school. He considers this an indicator that God wants him to return to Wheaton College. Upon his return, Dr. Books asks him to speak to the freshmen. "I mentioned that beyond 'believing' and 'behaving' in the Christian life, there is also 'being,' and I brought in New Testament exhortations such as, be not ignorant, be not deceived, be sober, be vigilant, be mindful of the Word, be steadfast, etc." (p. 47)

He trusts himself into his studies working to achieve a Greek major, which he thinks will help him to translate the Bible into primitive tongues. For the first time in this chapter, the author introduces herself on page 48 when she says, "For the same reasons, I too had chosen Greek as my major, and our schedule of classes that year was almost identical—rather a rare coincidence in a college of fifteen hundred students with so wide a choice of courses." This perspective confirms that God is in control, as he orchestrates schedules and answers prayers that bring their relationship into existence even as Jim prays about a future in foreign missions.

Jim is invited to Elisabeth's home for Christmas via her brother Dave, and the two of them become friends. Her family is enchanted with the simple young man who fixes everything around the well-worn house that accommodates a family of eight children. While among them, Jim helps the kitchen helper with the dishes, sings hymns as he works, goes sledding and skating with Elisabeth's teen-age brother and sister—but it's his long talks with Elisabeth that lay the groundwork for their relationship.

Back at Wheaton, they study together. Months later, he tells her of his interest in her and how it began during his stay with her family. Now Jim finds it even more vital to find time in God's Word. He takes an hour before breakfast in the Old Testament, a little time in Psalms during lunch and then time in the New Testament in the evening and keeps a little notebook about what he learns. Among these items, he includes his desire not to mourn for things once held precious but to learn to be satisfied with what matters. He keeps lists of people he prays for and cards containing Scripture he is memorizing. His example convicts those around him for not walking as close to the Lord. Yet his ways are considered unconventional. He studies the Word and trusts in the Holy Spirit to help him understand its meaning. His simple, literal understanding of God's Word colors his views on the war, philosophy, theology and the law.

While traveling with his Foreign Missions group, the car that Jim is in stalls on the railroad tracks and is crashed into by an oncoming freight train just seconds after they escape. His near miss with death is another example of God's timing. He has a purpose for Jim and the others in the car. This is Jim's second close call, which lays the foundation of an acceptable and perfect time for when his death does come. In the world's view, some may see it as too soon, or untimely, but as these former incidents



show—God has his own timing and is in control. The incident deepens Jim's commitment to Christ. "Father, take my life, yea, my blood if Thou wilt, and consume it with Thine enveloping fire. I would not save it, for it is not mine to save. Have it, Lord, have it all." (p. 55)

Near the end of the school year, Jim gives Elisabeth a hymnal with a note to see hymn #46. The hymn points to the fact that even though they are interested in one another, their purpose must be Christ alone. They talk about it and realize they love each other but that God must be first in their lives.



# Flame of Fire

## Flame of Fire Summary and Analysis

Praying for guidance that summer, the Lord does a work in the hearts of both Jim and his friend Dave Howard, Elisabeth's brother. They travel as part of a gospel team that also includes Roger Lewis and Verd Holstein. The trip takes them through the Midwest from Michigan to Montana. Jim seeks to release everything of this world and admits to his own spiritual resistance to letting go. "Have had much struggle of soul lately—doubts as to the truth of God's care for the world, springing I think from so little evidence of His power in the Gospel" (p. 59)

Flaws and struggles in Jim Elliot's life making him interesting and real to the reader because they can identify with him. He longs to release every instance of desire tying him to this world and to free himself to be all that God wants. However, at the same time he admits his struggle of letting go of earthy possessions and the love he has for Elisabeth. Jim's reading of Hudson Taylor's work and his pondering of how a man can still yearn to be subjugated by a woman's love foreshadows his upcoming relationship with Elisabeth reaching a level beyond friendship.

He finds comfort in the knowledge that faith in the Gospel is based on fact rather than how he feels, and he prays for the Lord to make him like a fork in the road where people make decisions to either continue their own way or to follow Christ. Jim recognizes the Lord's purpose in this trip—that Jim sees the mighty hand of God working and not his own efforts as the agent of change in people's lives.

Jim's mother is not well and Jim encourages her by letter to look forward to the coming of the Lord that he believes is near. When he preaches to the Indians, he teaches about God's grace. His trust rests in eternity, as he believes that even if he doesn't see results from his efforts now, he will see them in eternity.

As he travels, Jim reads *The Growth of a Soul* by Hudson Taylor, and is compelled to wonder how a man who is satisfied by God's grace can still yearn to be subjugated by a woman's love. He fights with his feelings for Elisabeth and longs to "be swept away in a flood of consuming passion for Jesus, that all desire might be sublimated to Him." (p. 61)

Jim arrives home and to his disappointment, his brother Bert is away. He writes him a letter talking of everyday life within the family and how so much of what is done is meaningless in eternity. Yet, he struggles to find balance within his life and admits that if he carries this thinking to fulfillment in every circumstance that he could starve for not eating. He goes on to say that what he wanted to talk about is his brother's upcoming plans for missionary work in Peru and explains his own shifting yearnings. He no longer feels led to go to Latin America but is now considering travel to India. Jim's desire to speak to his brother about this reveals his willingness to practice the biblical principle of

seeking godly council which reinforces his belief in Biblical Church patterns and practice.



# Behold Obscurity

## Behold Obscurity Summary and Analysis

Jim returns to Wheaton College and writes home telling his parents about registration, courses, his new roommate who is the nephew of the housemother and not around much, and his need for sheets. He also shares that while he was home for his brief visit he learned the importance of the centrality of Christ in the home from first hand observation. He notes the same value within the church assembly as well as individual's lives.

A week after school starts, Elisabeth stops by the school to visit Jim. She had graduated the year before and they had agreed not to correspond over the summer. However, after the three-month interlude, the two young people realize that they not only love each other but their love has grown in the absence of each other's presence. Amid personal inner conflict these two unlikely mates are drawn together not by looks, cleverness of speech or any of the other things that most often lead to infatuation, but instead the attraction is in being like-minded with an unwavering devotion to Christ. God takes them a step at a time closer to each other as he draws them closer to Himself and foreshadows the time when they will be together in the work he has set for them to do.

Jim lets Elisabeth read his journal, which he gives her along with a note. He hadn't written it with the intent of someone else reading it, but he believes it will let her know him like no one else on earth knows him. He forewarns her that she was in his thoughts more than the pages in his journal reflect but that it is not a diary of his experience or feelings. Instead, it is a "book of remembrance" to help him learn to put his spiritual yearnings into words.

He tells Elisabeth that he believes God looks upon the love they hold for each other with sympathy and that he withholds them from one another to draw them closer to Himself. Up until this time, Jim has told his parents little about Elisabeth Howard, whom he affectionately calls Betty. In a letter home he admits he finds her company satisfying not because of her looks or ability to carry a conversation, but that her thoughts are so similar to his own. Her devotion to Christ is what he finds attractive. He asks for prayer in the matter, because he truly wants God's will even in this area of his life.

Jim and Elisabeth agree to write to one another as her visit ends, and Jim admits that it scares him to think that he may be affecting Elisabeth's life. In the same way, he shares concerns that he may allow her to take the place God should have in his life. The internal struggle is marked by mood swings as he tries to come to terms with how to handle his love for Elisabeth. Other struggles adding fuel to his dilemma is his desire to get to the mission field and the possibility of being drafted hanging over him. Amid this turmoil, he expresses puzzlement over whether or not he should finish school, or if it is really just stealing his time. Through all this, he continues to mature in Christ as





weaknesses are brought to light; he prays to bring them into line with God's will for his life.

He decides its time to go to the mission field and his parents express concern over his hastiness. But Jim reminds them that the Word says, "When thou runnest, thou shalt not stumble," Isaiah 40:31." (p. 72) Jim feels if he is to learn native languages to work among the Indians in South America that he better do it now, because the older you get the harder it is to learn new things. He is willing to go to the mission field without Elisabeth, claiming that God's grace is sufficient to see him through. He urges his parents to leave the matter with God, because they long to see him marry.

In his journal, Jim shares a strange prayer asking God either to glorify himself to the utmost through his life or to slay him. In addition, in his letters to Elisabeth, he shares his joy that they are on the same side and will one day stand with the Lord. Jim's prayer at the end of the chapter reflects his willingness to not only live for Christ but to die for him. This foreshadows what many consider an untimely death and lays the foundation for the reader to accept the sad news with an element of joy.



# Wine of Bewilderment

## Wine of Bewilderment Summary and Analysis

In a letter to home, Jim details how busy life has become and yet through it he has held on to God's peace as he waits for the Lord's guidance in what to do with his life. His lunch hour is now spent in the Psalms each day and provides a spiritual boost mid-day. He recommends the same to everyone. "Just a few moments spent before the Shepherd, listening to the silence of His love and telling Him the state of your soul even if it's not warm toward Him, just to keep short accounts by simple confession—this has been a great blessing to me." (p. 74)

In his letter, he explains to his parents that he feels responsible to attend the Student Missionary Convention at the University of Illinois rather than come home for Christmas as he hopes the Lord will reveal the missionary field he has planned for him. Jim Elliot is not a traditional Bible School student but a stand-alone Christian willing to go against religious tradition and even family desires as he seeks to do God's will. A further example of this is found in his description of what he thinks of the holiday doings. He describes visiting a nice home and family but points out that Christians have become so ordinary that they have no impact. Jim also struggles with his own "wine of bewilderment" with so many exciting possibilities of things to do for the Lord but not enough time to do them.

In this same letter, he confesses his true feelings for "Betty" (Elisabeth), and explains away things his mother has heard about her. He finishes by telling his mother that his relationship with Betty is not something she will really have to worry about because his life and hers are committed to the Lord. He would need evidence from God pointing him in a clear direction to pursue his relationship to a deeper level.

Jim looks to his father for guidance as to going to the mission field and asks specifically if he has any insight from the Lord on the matter and if so to please share it with him by letter. He also confronts his mother directly about her wanting him to stay home because of the need in the States. Later that month he is voted in as president of the Student Foreign Missions Fellowship and his schedule becomes even heavier with a class load most would find difficult. His concern is that his heart grows "wiser and chilled" while his head becomes "bigger and warmed". His heart's desire is for less busyness and more production beyond his degree, which he deems worthless in view of eternal things. His desire is for Christians to unite and that the form of assembly practiced not be stressed as much as the promotion of a willing search of the Scriptures followed by obedience if Christians really want to be supplied for fruitful work.

Discouragement haunts him amid his busy schedule. He sees it and recognizes it as a Satanic tool, but he blames its effectiveness on the ineffective work of the assembly. No one seems to be getting saved and of the saved, none seem too excited about the Lord's work. He takes an unconventional view of fundamentalists seeing that the world



has infiltrated church practice. He talks with another student who is ready to turn Modernist because of all this. This student looks at Jim as a liberal because he explains that he was not saved all at once, but that it's been a growing, changing process. He highlights times of spiritual growth that result while meeting in small groups. "We miss this intimacy with our insistence on 'let's have a crowd out'—while the few, gathering expressly 'in His name' find of a surety that He is in the midst. . ." He's becoming a bit pessimistic about the powerless Christians. He admits his own struggles with emotional ups and downs under the rigors of such a full schedule and the realization that the church has strayed from New Testament practice. His parents worry that his faith is being shaken, but he assures them that the Word of God and prayers of the saints are where he finds balance.

Betty's acceptance of New Testament truth and practice are part of what Jim finds attractive about her yet he writes to her of his willingness to sacrifice a bride in this world if it will further the cause of Christ. Yet in the same letter he reminisces of times they've shared in the past and how special they are. He wishes her a happy birthday, and tells her that, "The next year will be a crisis year for us both and we must individually find his path." (p. 86)



# Sheep—Destined for the Altar

## Sheep—Destined for the Altar Summary and Analysis

At the conclusion of the year 1948, Jim goes to the Student Missionary Convention at the University of Illinois. While he experiences a sense of the Lord's presence changing his life, he also senses a lack of zeal within attendees at the Missionary Convention. He mourns the unfulfilled potential of reaching the world because time is wasted analyzing, arguing and discussing instead of acting. Jim walks away from the Convention with a peace regarding doing pioneer Indian work. "[. . .] I'm quite at ease about saying that tribal work in the South American jungle is the general direction of my missionary purpose." (p. 88) This presents some resolution to Jim Elliot's inner conflict as he settles on pioneer Indian work as his missionary purpose. However, no sooner is this resolution presented when tension is raised once again relative to Jim and Elisabeth's relationship. In his letter to Betty, he lets her know that after much soul searching, he believes God wants him to start his missionary work single rather than married. Within the same breath he tells her how much he loves her and reminds her that she has covenanted for the cross. He tells her again that as believers they are sheep destined for the altar.

His letter generates fear within Elisabeth that she might turn Jim from God's purpose, and so when she corresponds next she asks him again if he is sure that they should write to one another. For now, Jim says that the Lord has not given him a sign that they should desist, and they agree to stay in touch realizing it may present a more bitter farewell in the future.



# Goaded by God

## Goaded by God Summary and Analysis

Jim's teachers allow him to take his exams early to attend his brother Bert's January wedding. He writes to his parents and makes an inflexible request that if he comes home before the wedding that there will be no going out to eat or others coming over to eat. Instead, he seeks a time of quiet refreshing with just the family, prayer and God's Word as "[...]this may be the last family get-together before Glory [...]. (p. 90) He does go home and as he foretold, it is to be the last of the Elliot family gatherings.

He attends his brother Bert's wedding in Portland and after a week says goodbye to him and his new wife as they will be traveling to Peru as missionaries. For the first time in his life, it is hard to say goodbye to family before returning to school in Wheaton for his last semester. The theme of "Christ first" comes to the forefront as the reality of leaving all behind looms closer as he says farewell to his brother not knowing if or when he'll see him next. He also feels burdened for his mother as she knows her first son is leaving for the mission field. These are difficult things, but one step at a time, God uses them to draw Jim closer to Himself and his purpose as he puts worldly accomplishments and relationships behind and Christ first. As he settles in at school, his time with the Lord addresses matters of pride and lust in his life. However, compared to Christ's love, these things are so worthless that the Lord brings Jim's life once again into humble, contrite, spiritual balance.

He participates in the Wheaton Invitational Wrestling Tourney where his team comes in second. Jim wonders at how the Lord will use athletics for His honor. He looks at the tournament as his last collegiate match and wonders at its worth in eternity and thinks how a full life without Christ at the center is empty. He asks the Lord to establish the work of his hands and pours himself into the work of the Foreign Missions Fellowship. He has to arrange weekly speakers and becomes dissatisfied with the emphasis many of them place on training and leadership. It's the very thing that bothers him about school and the assembly of believers. They talk and discuss, but show very little active faith.

Jim feels a burden for his mother and prays for her as his brother Bert and his wife Colleen leave for the mission field in Peru. "Remember—and I don't want to sound pedantic or impudent as if I knew all the costs—remember that we have bargained with Him who bore a cross, and in His ministry to those disciples His emphasis was upon sacrifice, not of worldly goods so much as of family ties." (p 94)



# The Renaissance

## The Renaissance Summary and Analysis

Jim reevaluates his conduct, specifically how he views the behavior of others. He realizes his strict "code of don'ts" does not line up with the Apostle Paul's teaching and that it has hindered relationships with other students all his years at school. The rebirth of his thinking as God's word renews his mind allows him to enter into a variety of new activities including the rivalry between his class of '49 and the junior class of '50. He lightens up and even participates in "Reverse Day" when women and men on campus reverse roles. The girls hold doors open for the guys, and a girl even asks him to the student-faculty basketball game. He accepts and has an enjoyable time. As he interacts socially, he invites one of the MacCallister girls from back home to attend the Chapel Choir concert after her plans fall through with his Aunt. Afterward, all the guys and their dates come back to the dorm for cookies and ice cream. Jim plays the harmonica as part of a quartet as entertainment.

Jim's renewed mind regarding others' behavior foreshadows his willingness to let God change him from the inside out. Moreover, in his letter to his mother regarding his brother and wife leaving for the mission field the author introduces a new level of the "trust God" theme when she exposes Jim Elliot's willingness to take God's way rather than the easy way. It would be easier to hold on to those you love and keep them near, but instead he challenges himself along with his mother to trust God. Instead of looking to his own desires, he challenges himself to find strength in God's goodness. This theme is further pronounced when he confesses that his plans to minister to other students on a spiritual level has a wrong motivation because he is trusting in his self to minister rather than God. The experience humbles him and the realization brings him closer to the Lord as he lets go of his own expectations and trusts God to do the work.

His new activities take him to the wrestling banquet, visiting Lake Michigan with a group of seniors and a camp out at a fellow student's farm. He admits, "Fellowship with the gang is enticing fun with soul-excitement." (p. 97) Beyond this, one of his goals is to get together with other kids on different spiritual levels than his own in order to minister to them. Through this experience, he learns the sin in that goal. He is depending on what he can do. "What a rebuke came when I sensed my real motive—that I might minister." (p. 100) The realization humbles him before the Lord.

He writes to his mother again with concern over her feelings about his brother and wife leaving for the mission field. In the letter, he admits that it is hard to know how to pray other than finding strength in the Lord's goodness and that they must learn to pray for them in the work they are doing for the Lord. In this way, they can strive together with them in the work God sends them to do.

The chapter closes with Jim seeking God's will for the summer with only a few weeks of school remaining. With nothing solid, he plans to go help his brother Bob build a house

for him and his wife. He looks at it as a better way to spend his time in preparation for the mission field than another three months with his books would be.



# The Test of Free Time

## The Test of Free Time Summary and Analysis

Jim graduates with highest honors and heads west with his parents. His immediate plans are to spend the next three months helping his brother build his house, but beyond that, he doesn't have clear direction as to what God wants him to do. It leaves him with "mingled feelings of 'not belonging' and of thanksgiving for all God's grace these past four years. God, preserve me from living a life which conforms to the general pattern." (p. 103)

The Lord places Jim in Portland for a year where he helps in the assembly. Through the process, God prepares his soul through his concentrated study of the Word while physically he helps with things like painting. While working side-by-side painting with his dad, they talk about preparing for the Lord's work. The non-conformist theme of "Conforming not to this world" is brought into focus as they discuss the life of the Apostle Paul and the unsatisfactory training students receive in the "artificial atmosphere" promoted through Bible College. They make tentative plans to go along with his brother Billy to Montana the following summer if it is the Lord's will. Jim tells his brother it would mean putting off any ideas of marriage, because he doesn't believe young married people should be involved in "active battle" spiritually until they are settled. Jim also challenges his brother to tell him if he sees any ungodly behavior in his life for as he reads through the book of Acts he hungers more and more to learn God's ways.

By the middle of summer, the days seems strange to Jim as his family works through red tape to start his brothers house. He admits to feeling spiritually lagging as he spends his time doing odd jobs around his parents' house because doors to the mission field continue to be closed. Yet even through these times, he is confident that the Lord will not withhold any good thing from him. The Lord uses the waiting time to grow his soul. He realizes through confession of pride in his life that confession should be an hourly thing. He determined this based on things he learns from reading David Brainer's diary. Jim recognizes sin of his thought life and that he cannot overcome it in his own strength. Within a couple of weeks, he's confessing his anger at the delay of going to serve the Lord. Through this time, the Lord shows Jim things that must change to be used of the Lord.

Elisabeth comes for a visit and meets Jim's family for the first time. They spend time together visiting the Oregon coast. Jim writes in his journal about it, and says, "Strange but oh so happy days, [. . .] were those not of Thee, my God. And will Thou deny fruition to such love as we have known?" (p. 106). Then even his work dries up and he goes through a time of testing, but he believes God is using it to better him. He has no work, no money and nothing to do but read, write and pray. It's another time of growing where Jim shows his trust in God. Although he admits spiritual ups and downs, and an unsettledness doing odd jobs that feel like he is spinning his wheels—he holds on to





Scripture believing God will not withhold any good thing. Little does he realize that God will use the free time to help cleanse his life from things like pride, lewd thinking and anger plus lead him into practical ministering to both lost and saved to prepare him for the work ahead.

Once he comes to this, he experiences times of refreshing and sweet fellowship with God along with deeper soul searching. He considers a letter he has written and has ready to mail. It is to Wilfred Tidmarsch, who his brother Bert knows and regarding going to Ecuador. He recognizes that he's moving ahead of the Lord and determines to pray about it before mailing the letter. If he doesn't get God's peace, he won't mail it. After reading Ephesians, he has certainty and mails the letter.

While he waits, he puts in an application at the local Christian school for a position as substitute teacher. He visits the boys' detention center, and offers to assist with a craft outreach for unsaved children. He's practicing his faith and even attending street meetings where he meets both saved and lost. His peace is disturbed when he hears that people are talking about him being unemployed. He has to fight his desire to retaliate.

During this time, Jim has maintained correspondence with two missionaries. Wilfred Tidmarsch's wife has been injured, and he must be replaced on the mission field where he is doing a work among the Quichua Indians and the other is Rowland Hill of Bangalore, India. The information brings about a new test of Jim Elliot's faith as he believes God is leading him to work among the South American Indians. He chooses to obey God and turns down the offers.



# The Test of Service

## The Test of Service Summary and Analysis

The chapter opens with the start of a new year—1950. The author uses Jim's letters to show the things for which the Lord has given Jim passion and the struggle between following man's ways vs. God's ways. For example, Jim writes to Elisabeth admitting that he wonders what he is doing still in the United States as he feels an urgency to bring the Word of God to others after listening to others preach and discuss the imminent return of Christ. He decides to accept an opportunity to go to Camp Wycliffe over the coming summer, figuring it will do him good for whichever foreign field the Lord sends him to. In his letters to Elisabeth, he asks her to, "Pray for more openings for the Word, will you?" (p. 116), because he feels stagnation in his own desires to minister in South America. In the meantime, he is filling in at the Christian High School for two weeks. He feels a bit intimidated and ill prepared because he's never done this kind of work before. However, he trusts that the Holy Spirit will work through him.

He also writes to her about his thoughts on the "dangerous cumulative effects of earthly things." Among these he lists a wife, because with a wife comes the need for a house. The house presents more needs to become a home. In addition, eventually children come along. He calls it the "Pumpkin Eater's dilemma" and laments that needs multiply as each need is met and that he thinks to live as Timothy 2:4 states is impossible in the United States. This foreshadows the possibility that perhaps there is a way for them to be married and live for the Lord outside of the United States.

Within the same letter he brings up the age old pondering of why God takes young people to heaven before it seems their time on earth is done, but reconciles it with the fact that God is populating eternity. Moreover, who is he to restrict God to only the old?

He discusses Einstein's new theory of gravitation and marvels that it has made such a stir throughout the entire world. He considers it evidence of the "integration process" as the world heads toward Willkie's One World idea. "World Government, World Council of Churches, unification of ideals, and now, the explanation of all phenomena on the basis of a single formula—these are the signs of the end. Social, religious, political and technical unification, men will find." (p. 117) But the Spirit warns him that men will not find a moral common denominator other than the Christian God.

Again, he struggles with spiritual peaks and valleys. After speaking to a group of nurses, he becomes aware of his shortcomings and feels he handles God's word too carelessly. Above all, he desires his ministry to be Spirit empowered, and realizes that he has spent too much time pulling together sermon ideas rather than letting God's Word minister to his heart. Throughout all this, Jim is strengthened and prepared for future things. As he learns, God continues to open doors for new opportunities to minister, but through these experiences, deep concern flags the lack of real passion in the "prophets" of his time. This is followed by his own spiritual dryness as his prayers seem to lack



fervency, nothing comes to him from the word, the weather is cold and on top of this, he is suffering from headaches. From this experience, he learns the value of following what he must do rather than reacting to life's circumstances.

Jim also questions why he doesn't see in America the miraculous things missionaries write about. He calls it a cold war, where word weary Christians fight shadows rather than real demon powers. When he has the opportunity to speak at the Christian School Association, he speaks on the topic of demon powers in the classroom but walks away feeling that he did not get his point across. The school board asks him what he plans for the following year because they would like him to teach for one year. He pleads with God that he would do His will as he seeks the path to take.

This same day he feels compelled to write to his school chum Dick Fisher as he believes he is missing God's best for his life. He challenges him to drop the inconsequential things of life, to pay his debts and perhaps go to Wheaton where he will find Christian companionship. Jim confronts him regarding his worldly thinking and desires and reminds him that God wants more for him than a good business. The result is that it does no good for him spiritually and he is no happier. Spurred on by thoughts of Christ's return, Jim tells Dick that he is telling him these things for the profit of his soul. He closes his letter by telling him that God can use some sold-out young people and that he thinks Dick should be one of them.

Jim also writes to his father talking about his teaching job and ties in the kids' lack of readiness to learn and how it is similar to the ways things are in the modern-day church. He writes of how modern church practice is lacking the power of the Spirit and doesn't follow New Testament patterns. He attributes it to things like setting men up on platforms. This practice discourages dialog from those attending, and Jim feels led to perhaps try New Testament ways avoiding things like a "leader" or even a "song leader". Instead, he'd rather wait on the Lord's leading.

When he speaks to the student's at Multnomah Bible College, his topic is Timothy 2:4, the "war with spirit forces, disentanglement, and something of the call to service." (p. 134). The next day in his journal, he admits he feels it is a mockery because he has not been able to draw near to God this week and he even calls God distant. However, after turning down a request to lead the "breaking of bread service" the following Sunday, he finds refreshment from the Lord while walking out under the moonlight.

He is then pressed by Inter-Varsity and Foreign Missions Fellowship regarding his work for them. However, Jim struggles with what he sees as compromises. He would be controlled by man's systems and programs, which will squeeze out God's ways. Plus, he doesn't believe being forced to move from one place to another has proven an ineffectual way to reach souls for Christ. On the other side of things, he struggles with what he considers small results to his preaching and ministering which leads to a humbled heart and more prayer and searching God's Word for the answer. Interspersed with these times of struggle, Jim also writes of meetings where the power of God presides. One example of God's power is the town drunk who comes to Christ publicly and makes a strong start with studying Scripture.



Jim faithfully seeks the Lord's will for his future with no clear direction on missions, and yet turns down the opportunity to finish out the school year as a the 7th grade teacher believing it is the way God wants him to follow. He seeks to sense God's presence more continuously, and decides that anything he puts before the study of God's word becomes a snare to him. He writes to Elisabeth and tells her that although he is busy, he is jubilant within his "inner man" at knowing God better each day.



# Impelled by These Voices

## Impelled by These Voices Summary and Analysis

God answers Jim's prayers regarding attending the Summer Institute of Linguistics at the University of Oklahoma. Obedience to God's guidance keeps him on track. "Decisions of course must be made, but as in the railroad, so in life—a block signal, a crisis, is lighted only where there is specific need." (p. 128). The program lasts 10 weeks, and Jim learns how to write and analyze unwritten languages along with hundreds of other students. Phonetics proves easy for him as he has a natural ability to mimic accents. One special project allows each student to practice their skills one-on-one. Jim works with a fellow missionary from the Quichuas of the jungles of Ecuador. In dealing with this man, Jim first hears of the Aucas. He becomes excited over the prospect of reaching a tribe untouched by civilization. For Jim, this does not seem to be mere coincidence, but God's leading. Jim decides to set aside 10 days for prayer for guidance whether he is to go to Ecuador or India. "'Make my path sure, Lord,' he wrote in his journal. 'establish my goings. Send me when and where You will, and manifest to all that You are my Guide.'" (p. 129)

Jim's hearing about the Aucas didn't occur in his strength or searching. It happened because Jim consistently obeys God's leading in his life. This obedience puts him in the right place among hundreds of students, and God provides the exact missionary to work with him—the missionary who knows of the Auca's need. God is in control and opens opportunities, as Jim believes and obeys. This chapter brings about the culmination of a blend of the themes: "Trust God", "God is in control", "living faith" and "God first".. If Jim had put his parents first, he would stay in the United States doing preaching and teaching of God's word to young people. However, it wouldn't be God's work—it would be Jim's work.

God uses these days as days of revelation. Jim sees things that ought to be different. Not only in his life; but in that of the Church as they waver from the Word of God in practice. At the end of his 10 days of prayer, God gives Jim his answer through Exodus 23:20, which tells him an angel goes before him to prepare the way to the place God has prepared. He decides to go to Ecuador. God confirms this decision through a letter from another missionary serving in Africa. Her letter tells of a "peculiar compulsion" she had to pray for him during the same time he was praying to seek God's answer regarding where to serve. He admits to his parents in a letter that God is confirming his decision again and again. He brings up his brother's fear regarding the draft board but he holds to his faith and reminds them that if God opens the door then no one else can shut it.

Jim praises God for the heritage of a godly family that brought him up in the Word and his mind thinks of the Quichua children brought up under Romanism with a future of intoxication leading to an early grave as natives drink to escape their hopelessness. Yet, his own parents and others try to convince him to consider staying in the states and



working with youth because he is such a good Bible teacher. At the same time, they confess their own feelings at losing him to the mission field, and the extreme loss they will experience. He answers their letter reminding them that this is the very thing the Lord warned his disciples about when he reminded them that their feelings for their family should seem like hate compared to what a follower holds for the Lord and his work to be done. It's about denying self.

Jim's faith and prayers includes asking God for one other to accompany him on the field. His vision has them learning Spanish Quichua together as they learn to know each other and the jungle.



# The Pattern Tested

## The Pattern Tested Summary and Analysis

Once the Linguistics conference is finished, Jim does not feel led to leave and decides to stay for a couple of months in Norman, Oklahoma to help Bill Cathers with the assembly there along with helping lead a Bible Study on campus. While in Norman, Jim and Bill apply for their passports. They anticipate leaving for Ecuador as Dr. Tidmarsh's most recent letter urges them to come before he leaves for furlough in the fall. Jim places ads in the classifieds as a handyman and together, he and Bill make enough money to stay ahead.

Jim writes to Elisabeth to let her know that if the Lord wills, when he receives his passport he and Bill will be leaving for Ecuador. He mentions a small list of needs for her to pray about including a radio set and dental supplies, which they will be shown how to use on the mission field.

By September, they are still waiting for passports, but while they wait, God's word reminds Jim that his times are in God's hands. He and Bill have to leave their apartment and he prays for guidance as to where they are to go. A letter from Ed McCully excites Jim as Ed feels the prompting of the Holy Spirit to leave school and to live a sold-out life for Christ. He is looking for what it is God wants him to do. Jim wonders if the young man is an answer to his prayers and should accompany him to Ecuador.

In mid-October, Jim leaves for Wheaton, although he's not sure why he is going there since there is so much need in Oklahoma. He turns to the Lord and says, "Lord, I have trusted Thee with all my heart, and now I confess that I have no understanding upon which I can lean. Grant that my way be prepared for me [ . . .]" (p. 135) On his way to Wheaton, Jim wrecks the car he is driving when he hits the high shoulder of the road. The car is totaled, but he comes out of it uninjured.

Jim works painting at Ed McCully's parent's home and Ed is working as a night clerk at a hotel. Every other night Jim visits Ed at his job and the two of them get in about three hours of Bible study. Jim still waits for God's guidance as to where to go next. He's feeling little direction, but all his needs are being met. He really enjoys Ed's company and still hopes the Lord will bring him along on the mission field. However, he thinks it better not to make the decision while the two are together lest they influence each other rather than listen to the Lord's quiet voice. To further delay things, Jim receives a letter from Tidmarsh telling him that he is going on furlough and it will be better to wait to come until after he returns. On top of this news, Jim receives a letter from Bill Cathers announcing wedding plans. The news surprises Jim as he had thought the two of them would be going to Ecuador following the New Testament pattern of two-by-two.

This occurrence stirs dialog between Jim and his mother by letter. In it, he tells her, "So whether to get married is still a problem, aggravated by the peculiar demands put on



one who would follow the Pauline pattern in a tropical forest." Jim travels to Milwaukee and on to Indiana where he works with young married couples. He's up front from the beginning and explains his views of following New Testament patterns rather than traditions of men. It excites Jim to see that some of them see that something is wrong with how the church operates even though they don't understand what it is. "None know the Scriptures well because of the devilish schemes of the clergy to keep them from thinking for themselves." (p. 137)

Jim's conviction regarding the following of New Testament methodology versus modern day church practice meets with severe criticism. In addition, while people agree that the New Testament practice would be ideal, he finds very few willing to commit to it. Within a month, he is feeling useless because of the ignorance of the churchgoers regarding the Truth. He determines that what is needed is a godly family to come, get a job and then open their home to teach the Truth and confront the apostasy of the local assembly.

Elisabeth forwards Jim a letter from another missionary who speaks of the "anything will do" mindset. The main question raised is whether God reveals a universal pattern that the church is to follow. Jim puts forth the fact that Christ left specific instructions for the care of his bride and that there is no biblical basis for the role of clergy—that instead is a carry over from papism. Jim experiences up and downs as he fights this fight wondering if there will ever be a remnant to uphold the biblical practice principles but God uses his Word to encourage him. He pleads with the Lord to send him to a place where the Scripture has not been twisted. The theme of biblical church patterns is furthered through his letters to Elisabeth as he defends the Scriptural pattern versus modern day church practice. This stand reflects God's leading in his life. Rather than being a man-pleaser as Scripture forbids, Jim's faith spurs him on to take an unpopular stand among those who should be his peers.

For now, he heads back to Chester to continue gospel ministry. He asks Elisabeth to pray for open doors to reach lost souls there. This way he will not be building on another's work. Christmas arrives and even after seven months, he does not return home as he feels it is God's will for him to stay in Chester.





# Hemmed in to Nothing

## Hemmed in to Nothing Summary and Analysis

Jim and Ed are encouraged in their work for the Lord in Chester, and Jim is excited at the opportunity to speak the Word in truth. He sees a big opportunity for God's word to break the people free from non-biblical patterns practiced within the church, and he prays that from these people that God will raise up men. As time goes on and restless sets in he confesses his rebelliousness to God. He's tired of waiting to be released to the mission field.

An opportunity comes along for Jim and Ed to broadcast God's word over radio. Jim senses a burden for how important his words will be over the air and takes the responsibility of handling God's word accurately very seriously. He and Ed start broadcasting the gospel message while his secular sales job is slow which isn't helping his plan to put aside money for the mission field.

As part of their reaching out in Chester and the nearby surrounding area, they visit the prison and the local coffee shop to reach teens and start holding regular meetings in a nearby town. Not all the work can be deemed a success by man's standards, and Jim broods over the lack of God's power. He takes steps to secure a building in the less desirable part of town where he plans to start a Sunday School. It will give them a place to minister regularly as there seems to be very little interest in their radio broadcasts. Both Ed and Jim feel the Lord is testing them and Jim admits that it would be much easier to take up a life in business and get on with life.

Jim writes to Elisabeth and tells her of the loneliness bothering him. The churches are full, but they are "still hollow with reality." (p. 144). He reminds her to pray for him. His loneliness even when churches are full accents the theme of biblical church pattern. Most people take the path of least resistance, which in this case would be attending the organized church on the corner. However, God's word has renewed Jim's thinking to see that modern church practice does not match up with biblical church practice and to take part in it is sin. This leaves him with a despairing loneliness until God's Word picks him up. Through the growing process, he is reminded that his part is obedience. The rest is in God's hands. Even when he makes a couple of big sales, he admits it is exhilarating but still leaves him empty. Each night Jim and Ed return home to a small apartment at the end of the day where they take turns cooking dinner, and spend time relaxing by memorizing poetry.

When they finally get their "River Rat" Sunday School off the ground, they have 17 turn out on the first day. This encourages both Jim and Ed. God reminds Jim that to preach in his own strength is vain, leading Jim to pray that God will use his lips—not because of his own eloquent words but that God will do the heart-changing work. During this time, Jim feels assured that the Lord is sending him to Ecuador and checks on his passport again. However, his hopes are thwarted one more time when Ed announces that he is



getting married. Once again, Jim's desire to follow the biblical principle of traveling with a single man is snatched away in marriage. He discusses his own feeling on marriage and states that it really wouldn't be fair to the girl or to the work the Lord is giving him to do if he were to marry.

Jim has various preaching opportunities and keeps his sermons serious and direct. The more he preaches, the more he hones his style and does less shouting. His notes consist of little slips of paper in his Bible. He doesn't ask members of the congregation to make a response, but trusts if it is to happen that the Holy Spirit will prompt the listener. It's been two years since graduation from Wheaton and Jim feels a sense of uselessness in how he has spent his time. "It is no use arguing what might have been if so and so had happened. We are only asked to do what we are told—small, strange or simple as that may be—our orders are to obey, and in this my conscience is clear." (p. 148)



# Exactly Timed for God

## Exactly Timed for God Summary and Analysis

Jim participates in the weddings of his two good friends Bill Cathers and Ed McCully before he goes west to Portland. He arrives with only \$1.20 in his pocket and wastes no time picking up handyman jobs. A month later, he takes a much-needed vacation with his family at Ocean Park, Washington. In addition, the Tidmarsh family visits for 10 days and Jim feels his plans for Ecuador are confirmed. His passport number is now in the visa process for Ecuador. Things move forward as he also receives the okay from the draft board to leave the United States. It looks like he'll be leaving somewhere around December 1, but first he plans to go east to fulfill his preaching obligations. He tells Elisabeth that he would like to see her while his is there as he has a couple of free days.

Ed and his wife Marilou plan to attend medical school and join Jim on the mission field in Ecuador in a year. Jim confesses that he is still praying for a single fellow to join him but time is running short. In correspondence with Pete Fleming, the two discuss the possibility of him joining Jim on the field. However, Jim reminds him to seek God's leading in the matter.

Upon his visit with Elisabeth, Jim feels closer to her than he ever has. Yet even amid these feelings, he is sure that God doesn't want them to marry at this time in their lives. Instead, God is leading him away from her and directing him to Ecuador along with Pete. For Elisabeth, an opportunity to go to the South Seas as a missionary closes. She admits that if it weren't for God's clear leading, the normal thing to do would have been to get engaged and travel to Ecuador together. Jim tells her that there is no reason to reject the idea of her going to Ecuador and tells her to take it to the Lord. If she ends up going, they both know there will be criticism, but they put that concern aside and seek God's will in the matter.

After Jim leaves for New York, he writes to Elisabeth and tells her about a fellow he is staying with that raises chrysanthemums. As they wait for an answer from God about Elisabeth going to Ecuador Jim hopes it might open the door to marriage. However, Pete plans to accompany him to Ecuador and he takes it as a closed door for Betty's presence at this time. The pace of the story ebbs and flows with new hopes and plans as Jim and Elisabeth's love continues to grow. This chapter brings it to a new level with consideration of Elisabeth going to Ecuador and even opening Jim's mind to the possibility of marriage. This raises tension and conflict as the reader hopes to see the two get together to serve God.



# The Hand is on the Plough

## The Hand is on the Plough Summary and Analysis

Once Jim arrives in Portland he starts to gather supplies he'll need in Ecuador. Even amid the stress of packing and preparing to depart he doesn't neglect his prayer and Bible study. God opens his heart as he reads about Abraham, and how God was able to make an old man fall to the ground and laugh with joy as every need was met. He holds onto this fact with faith as he struggles with his own feelings and needs including his desire for Elisabeth. "It may be that he hasn't planned to make us wait for years, but it certainly looks like it from here." (p. 154) This statement by Jim Elliot foreshadows his change of heart regarding marriage. He has plenty of arguments of why he shouldn't marry, and he trusts in Jehovah to make things clear. It is that trust that leads to a changed heart. This builds on the theme of "God first" and your own desires last.

Reading God's word provides the moral power he needs to overcome his desires for Betty. He continues with his ups and downs with his feelings about his preaching. At one point, he feels like stopping and telling the congregation that he doesn't have a word from the Lord for them. What is even worse for him is that it seems the people can't tell the difference if he is being Spirit led or preaching in his own power.

After reading *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, Jim considers how fiction can arouse a person and how beneficial it would be if Christians to be aroused in the same way regarding things of God. He admits his own life is full and that he couldn't ask for more. "The training has been good and to the glory of God, I am ready to meet Jesus." (p. 157) Although satisfied with life, his human side longs for letters from Elisabeth as he awaits confirmation about going to Ecuador via the Santa Juana. He continues in prayer on the matter asking God to seal his leaving. As he awaits the right time, five checks pour in for his support, which will pay his way to the exact penny. The theme "God in control" is evident once again as the exact amount of financial support arrives in the form of five checks all from different sources.

Jim packs, receives the necessary inoculations and experiences a reaction to his Typhus shot. God continues to provide as Jim receives 1,500 slides that will be useful for teaching from a fellow believer. He organizes them to take along as a teaching aid among the Indians. As he packs, he learns that the ship will arrive in port on December 18. Jim and Pete must have all their belongings at the dock before they leave Portland on January 10. Then they will ride south with his parents and meet the boat in California. In all the busyness of preparing to leave, Jim feels his spiritual life has suffered with rushed prayer and little time in the Word. Yet through this he knows that God is gracious

By January 15, Jim is in Oakland California lettering his name and destination on the barrels containing his books and other supplies. He and Pete are busy with engagements while in Oakland as they get ready to leave. His schedule leaves no time



for private prayer. "Privacy before the God who sees in secret in an integral part of true prayer [ . . . ]." (p. 159). All in all, Jim packs 1,400 pounds of belongings while Pete packs 900. By January 25, Jim has his passport visa and only one more crate to get to the dock. He takes his precious time to write Elisabeth a letter and admits how much he will miss her. One of his last nights in the States is spent with Ed and his wife Marilou and then he attends a big rally where people expect him to speak. He prays that he will not be cause for them to be ashamed of choosing him to handle God's Word.

By January 30, the ship is late and Jim has three unexpected extra days to pass time. He catches up on correspondence, reads Leviticus and writes another letter to Elisabeth about little projects he is able to catch up on. She writes to him that she feels like she is missing out on sharing these things with him. Jim admits that he understands how she feels and brings the matter before the Lord in prayer and reminds her that as they have denied themselves of each other, they can expect to see profit from their sacrifice. He tells her "Let not our longing slay the appetite of our living." (p. 160).



# Under Way

## Under Way Summary and Analysis

Jim stands admiring the night sky from the deck of the Santa Juana. He's finally on his way to Ecuador along with Pete. Jim sees the hand of God in all things—even in the fulfilling of a childhood desire to sail. He thinks back to a childhood dream of sailing and sees how God even grants this desire, but in a much different way than he first imagined. God meets all their needs. They are well fed, and have a stateroom for just the two of them, although originally a third person was to join them. It's another example of God in control and answering prayer beyond what they could ask or think. As he looks at the sky, Jim ponders how God has made him. He didn't even cry when he said good-bye to his parents. He longs to follow God's leading and is thrilled to be on his way with his face toward God's ways rather than man's. The reader gets a first-hand glimpse at how Jim's emotions are in tune with God's desire. Later he writes to his parents thanking them for their part in his life and telling them not to worry. He praises them for all they've done for him and the spiritual foundation, which they have laid in his life. He admits that he can't really know how they feel because he is not a parent. He tells them not to cry, but to pray for him and that everything is great aboard the steamer. He's eating well and the crew makes pretty good company.

Jim journals about the tropical beauty he witnesses. While eating tortillas in a restaurant in one of the ports, he and Pete are approached by a young prostitute. They try to witness to her in their limited Spanish and finally she leaves them. "But oh, I longed to speak about the Savior of harlots, the Friend of genuine sinners, God help me in the language for just such cases as these." (p. 168). Jim and Pete also go shrimping along with the Captain and a few other crewmembers. They net about 250 pounds of shrimp in one night. While they are at it, Jim and Pete have a chance to witness to the Captain before he passes out from too much drink.

When they make port at Puna, the crewmembers are told by the officials that they are not allowed to disembark. By mid afternoon, the passengers are picked up by a small yacht called the Santa Rosita. They say their goodbyes, and by God's grace all their belongings make it through Customs without a problem. By six o'clock that evening they are at the docks in Guayaquil looking for their contact, Tidmarsh. However, he doesn't show up to meet them. Now they are in a strange place without a contact other than God. They suffer mosquitoes and heat of the night and head off the following morning to the office to see what they can find out about Tidmarsh. Jim and Pete find out that the office was not informed of their coming, and so Tidmarsh arrives a day late.



# Dreams are Tawdry

## Dreams are Tawdry Summary and Analysis

Jim and Pete catch a DC-3 out of Guayaquil that takes them over the coastal plains and into the mountains to Quito where they are taken to Tidmarsh's home. From the start, Jim struggles with the inability to communicate in Spanish and looks forward to learning the language so he can speak for the Lord. That necessity pushes him to try and learn Spanish perfectly, which turns out to be a time-taking procedure with four classes each week.

He visits the market that he finds an interesting blend of every class of people. The large selection of fresh fruits and vegetables also pleases him. Jim makes friends with a young Ecuadorian named Abdon, and they help each other learn one another's language. Through this exchange, Jim comes to an understanding of the importance of training nationals to do the work of reaching others within their country. It doesn't take long for the burden of reaching the Auca and Cofan to filter into his thoughts, but he is reminded again that God's timing is not his timing and sees that his calling right now is to the Quichua. Even in Ecuador, Jim fights his sullen moods. He steps outside into the moonlight and takes in the beauty of God's creation to sooth his soul.

The Short family invites Jim to come stay with them in Santo Domingo where he helps out with little things and continues his Spanish studies. As he interacts with the Indians in the area, he sees a real need for Christ, which spurs him on with learning the Spanish language. While here, he receives word that Elisabeth will be coming to Ecuador for the Lord's work and will arrive in a week. He finds this fact "wonderfully strange" and knows that it will stir gossip back home. However, he doesn't let it trouble him as he knows that it is of God.

His one concern now is that the learning of Spanish is too slow, and he hopes to find a place and people to live with that only speak Spanish. In order to spend more time with the native people he participates in activities like mountain climbing, attending the bullfights and trying to interact with locals.

When Elisabeth arrives in Quito it raises questions within Jim again regarding marriage. The two of them have been led to Ecuador, but because Jim hasn't actually gone into jungle work as yet he doesn't know what lies ahead. "So long as I can do a work in reaching a primitive people better as a single man, I will stay single." (p. 173) He allows David's biblical example to never lead his people without talking to Jehovah to encourage him to devote himself before the Lord again about reaching the Aucas. Within his prayer, he asks for help with his Spanish and miraculous guidance. His study of David's life regarding his sin against Uriah the Hittite and his wife Bathsheba also leads him to realize now is not the time for marriage. As he spends quality time with Elisabeth he expresses his love for her and for the Lord and his willingness to do things God's way. He can't explain it, but knows it is God's will. Jim's part is to obey. Through



Jim Elliot's life choices, his life mimics Christ's in his willingness to sacrifice all for the will of God. Yet, when God brings Elisabeth to Ecuador, it foreshadows God's greater plan to bring the two together as husband and wife.

Jim takes part in a homeopathy course taught by Dr. Tidmarsh. The course gives Jim further purpose as he looks forward to beginning medical work among the people, but he struggles with his lack of mastery over the language. As a believer, he comes to realize his training will never be done. Another first includes a survey trip by airplane to the Oriente in search of Aucan houses. Through their time with Missionary Aviation Fellowship Jim and Pete learn what they wanted to know about Aucas. The bottom line is that there has been no friendly contact.

Jim's days are happy with Elisabeth living nearby, living with an Ecuadorian as he learns Spanish and even reading God's Word in Spanish, which forces him to return to basic truths with his basic language skills. "Give me not to be hungering for the 'strange, rare and peculiar' when the common, ordinary, and regular—rightly taken—will suffice to feed and satisfy the soul." (p. 179). The Lord is answering Jim's prayer for help with his Spanish as many natives are surprised to learn he has only been in Ecuador five months. He gets his first chance to really preach in Spanish in Sangolqui with Dr. Tidmarsh. The following week Pete and Jim will be going to a boy's camp at Shell Mera. Before he leaves he thinks again of the possibility of marriage but after talking it over with the Lord sees that door still closed. Even so, he misses Elisabeth terribly and wonders at the possibility of her joining him on the mission field in the future.





# The Realized Will

## The Realized Will Summary and Analysis

Jim writes to Elisabeth from the boy's camp and lets her know that he walked over to her window before leaving and toyed with the idea of waking her, but didn't. "Then I dropped into silence, knowing I was leaving you and the happiest weeks of my life." (p. 182). A week after settling in, Jim writes to his parents and lets them know God continues to work and has helped him with his Spanish as he teaches two Bible studies each week. Jim is excited to see the Word of God change the young lives of the boys as some give their lives to Christ with tears of repentance. The miracle of new life answers discipline problems.

In his correspondence to Elisabeth, Jim admits to wondering about God's purpose for them and feeling a bit of resentment at being apart. Yet once again he affirms his faith that God's ways are the best and that he wants to follow no other path than the one He lays before them.

After the camp concludes, Jim returns to Shandia. Pete and Dr. Tidmarsh take the first plane back and while Jim waits for the second plane he collects vegetation for the garden back in Shandia and as part of the collection he includes some orchids. Again he expresses his desire to return to Elisabeth, but reaffirms his commitment to follow where the Lord leads. In Shandia he lives beside the rushing waters of the Atun Yaku and learns to eat new and interesting foods like palm heart. Here he also uses his medical skills to treat the sick and injured and also administer inoculations. Along with this he and Pete have the responsibility of keeping about 50 men working on the airstrip and other projects. With all these extracurricular responsibilities his study time is interrupted, but his language skills continue to improve as he lives and among the people. He learns to love the Quichua people as Jesus loves them. Through his daily interaction, he learns that they don't live in villages, but their thatched-roof, one room huts are scattered along the banks of the river. As Jim gets to know them better, he is concerned over the people's lack of concern for their souls, and attributes this apathy to lack of prayer.

Jim lies in bed at night listening to the strange night sounds that are so different from at home. The rushing river, birds, even bats making tiny sounds from within the thatched roof. This night the river rises 4 feet. The author uses Jim's reflections on night sounds to introduce the rising river and foreshadow the coming of the devastating flood. As Jim listens to these sounds, he is awed at the revelation of God through nature, but in the same week experiences his first death among the people when the cook's wife loses a breech birth baby because they refuse to take Dr. Tidmarsh's advice. Instead, the people follow the instruction of their "knowing one" which Jim calls a witch. He understands that this is how it must be as they make headway into the culture in order to reach the people.



The rainy season arrives with hot tropical weather, which slows the work on the airstrip. "We find the daily walk with God as always, a simple thing of faith, patience, and love, superabounding in the sheer joy of living." (p. 190) Then he receives a letter from Elisabeth telling him that she is leaving Quito for the western jungle where she will analyze the Colorado language. Jim reads the letter feeling like they are saying good-bye all over again. Now it will take more time to get letters from her—he had felt she was just around the corner and now she would be further away. He feels the emptiness more at night as he is alone with his thoughts, while the days are occupied with medical work, language studies, construction and 4-grade school. At the school they introduce American games like volley ball and after several mishaps with the ball make a rule that the kids are not allowed to kick the ball in order to prevent it from bursting on long thorns in the jungle or from going over the cliff.

They experience the death of another baby among the Indians and after trying to revive the baby without success are thrust into the native customs following death. They play games amid wailing and chanting. Jim participates in the game of "flip the bowl" where he takes a bowl filled with creamy liquid into his jaws and flips it over his head without getting a drop on him. The Indians are impressed that he is able to do this. These strange customs draw him closer to the people and yet people from the outside question this as missionary work. The criticism Jim receives over playing games during the wake draws the line of conflict between what traditional religious people think and his desire to live by New Testament principles. The family of the dead baby asks to bury the body under the schoolhouse so they don't have to abandon their small home.

Jim takes his medical abilities up river where game is more plentiful and several families are experiencing sickness. Life goes on at a slow pace and a couple of schoolboys quit the school, language studies are suffering and construction crawls with the onslaught of the rain. Arajune Indians visit the station, and Jim longs to travel to see where they live. Day-to-day up keep of the airstrip and other work to be done is interrupted with another medical call for a snakebite victim. In all things, including his relationship with Elisabeth, Jim feels God's guidance and leading. He's encouraged by the inroads and relationships building among the Indians. When Thanksgiving rolls around he has a can of salmon that Elisabeth had sent, and for dessert he enjoys prunes. He is satisfied with life, but when December comes he feels a longing to see Elisabeth. As the work goes on, he feels as if he is going through the motions while his heart with her. "Oh what an ache wanting you can bring, when I knew that the wanting itself is good, right, even God-granted, but realize that now it is wisely God-denied, and that He has not let me know all the wisdom of the denial." (p. 196). The picture he has of Elisabeth helps him through it.

Jim's parents are thinking of visiting Ecuador, and he encourages them to do it as airfare is less than \$100. However, with this information, he reminds them to seek the will of God in the matter.



# Three Challenges to Faith

## Three Challenges to Faith Summary and Analysis

In January Jim sends a messenger to Elisabeth in the western jungle where she is working on the Colorado language. He asks her to meet him in Quito. The following day she rides through the jungle on horseback to Santo Domingo followed by ten hours in a banana truck to reach Quito. Jim enjoys his time with Elisabeth and Ed McCully and the much-needed change. Finally, he gives Elisabeth an engagement ring. He had hoped to give it to her for her birthday in December, but didn't want to leave Pete alone while Dr. Tidmarsh was gone. It delays his plan to give her the ring by forty days and forty nights, which is symbolic for times of testing in the Bible such as: 40 years in the wilderness and 40 days on Mount Sinai.

A week later, the couple's dedication to God's purpose is tested when Elisabeth is told she has tuberculosis. This disease will curb her ability to serve as a missionary and thus negate her chances of being Jim's wife within a jungle setting. The bad news adds conflict and tension amid dreams and desires finally fulfilled, until 10 days later when further tests show no sign of the lung disease and once again introduce the theme that God is in control.

When Jim returns to the jungle, this time Ed McCully comes along to get an idea of where he will be living and what he'll be doing. Pete is out with Malaria and the time with Ed brings the two into close fellowship again. Jim prays that the Lord will hurry the rest of the preparation.

Back in the jungle Jim witnesses the death of a man he knows accompanied by much vomiting of blood and a high fever. It's the first time Jim actually witnesses someone dying. It brings back words he used to use when preaching: "Are you willing to lie in some native hut to die of a disease American doctors have never heard of?" (p. 199). Jim prays that the Lord will let him live to preach His word to this generation.

With Ed gone on the plane, Jim works to lay the foundation of a small house Ed and his wife will live in. He writes to his father telling him he sure could use his help these days with all this building. However, he feels his uniqueness and knows he is the one God has brought to the field to accomplish these things. His ability to speak the Quichua language is still not fluent, but he thrills at their response to the parable in Luke 14 about the various groups invited to the feast. When Indians draw near to the riverbank to say good-bye, it touches Jim to see that he is getting through. Two girls tell him that they will pray for him.

The rainy season arrives and work slows to a crawl. It gives him more time to read and he is encouraged by a book that talks of apostolic missionary methods. Again he longs for New Testament patterns and principles to be followed. "God must do the work, or it



will not be done, and we stand waiting for him here." (p. 202) Even with this, he struggles with longing to see adult Indians come to conversion.

In May, Jim goes to an Inter-Mission fellowship where he has time with Elisabeth. They spend two weeks together shopping for building supplies and visiting with colleagues. On the way home, Jim runs into extra expenses as the truck breaks down needing a gas pump and in the same trip a flat tire delays them enough that when they arrive late the guard decides not to let them in. When Jim finally decides to catch a ride with another truck, he finds his bag has been stolen. Instead of becoming angry, he looks at the situation as another bit of God's training in learning to let go of material possessions. The following month, this lesson hits home even stronger as floods tear at the cliffs in Shandia until almost nothing is left. Every building is destroyed, but they are able to save some of their equipment and belongings.

However, the rains continue to pour and they spend their time moving, drying, and sorting their meager belongings while trying to stay out of harms way from the collapsing countryside. They save what they can and throw out what they can't. During this time Jim comes down with his first bout with malaria. Once he recovers, he's right back to work cleaning up and planning with Pete, Ed and Dr. Tidmarsh. They decide the time has come to make their first trip into the jungle to check out the Quichua tribe's area to the south. Pete, Jim and Ed travel on foot and by canoe to visit the Indians living along the Bobonaza River. Jim and Ed catch jungle rot. Upon their return to Shandia Jim tells Elisabeth of an Indian with 15 children who has asked them to come and start a school. Ed feels that he and Marilou should not try to start a new work when they are just beginning the study of the language. They plan to stay in Shandia to help with the rebuilding process. Jim needs a companion to help establish the new work and asks Elisabeth how soon she will marry him.

The theme of God is in control comes to the forefront as difficult circumstances open new opportunities that lead to Jim asking Elisabeth to marry him which grants the desires of his heart: a wife and missionary work reaching tribes who have never heard the gospel.



# Lo, This Is Our God

## Lo, This Is Our God Summary and Analysis

Jim and Elisabeth get married on October 8 (Jim's 26th birthday) in a small civil ceremony with only Ed and Marilou McCully and Dr and Mrs. Tidmarsh in attendance. They honeymoon in Panama and Costa Rica where they make a surprise visit to Jim's brother Dave and his wife Colleen. They return to Quito to pack and get ready for the new work to be established in Puyupungu. They pack up with the help of friends and arrive at the new site where Atanasio and his family of 15 children and two wives greet them warmly with help and supplies including a thatched roof hut. Although the hut looks great at the start, neither Elisabeth nor Jim can stand up straight under the low roof, and it is loaded with cockroaches. Within a couple of days, Jim sets up a tent, which they live in for 5 months. He also sets up an outdoor kitchen under an aluminum roof. They no sooner get settled and Jim is struck with a high fever that does not respond to malaria drugs. Elisabeth tries in frustration to get help with the aid of the hand-cranked radio while Jim is bedridden for three weeks. Amid difficult circumstances like health, weather and living conditions it would be easy to throw up one's hands and return to the comforts of Shandia. However, Elisabeth and Jim unite as one and stay firm in their resolve that God is first and His will be done.

As Jim recovers, the constant rains turn the floor of their tent to a gummy consistency. He works to get a floor in and has it half done while still a part-time patient that is supposed to be getting bed rest. He considers married life "rich" and feels very little adjustment from single life. He attributes this to waiting for God's timing in all things.

A month later, Elisabeth and Jim walk through the jungle from Puyupungu to Puyo to go to Shandia to spend Christmas with Ed and Marilou. They enjoy their holiday in Shandia and while they're visiting the first young-men's conference takes place. They return to Puyupungu and begin work on an airstrip and a house, but the rains again slow the progress. By early February they finish the roof on the house and outhouse. The workers slack off, and Jim reminds himself that only the Lord is constant and that it is by His grace that the work gets done. Jim prays for the souls of the Indians he lives among as he fights discouragement of lack of progress. More men are sent to help and the airstrip is completed. Finally a plane lands on part of it, but the second half is too wet to take off.

During Holy Week, they hold meetings every night with Jim and the schoolteacher Lucas trading off turns while talking on the seven words spoken from the cross. Atanasio tells Jim that even though he is old that his eyes are starting to open. These words encourage Jim to continue prayer.

By the end of May, Jim's dad has arrived to help in Shandia. Elisabeth and Jim meet his dad in Puna along with the construction equipment he has brought. This is answer to

prayer too and Dad Elliot's help really meets a need as Pete leaves for the states to get married.



# The Pattern at Work

## The Pattern at Work Summary and Analysis

As June comes to an end Jim and Elisabeth hold a little commencement for the schoolchildren and their families at Puyupungu with promises to return to visit when they can. After closing up the house, they travel to Shandia where Jim joins his dad in the building program. Jim and Elisabeth move into the house that Pete had built and enjoy eating their meals with Ed and Marilou.

The work there is heavy, hot and exhausting. By the end of the day, Jim bathes in the river a 12-minute walk away before coming home at sundown to eat dinner. Following dinner, he spends time writing letters, in Bible study, talking with the McCullys or in study and talk regarding language. Jim's relationship with Ed McCully picks up where it left off in college and the two grow closer day by day.

By October he writes to his parents on his wedding anniversary and birthday to tell them that this has been the happiest year of his life. His new house is almost complete and Ed and his family are visiting Arajuno as they set up another station to be included on the preaching circuit. It is also time for school to start again, and this year they have 11 boys. Jim and Ed have decided to help with the teaching along with the Christian teacher they have come for the year.

Jim goes along with Ed back to Arajuno ministering to the Indians amid an abandoned Shell Oil drilling facility. A day earlier they had 25 Indians show up for a meeting and this morning there are 50 who turn out at a home who show real interest. Jim is thrilled to be bring the Gospel message to those who have never heard it.

That Christmas, the Elliot family spends alone at Shandia because the McCullys go to Quinto for the birth of their second son. Jim uses Christmas week to build a room divider to separate the living room and kitchen. By the middle of January, Jim's journal reflects some of that melancholy that regularly plagued him during his college days. He talks of only 25 turning out for the meeting of the Lord's Day, and that the spirit among those attending seems restless with schoolboys playing and other interruptions and that his own preaching feels powerless. He renews his commitment to make individual witnessing to the Indians and corporate gatherings to preach the word his number one goal. As he captures his thoughts in his journal he admits that he regrets not keeping up with writing like he used to as he has lost fresh ideas and insights into God's Word by not writing them down.

He continues to work with the Indians, and turns more and more of the teaching responsibilities over to them because he sees this as the best way to reach out to the other Indians. They already know the language and are growing in their faith daily. The example of the preaching Indians also provides an example to the others that God does not only choose seminary graduates to preach His word, but everyday people. Elisabeth



marvels at Jim's patience with the people as he adjusts to the foreign culture where women think nothing of carrying on a conversation or rushing to look out a window while the preaching is going on.

In February Jim and Elisabeth travel to Shell Mera to help with the construction of a hospital. Two days later, Elisabeth gives birth to their first child, a daughter whom they name Valerie. Jim holds her just minutes after she is born and is speechless with emotion. They stay with missionary friends for another week and then return home. Jim's parents come for a visit to be with them after they have visited his brother in Peru for several months.

They return to life as usual following the birth of their baby. News arrives of Aucan Indians attacking an area that is not far from Arajuno and killing a mother and two children. Doubt starts to creep into Ed's thoughts, and he wonders if it is wise to put his family in danger. Jim asks for prayer for Ed as he makes his decision.

Conflict and contrast are drawn into this chapter as the birth of Valerie adds a new element in Jim's life. The reader is almost lulled into thinking everything will work out fine as the house becomes a home, and Valerie completes the family unit. In one paragraph, Jim and Elisabeth are painting the baby crib in a peaceful home setting. In the next, they hear about Aucan Indians attacking an area not far from Arajuno. Groundwork for this type of spiritual warfare has been laid throughout the book as individuals learn to put God first, but with Valerie born, this challenge is symbolic of Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his only son.

Over the next two weeks the Indians are receptive to the Gospel message amid efforts to get the water system hooked up and running. The McCully have decided to continue on with the work of outreach and going to Arajuno while Jim and Elisabeth continue to establish the work at Shandia.

In June Jim uses his medical skills to fight sickness like snakebite, and his house calls take him an hour's walk down river three days a week to treat the patient. It's another opportunity to make contact with Indians who look at the white missionaries as "devils". Jim also makes a visit back to Puyupungo to give the end of the year exams to the schoolchildren. One of Atanasio's wives died a week earlier of smallpox, and her death opens an opportunity to talk with Atanasio about eternity and things of God.

The number of believers now breaking bread in Shandia rises to 25. Jim praises God for numbers that in an assembly at home would be superb, but considers it a natural process when biblical patterns are followed in the preaching and living of the Word. He tries to spend time with the people, and even takes a group of Quichua schoolboys hiking in August. While hiking, two boys get caught up in the swift current of the river. Jim rescues one and Ed McCally the other. The experience is physically exhausting, and Jim feels a bit led down that there wasn't more opportunity to share the Lord.

Valerie continues to grow and is a giggler. Jim spends time making his house a home for his family by adding window casings made from barge wood, and he continues to



add flowers around the house and provide a garden. He even gets three rose bushes to add a touch of home to their jungle abode.



# Mission Accomplished

## Mission Accomplished Summary and Analysis

Aucan Indians are sighted in September of 1955. Ed and Nate the missionary pilot spot them not far from Arajuno by plane. Jim sets his sight on the fulfillment of God's purpose for his life, and it looks like Ed might have a part in it, too. Ed and Nate pass over the Auca territory regularly and drop gifts as a sign of friendship. As preparations are made in hopes of reaching the Aucans, the work in Shandia is being established. A core of native believers is able to carry on the work there. Jim's heart burns with a new fervency to reach those who have never heard the Gospel. As they continue preparations, they hear reports of new Aucan. In October, Ed and Jim fly to Villano and make a circuit visiting established groups of believers before flying to Arajuno. While there, they go up in the plane with a loudspeaker using phrases they have learned from an escaped Aucan girl named Dayuma. The shout out things about trading a lance for a machete, or telling them they want to be friends. When one Aucan is seen running into the house and coming out with a lance, the men are encouraged. The Indians understand. After enough practice, they receive gifts back from the Aucans.

Jim carries the Aucan phrases on little cards everywhere he goes and practices every spare moment. He even takes them to bed and looks at them just before falling asleep in an effort to learn the language. When Jim returns from the Aucan flight, his excitement is evident, and Elisabeth knows in her heart that the time has come for Jim to meet the primitive tribal people. Doubt starts to cloud her thinking, and she asks herself if this is really God's plan.

She thinks of the reports of Aucans killing for fun, and the work that still needs to be completed like the building of the school and the mentoring of the young men who are to take over the work in Shandia. Even the question of numbers comes up. Should he leave thousands to perhaps reach a handful? Yet, Jim is not swayed in his walk with God. As always, he turns to God's principles and does not rely on his feeling as he makes choices in following the Lord's will for his life. Elisabeth asks Jim if he is sure that he is supposed to go and he tells her, "I am called." (p. 236). His answer gives her peace, because she knows he is following what God wants in his life. She returns to Ilya and talks with the Aucan girl, Dayuma, again to gather more linguistic material to help Jim prepare to speak to the Aucan natives.

Back in Shandia, Jim works rapidly to finish the school. He's exhausted but enjoys Valerie who is now learning to pull herself up in her playpen and is getting more teeth. In the days leading to his departure, he spends afternoons and evenings with the young Indian men preparing them to take over. As the time draws near to leave, Satan's attack against Jim grow fierce. Soon discouragement greets him every way he turns. Plans are made to travel down river by canoe, and they talk of Elisabeth and Valerie coming along. However, in December all that is dispelled when Nate discovers a stretch of beach he thinks they can land the plane on. Elisabeth is no longer going to accompany



him as plans change. She brings up the possibility that he may never come home. He turns to her and let's her know that if this is how God wants it that he is ready to die.

The Flemings hold a fiesta at Puyupungu just before Christmas and invite Jim and Elisabeth to help with Bible teaching and about 100 Indians attend. Jim is very encouraged as most of them pay attention with a clear desire to learn about Christ. Many of the Indians change after this outing and even stop drinking. A few days after they return to Shandia along with Nate and Ed, Marilou calls on the radio from Arajuno frightened as an Aucan Indian has been spotted only 50 yards from the house where he stood holding his deadly lance. Ed and Nate fly there in a hurry and find evidence of the Indian's being there but he has disappeared into the jungle.

After praying and preparing for months, Nate spots two groups of Aucan homes while making a survey flight. The missionaries develop a plan to make first contact. As Jim packs for his trip, Elisabeth helps him gather everything she can think of that he will need. Jim's excitement foreshadows the contrasting difficulty of saying good-bye and watching Jim walk to his plane. This inner conflict is fueled in the reader's mind as the author expresses her own inner conflict and doubts as Jim's wife, drawing a clear contrast between Jim's walk of faith and God's purpose with no turning back. This is brought to resolution when she gets up the courage to ask him if he is really supposed to go. When he tells her that God has called him, she gains a peace that allows her to help him prepare to go.

Once he's packed, he heads for the door and turns to look at Elisabeth. She realizes that he may never put his hand on that door again. More conflict is introduced when little Valerie is pictured standing in her playpen. It leaves the reader longing for her to know her father and yet knowing the outcome of the story based on details given in the prologue. When Elisabeth expresses her own doubts more than once, Jim reminds her that he is following God's will. His faith brings resolution to the conflict but not without mixed emotions.

The two of them follow the bamboo trail to the plane where he hops in next to the pilot. The following morning, he calls her on the hand-cranked radio. They had a good night, and stayed in the prefab tree house that Jim had made. That Friday, Jim's purpose and God-given dreams are met. He makes contact with the Aucas. Two days later, he gives his life.



# Epilogue

## Epilogue Summary and Analysis

The epilogue summarizes Jim Elliot's life and includes quotes that are used throughout the book and could serve as a eulogy for his life. It highlights various Scripture passages and points out that Jim Elliot lived and died for his Lord Jesus Christ. He didn't leave much behind as far as earthly possessions, and didn't even have a funeral. Yet the legacy he leaves behind includes his diaries, letters and relationships with people all over the world. His death was a result of his obedience to the Lord's leading. This epilogue is loaded with quotes from his diary, but this one sums it up: "Granted, fate and tragedy, aimlessness and just-missing-by-a-hair are part of human experience, but they are not all, and I'm not sure they are a major part, even in the lives of men who know no Designer or design. For me, I have seen a Keener Force yet, the force of Ultimate Good working through seeming ill. Not that there is rosiness, ever; there is genuine ill, struggle, dark-handed, unreasoning, fate, mistakes, 'if-onlys' and all the Hardyisms you can muster. But in them I am beginning to discover a plan greater than any could imagine." (1951) (p. 249)

The author's use of these quotes from Jim's journals tells his story from God's point of view, reminding the reader from where he came and how God led. In the eternal scheme of things there are no regrets, and because he lived life following God, the legacy Jim Elliot leaves behind is far richer as it bears eternal fruit.



# Characters

## Jim Elliot

Jim was the son of Fred and Clara Elliot, who trained him up in the ways of the Lord and teaching him to let his actions show the Glory of God and to avoid legalism in the expression of his faith. He accepts the Lord at age six and tells his mother he is ready for the Lord's return at any time. His upbringing stresses honesty and obedience and also gives him a love for the outdoors. As a teen, he is tall and thin, with a muscular good look that catches the girls' eyes. However, he is wary of girls, claiming that they only "lured men from their goals." Intellectually, he catches on to things quickly and freely offers his help to other students.

As an adolescent, he gained a reputation as "oratorical king" in high school because of his speech giving talent. Even in school, he carried a small Bible along with his other books. If the opportunity arose to share God's word with even one or two others, he didn't hesitate to talk about Jesus Christ from the Scriptures.

He played guard in high school football, enjoyed hunting and camping with his friends and always prayed together before they set out. However, he didn't let good times and friendships sway him from his goals. Although he could be very popular in high school, his faith cost him popularity in the world's eyes for things such as not going to a dance, because he felt in was part of being "of the world" and went against Scripture.

Following high school, he attends Wheaton College. At just under six-feet tall, with a bull neck and a barrel chest, he becomes part of the wrestling team. After two years in college, Jim struggles with the relevancy of his classes to God's purpose for his life. By the end of his sophomore year, he hears the call to foreign missions and visits Mexico with his friend Jim Harris whose parents are missionaries.

Dating and a social life are considered non-essentials that distract from God's purpose and which Jim can eliminate from his schedule until he meets Elisabeth and asks her out on a date. Later, Elisabeth's brother Dave invites Jim to spend Christmas with his family. The two grow close together but agree that God has called them to be single at least for this time in their life. Jim believes he is to go to the mission field unencumbered by a wife or family. He does leave for the mission field without Elisabeth while she serves as a missionary elsewhere.

In God's providence, they both end up in Ecuador working in separate areas but close enough to see each other on a regular basis. Jim's work with the Indians in Shandia blossoms and Elisabeth makes headway with the Colorado language. A disastrous flood changes things when Shandia is wiped out, and the missionaries have been invited down river to start a school. Ed and Pete stay behind at Shandia to rebuild and Jim asks Elisabeth to marry him and accompany him to start the school. Therefore, it is in God's timing after more than five years that the two become husband and wife.



Together, they get the school off the ground and return to Shandia. When his daughter Valerie is born he comments that it is the happiest year in his life. Shortly thereafter, news comes that Aucas have been spotted by plane. Jim takes part in an effort to make friends with the Indians by dropping gifts from the plane and talking with them over the loudspeaker. Finally, they find a stretch of beach that is big enough to land the plane, and Jim says good-bye to his family for the last time.

## Elisabeth (Howard) Elliot

One of eight children, twenty-one-year-old Elisabeth meets Jim Elliot as they attend Wheaton College and share many of the same classes. She is a year ahead of him school, but they sometimes talk after classes. After quite some time, Jim asks her on a date. She accepts, but then cancels. Her friends can't believe she's done this and explain to her that she has missed a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, because Jim Elliot doesn't ask girls out as he considers them to be non-essentials. Something that he can eliminate from his schedule. A couple of months later, her brother Dave invites Jim home for Christmas, and she gets to know him through long talks into the wee hours and watching him interact with her brothers and sisters and helping fix things around the house.

In one of Jim's letters to his mother he says that she, "is the sledgehammer type of personality when she knows you, though she may appear quiet at first glance." (p. 75) According to that letter she is perceived as a blunt character who tends to dominate, and yet as God works in her and in her relationship with Jim. As the story unfolds, Elisabeth's real character is shown through her willingness to live life single if though she loves Jim. Together they agree to wait—maybe forever. Like Jim, she heads to the mission field. She too has taken classes that help her in the learning of primitive languages in hopes of not only communicating with them but to also help translate the Bible into these ancient languages.

Over time, God leads the two of them to Ecuador but jungles apart. However, they are close enough to see each other and encourage one another from time to time. They even spend time doing fun things like shopping for building supplies. Elisabeth is content in her life in Christ even though she loves Jim and has decided to wait for marriage. It is not until Shandia is destroyed by flood that the Lord opens the opportunity to fulfill those desires of her heart. Ed and Pete decide to stay to rebuild Shandia, which opens a new opportunity never before presented to Elisabeth. Jim needs a companion to accompany him to start a school down river and now the other missionaries are tied up with the rebuilding process. He asks Elisabeth to marry him, and she agrees. The school is a success, and a year later they return to Shandia to finish helping with the rebuilding. Shortly after, Elisabeth gives birth to their first daughter, Valerie.

As a wife, Elisabeth honors her husband even when she doesn't totally agree with him. When the Aucas are spotted, in her heart she doesn't want him to go. Yet, when he tells her that the Lord has called him, she does not complain or whine. Instead she helps her



husband prepare to meet them by using her linguistic skills to pull together more phrases. As she helps him pack, she includes things that she thinks might entertain the Aucas. And even in writing this book, she continues to support her husband's faith and mission using his diaries, Scripture references and the testimonies of friends, families and even some of the natives.

## **Fred Elliot**

Fred is Jim Elliot's father. He is forced to quit school at an early age because of his mother's poor health, but becomes an avid reader and picks up practical skills like carpentry. He has a stocky build and his once red hair is now gray. His active faith is marked by an undeveloped theology which avoids legalisms and his active faith leaves his fervor real and practical rather than bogged down in theories or traditions. As his children are growing up, Fred reads Scripture to them daily and works to teach them how to live a practical living faith that shows the glory of Christ above all else. Jim cherishes not only his parental relationship with his dad but also the spiritual connection they have developed over the years, and the times together that enrich his life in Christ.

## **Clara Elliot**

Clara is Jim Elliot's mother. She meets her husband-to-be at age 18 when he visits her parent's home as he travels with a preacher by the name of Mr. Ironside. Three years later, while she is away at Chiropractic school, she meets him again as he preaches in a nearby Baptist church. The two fall in love and marry. She is a typical mother who makes Jim Elliot's story one that many can relate to. She fears him going on the mission field and tries to talk him into reaching those who need the Lord in North America instead of traveling to far off and dangerous places. Her soft gray hair and caring smile offer a manifestation of motherliness. Kindness is not only perceived in her life but shown in acts like caring for a little old lady known as Aunt Frostie for twenty years.

## **Valerie Elliot**

Valerie is Jim and Elisabeth Elliot's daughter who is just learning to stand alone at the time Jim Elliot goes home to be with the Lord.

## **Dick Fisher**

A grammar school friend of Jim Elliot, Dick became a close friend during their high school years and beyond. They played high school football together, and during the war, due to rations, the two of them often hitchhiked home from school and shared their ideas about great things of the world. During this time, Jim Elliot told him he had plans to become President of the United States. When he visited Jim's home for the first time, he was more than impressed not only with the number of chores Jim performed, but the



methodical way he attacked them. They were all the skills he'd later see his friend use in a position of leadership.

However, as an adult, his friend moved from God's best for his life and Jim exhorts him through a letter to put God first again. He reminds him that all his excuses do pan out. Because in reality, without God, although richer or successful, he is not happier.

## **Bill Cathers**

Cathers attends the Linguistics Conference in Norman, Oklahoma along with Jim and hundreds of others. He is to accompany Jim to Ecuador but as departure is delayed, he falls in love and makes wedding plans. This does not fit in with Jim's plan to follow the two-by-two New Testament pattern.

## **Dave Howard**

Dave is Elisabeth Howard's brother and friend to Jim Elliot. Dave is a spiritual companion who shares in times of exhortation, heart-searching and prayer that later Jim calls the "foundation of my life."

## **Dutch (Werner Durtschi)**

Dutch played high school football with Jim Elliot and accompanied him hunting and camping.

## **Bert Elliot**

Bert is Jim Elliot's older brother. He ran a profitable garbage business. While in their teens, Jim Elliot and Dick Fisher helped Bert on Saturdays. Bert marries Colleen while Jim is in college, and heads to the mission field in Peru.

## **Ron Harris**

Ron is a college friend of Jim's who takes him home to Mexico during the summer following his sophomore year. Jim falls in love with Mexico and Ron's parents invite him to stay as long as he would like.

## **Ed McCully**

Ed feels called of God to quit school and live a life sold-out for Jesus. Jim hopes he is the answer to his prayers for a companion on the mission field. The two spend time together and travel to Chester where they minister the Gospel. God provides for all their needs as they work together in a thriving work for God. While waiting for the open door





to go to Ecuador, the two of them start radio ministries. Ed's is a 15 minute program that runs on Fridays. Jim's plans are dashed when Ed marries Marilou, but God restores his hope when Ed and Marilou plan to join him in Ecuador following a year in medical school. Just when they arrive in Ecuador, a flood destroys the station, and Ed and his wife stay to help rebuild while Jim plans to go down the Bobonaza river at the request of a man with 15 children.

## **Pete Fleming**

Pete believes, along with Jim, in reaching the tribes in South America and becomes his traveling companion to Ecuador. They learn Spanish together, and build and work in the medical clinic in Shandia. After the flood in Shandia, Pete stays behind to help Ed McCully with rebuilding. Jim and Elisabeth agree to get married so they can travel down the Bobonaza River to reach out to a family with 15 children.

## **Dr. Tidmarsh**

Dr. Tidmarsh is Jim's contact in Ecuador who opens an invitation for Jim and Pete Fleming to join him. He introduces missionaries to the ways of the jungle and even teaches a course on homeopathy for new missionaries.

## **Abdon**

Abdon is a young Ecuadorian fellow who helps Jim to learn Spanish while Jim teaches him English. He's 23 years-old and as Jim's relationship grows with him, he prays that he will be able to help him in the Word. Jim's relationship grows to the point that he calls Abdon his right hand Ecuadorian buddy. They enjoy doing things together like climbing Mount Pichincha along with others.

## **Quichuas**

Quichuas are bronze-skinned, short, stocky natives of Ecuador with dark hair and high cheek bones. If they have homes, they are one-room, thatched-roofed homes set alone—not in villages but scattered along the river.

## **Aucas**

Aucas are the primitive, man-killing Indian tribe Jim Elliot tries to reach with the Gospel.



## **Objects/Places**

### **Wheaton College appears in non-fiction**

Jim Elliot attends Wheaton College in Wheaton, Illinois.

### **Santa Juana appears in non-fiction**

Santa Juana is the ship that carries Jim and Pete Fleming to Ecuador.

### **Quito appears in non-fiction**

Quito is a beautiful location between two Ecuador mountain ranges. It's a picturesque old city. To the west is an active volcano. Within the market, every level of society—both rich and poor, educated and non-educated blend together to do business. It offers a large selection of fresh fruits and vegetables.

### **Santo Domingo appears in non-fiction**

Santo-Domingo is a fast-growing agricultural center where Jim lives with the Short family. At the time, there were no other missionaries within 100 kilometers.

### **Oriente appears in non-fiction**

Oriente is the eastern Ecuadorian jungle where Jim first flew on a survey trip in search of Aucan houses.

### **Atun Yaku appears in non-fiction**

The Atun Yaku river runs through Shandia and into the jungle. This is the river that floods and eventually wipes out the station. The work of rebuilding separates Jim from Ed and Pete as they stay, and Jim and Elisabeth head deeper into the jungle.

### **Shandia appears in non-fiction**

Shandia is a missionary station set high on a cliff above the Atun Yaku river. Here the Shandia River and Napo come together. Here Jim uses his medical skills to reach out to the Indians, builds a clinic and school and not only witnesses death but takes part in the Indian customs in an effort to reach them for Christ.



## **Puyupungu appears in non-fiction**

Puyupungu is the new missionary work established by Jim and Elisabeth Elliot along the Puyo River where it reaches the Pastaza. This work begins when Atanasio, the father of 15 children, asks Jim to start a school.

## **Chester, Illinois appears in non-fiction**

Chester, Illinois is where Ed McCully and Jim Elliot work as salesmen. At first sales are slow enough Jim gets concerned that it is draining his resources rather than help him save for work as a missionary in the field. While there, they also get involved with ministries like visiting the prison, visiting the coffee shop and spending time with kids at the local high school.

## **Quichua appears in non-fiction**

Quichua are a language and a bronze-red people who live within the setting where most of the missionary work of the story takes place. Many are addicted to alcohol, and most can't read.



# Themes

## Trust God

The spiritual themes that run through Jim Elliot's life story all stem from trusting God. This trust gives Jim the courage to talk about spiritual matters and carry his Bible as an adolescent in high school, and when he moves off to Wheaton College as a young man. Although he has the personality and looks to be popular, he trusts God's Word to rule his life and does not participate in activities that he considers frivolous or that have no eternal value. He even chooses not to date to avoid having a girl turn him from his purpose in following God. Yet, when he meets Elisabeth he falls in love. However, he trusts God with those feelings as he seeks to follow His purpose for the mission field and the Apostle Paul's example of being single. He doesn't disavow the possibility of marriage in the future but is willing to accept that status only if it is God's will for his life.

Jim not only trusts God regarding his own life, but also in circumstances such as when his brother and his wife are going to the mission field in Peru. It's not easy to see those you hold dear leave for such a dangerous venture. It would be easier to keep them near, but through this event he challenges himself and his mother to trust God. Instead of looking to his own desires, he finds strength in God's goodness. This theme is further pronounced when he realizes that his plans to minister to other students on a spiritual level have a wrong motivation. Trusting God is a battle against self. Through his desire to meet others' spiritual needs, he realizes that he is trusting in his self to minister rather than God. The experience humbles him and the realization brings him closer to the Lord as he lets go of his own expectations and trusts God to do the work. This is an ongoing growing process through his life.

Trusting God is not always the easy or popular thing to do. When Jim feels led to go to the Linguistics Conference instead of going home for Christmas. He trusts God enough to follow in obedience that opens the door for him to hear of the Aucas—a tribe untouched by civilization. It wasn't in Jim's strength or searching that this came about but it was a matter of trust. It happened because Jim consistently trusted and obeyed God's leading in his life. It puts him in the right place at the right time among hundreds of students. Through this obedience and trust God provides the exact missionary for Jim to work with one-on-one as part of a role-playing exercise—a missionary who knows of the Auca's need. God opens opportunities, but according to Jim's faith it is up to the believer to obey by not conforming to this world. If Jim had trusted his feelings instead of trusting God he would have put his parents first and probably stayed in the United States preaching God's word to young people. In that case, it wouldn't be God's work—it would be Jim's work. On the other hand, perhaps he would have married and never made it to South America. Instead, he trusted God, and the resulting legacy lives on today.



## God is in Control

The "God is in control" theme works hand in hand with the "trust God" theme. The author establishes a theme of God is in control within the first chapter where she lays out how God orchestrated the coming together of specific individuals from far away places at just the right times to meet, fall in love and marry and how these unions lead to the birth and Christian upbringing of Jim Elliot. God put these pieces in place generations before in order to pave the way for the missionary work to be done in the future.

This theme is also evident in the fact that when God has a plan for you his hand of protection is on you in order to bring you to the time and place where his purposes will be accomplished. Jim's experiences with near misses with death as a young man include a hunting mishap when a bullet cuts through his hair and a car stalled on railroad tracks, which gets demolished. An inch lower and the bullet would have entered his head, a few seconds difference in the timing of the train or the car reaching the tracks would have meted different results. Details like this are fitted together throughout the book, so that by the end of the story when Jim meets his death at the hands of the Auca Indians, the reader is satisfied that things are as they should be and in God's timing.

The story not only shows that God is in control, but also takes the reader through steps in Jim Elliot's life as he learns this fact first hand. When Elisabeth comes into his life she is a year ahead of him in school and yet with 1,500 students in the school their schedules have them taking many of the same classes. She, like Jim, decides that she will remain single and go to the mission field, unless God shows her differently. This theme shows how God orchestrates schedules and answers prayers that bring their relationship into existence even as Jim prays about a future in foreign missions. It's no coincidence that the two of them end up in the same classes, and have the same mindset. God is in control and preparing for his plan to be fulfilled, while their part is to be obedient.

The God is in control theme God also comes to the forefront amid personal conflict as Jim and Elisabeth are drawn together as two unlikely mates. They are not attracted to looks, clever speech or things that most often lead to infatuation, but instead the attraction is in being like-minded with an unwavering devotion to Christ. God takes them a step at a time closer to each other as he draws them to Himself and foreshadows the time when they will be together in the work he has set for them to do.

Jim's obedience to God's leading is based on his faith and he lives to serve Him. Often, he does and says things based on the fact that he knows God is in control. When he attends the Linguistics Conference instead of going home for Christmas, it is because he believes it is what God wants. This experience opens the door for him to hear of the Aucas—a tribe untouched by civilization. However, it wasn't Jim's plan. Instead, it is a result of obedience and trusting God's leading in his life. He knows God is in control and has a purpose. Acting on this faith puts him in the right place among hundreds of



students, and God brings the exact missionary across his path at the conference to work with him on a one-on-one basis. This missionary knows of the Auca's need. God is in control—he opens opportunities, and through obedience Jim steps into God's perfect will. By putting "God first" God grants the desires of Jim's heart because they line up with His will for Jim's life.

When Jim finally knows the time is right to ask Elisabeth to marry him, he is forced to wait for forty days and forty nights to give her the engagement ring until he is free to go see her. This symbolizes the use of 40 in the Bible - 40 years in the wilderness, 40 days on Mount Sinai and such times of learning and testing. In all those circumstances the waiting and testing build faith in the knowledge that God is in control. After he finally gives Elisabeth the ring, they receive a medical report bearing bad news; she has tuberculosis. This adds conflict and tension amid dreams and desires finally fulfilled. Jim trusts God to know what is best. Ten days later, the healing of her condition blends this trust and faith into the theme that God is in control.

He is in control even when bad things happen like when Jim's bag is stolen along with his camera and other belonging and then returns to Shandia where floods tear away at the landscape until almost nothing is left. Even in these hard circumstances it is shown that God is in control. These difficult happenings are learning experiences and open new opportunities. In fact, the flood changes plans enough that Jim needs a missionary companion to accompany him to start a school. God has Elisabeth in place to step into that role, and the mission opens the door for them to become married. It's a finely woven thread that touches every aspect of this story. Even in the end, when Jim finally makes contacts with the Aucas and God calls him home.

## Living Faith

Trusting God or having faith in God are common religious sayings, but living an active faith following Christ is more than mere words. For Jim Elliot, faith is not a separate part of life only practiced on Sundays or Wednesdays, but it is how life is lived every moment. It is reflected in his everyday life as a student who carries a Bible along with his schoolbooks who anticipates any opportunity to talk about things of God. His love of God's Word and desire to follow his will leads to a wariness of girls because he thinks they lure men from their goals. His faith also does not allow him to cave to peer pressure when pressed to buy a ticket for the school dance. These events reflect a heart set towards serving God rather than himself with a real living faith.

In Jim's years in college it would have been easy to get lost in the busy schedule and put things like reading God's Word and praying on the back burner. Instead, he lays the foundation of finding time for prayer and God's Word even amid tight schedules and social pressures. It is during this time that he hears the call of God to go and preach the gospel and feels the Lord leading to Latin America. Active faith stays in tune with God's will as it responds in obedience to God's principles and the prodding of the Holy Spirit. Jim's living faith leads him to visit Mexico while on summer break and he stays six weeks serving with missionaries. Many college students might serve for a couple of



weeks and then claim the rest of summer break for themselves. Instead he works for the Lord and then returns to school where he adjusts his studies to help prepare him in the translation of God's Word into primitive tongues. Living faith is a growing faith. One step of obedience leads to another. During his sophomore year he meets his future wife, Elisabeth Howard, who also has a heart to be a missionary. Both see no room for the entanglement of marriage but form a strong relationship with long talks and times of study together. Jim considers it all the more important to spend time in God's Word and keeps a notebook of what he learns and how God is working in his life. His ways are considered unconventional and yet his living faith convicts those around him.

In addition, Jim's living faith sometimes even came into conflict with family expectations. His attendance at the Linguistics Conference instead of coming home for Christmas was not a popular decision, but it opened the door for him to hear of the Aucas—a tribe untouched by civilization. Jim consistently obeys God's leading in his life. It puts him in the right place among hundreds of students. Even when he knows his life is at risk, Jim trusts God and says good-bye to his wife and child and climbs on the plane to make first contact with the Aucas. This is faith in action—in contrast to a dry legalistic belief system based on traditions of men.

## God First

Like the other interlocking themes, this one works hand-in-hand with trusting God, and when Jim Elliot keeps God first, his faith is active and growing. His journals show that putting God first is not always the easy thing, but in the long run it is the most rewarding thing. For the benefits of putting God first are eternal rather than temporal. The text holds many examples of Jim putting God's ways above his own ways. These include his willingness to get up early to pray and read the Bible before classes. He was also willing to not date or consider marriage unless God shows him clearly that the time and right person have come, and his willingness to not get involved with Elisabeth so he would be available to follow God's biblical New Testament practice when going to the mission field. All these were tests put in Jim Elliot's path. Tests to see which way he would go—the way of the world or God's way. Jim chose to put God first.

This was evident when he chose to go to the Linguistics Conference instead of going home for Christmas, or when he visited Mexico and helped missionaries for summer break instead of going home. He loved his family and coveted time with them, but he put God and his ways first and followed him. In so doing, God was able to open Jim's eyes to His purpose for his life. The visit to Mexico helped Jim to see he wanted to reach out to the Indians of South America and when he attended the Linguistics Conference, it opened the door for him to hear of the Aucas.

Jim not only put God first in his own life but challenged others to do the same. As an adult when his good friend moved away from God's best for his life, Jim exhorts him through a letter to put God first again. He reminds him that all of the excuses of why he isn't putting God first don't pan out, and points out the reality that without God, although you might be richer or more successful you are not happier. However, when you put



God first, your desires fall in line with His desires and God's word says that he will grant the desires of your heart.

This holds true in his relationship with Elisabeth as well. The attraction between the two is based not on looks or personality but on the like-mindedness of serving God and keeping him first. Their meeting is not only orchestrated by God, but sustained by God. As Jim's feelings for Elisabeth deepen, he struggles with his feelings and emotions and pours them out to God—and then in an act of obedience he leaves for the mission field without her. This obedience is rewarded later when Elisabeth comes to Ecuador as a missionary to another area but nearby enough for them to see each other and correspond on a regular basis. Even with her nearness, they decide not to marry until circumstances brought about by the flood of Shandia necessitate a need to be married in order to follow God's will for their lives.

Throughout the story, Jim's obedience to God's leading is based on his faith and putting God first which is reflected in all that he does. At the end of the story, when Jim is getting ready to leave to make first contact with the Auca, both he and Elizabeth know the risk. She has her doubts, and a longing to keep him with her and their daughter. Yet each of them works through their personal struggles and puts God first. The result was first contact with the Aucas, and the end of Jim's Elliot's earthly existence along with four other missionaries. That step of obedience carried him into eternity where God is still first.

## **Biblical Church Pattern**

In the writing of this book, Elisabeth Elliot avoids using traditional and well-worn Christian terms in her storytelling. As you read, you'll note that often the word assembly is used instead of the word church. This is one example of the Biblical Church pattern theme, which Jim Elliot pursued as he strove to avoid traditional and impotent man-made methods used by the modern church today. If a person says the word church, they get in their mind a building with a steeple on the corner, or something like it. Instead, Jim Elliot worked to establish that the believers are the church wherever they assemble according to the New Testament pattern.

This theme is first introduced when Jim Elliot's father is a boy who is forced to drop out of school at a young age because of his mother's poor health. Through this experience he becomes an avid reader and develops skills like carpentry, which later play a part in Jim Elliot's character. Along with this he becomes an independent thinker who has a desire to live a practical faith. This practical faith continues into his adult life where he reads Scripture daily to his children and influences Jim Elliot to follow New Testament patterns and principles rather than practices propagated by the modern church.

Thought his years at Wheaton College, following biblical patterns makes him stand out in the crowd when he chooses not to spend his times on frivolous activities. Instead, he does things like using his spare time to memorize Scripture, or setting his alarm so he awakens early enough to have time in prayer and God's Word. After college he travels





west with his parents where he plans to spend the next three months helping his brother build his house. As he awaits God's direction in his life he admits to, "[. . .] mingled feelings of 'not belonging' and of thanksgiving for all God's grace these past four years. God, preserve me from living a life which conforms to the general pattern." (p. 103)

The Lord places Jim in Portland for a year where he helps in the assembly. Through the process God prepares his soul through his concentrated study of the Word while physically he helps with things like painting. While working side-by-side painting with his dad, they talk about preparing for the Lord's work. They discuss the life of the Apostle Paul and agree that training at a Bible College is an "artificial atmosphere" compared to what one experiences in the real world. In the New Testament they didn't have Bible Colleges, instead they had people mentoring and discipling those who were newer in the faith or who strayed from their faith.

When his childhood friend, Dick Fisher, strays from following the Lord, Jim writes a letter that challenging his friend to leave behind worldliness and to sell out for Christ. He hits specifics like his need for Christian company and putting aside trivialities. This advice is based on patterns found in the early church. In addition, in a letter to his father, he writes of his concerns of how modern church practice is lacking the power of the Spirit and doesn't follow New Testament patterns.

Over and over, in letters and in his actions, the theme of biblical church patterns is woven throughout this story. In his letters to Elisabeth he defends the Scriptural pattern versus the modern day church, and when he teaches these principles to his young married couples' class he comes under fire and is even labeled a sect. This stand reflects God's leading in his life; rather than being a man-pleaser as Scripture forbids, Jim's faith spurs him on to take an unpopular stand among those who should be his peers.

Because Jim is sold out to following biblical church patterns he is caught off guard a few times when friends who he thinks are like-minded stray from that pattern. Like when Ed decides to get married. Jim had thought they would go to the mission field together following the Pauline example, but when Ed marries it disqualifies him from going as a single man unencumbered by the things of this world. The news surprises Jim as he had thought the two of them would be going to Ecuador following the New Testament pattern of two-by-two. Each time something like this happens, Jim struggles but waits for God's guidance.

Biblical church practice stirs questions in Jim's own mind about marriage as he has fallen in love with Elisabeth. In a letter to his mother he says he talks about the demands of following the Pauline pattern in a tropical forest. He's on the move serving God as he awaits the open door to go to South America. He goes to Milwaukee and on to Indiana where he works with young married couples. He's up front from the beginning and explains his views of following New Testament patterns rather than traditions of men. It excites Jim to see that some of them see that something is wrong with how the church operates even though they don't understand what it is. "None know the



Scriptures well because of the devilish schemes of the clergy to keep them from thinking for themselves." (p. 137)

Jim's conviction regarding following New Testament methodology versus modern day church practice met with severe criticism. Moreover, while people agree that the New Testament practice would be ideal, he finds very few willing to commit to it. While trying to serve within the modern church he feels useless because of the ignorance of the churchgoers regarding the Truth. He determines that what is needed is a godly family to come, get a job and then open their home to teach the Truth and confront the apostasy of the local assembly.

When Elisabeth forwards Jim a letter from another missionary who speaks of the "anything will do" mindset it raised the question of whether or not God reveals a universal pattern that the church is to follow. Jim puts forth the fact that Christ left specific instructions for the care of his bride and that there is no biblical basis for the role of clergy, which he points out, is a carry over from papism. Jim experiences up and downs as he fights this fight wondering if there will ever be a remnant to uphold the biblical practice principles. However, through it all God uses his Word to encourage him as he pleads with the Lord to send him to a place where the Scripture has not been twisted.

Jim is always excited at the opportunity to speak the Word in truth. He sees a big opportunity for God's word to break people free from the non-biblical patterns practiced within the church. He prays that from these people that God will raise up men. Eventually, this is exactly what he does among the Quichua Indians. Before his death, God raises up men from among them who Jim and the others have trained in biblical church patterns and their numbers grow as a result of it.



# Style

## Perspective

This non-fiction biography is written using journals, letters and first hand accounts from others and comes together with insights from various perspectives. For the most part, because of the extensive journals Jim Elliot wrote throughout his life, the author is privileged to portray the world through Jim Elliot's eyes. It offers insight into his personal struggles with the traditional methods of the modern church as they stand in contrast with New Testament practice. It's not because he doesn't like it, but because it is not scriptural and is thus ineffectual. This perspective also opens the door for the reader to witness God's dealing with the heart of this man and the transformation that takes place in his thinking and actions. On a lighter side, Jim's journal entries and letters also shed light on his humanity including his relationship with his parents and the way he looked up to his father as a spiritual mentor.

Small parts of the story shift to the author's perspective as she transitions from one section to another and sometimes uses letters he wrote to her and at other places bases her comments on her own personal knowledge of her husband. At times with the use of Scripture verses, the author conveys an aspect of this book that gives you a feeling of God's perspective. It points to how God orchestrates the steps of an obedient man during his time here on earth. Throughout the story, Scripture verses instrumental in directing Jim Elliot's life are used to show God's desire and Jim's resulting actions. It also sheds light on why he thinks conventional church methods stray from Scripture with solutions to how things should be handled based on the same verse. The storyline backs up his thinking with circumstances that show the biblical way is more productive in producing converts that are will to live an active faith and make a difference in the world.

Small contributions by Jim's friends of grammar and high school also add a bit more insight into the foundational years of this young man's life, while input from the Aucan Indian "George" also provides insight as to how Jim Elliot and his friends were first received when he finally reaches his ultimate destination and God's purpose for his life. To accomplish this, the writer blends all these perspectives including how his parents feel about their son going to the jungle and his mother wishing that he would stay in the United States. This personal perspective from so many sources includes the author's own reservations and conflict as she works along side her husband and watches him walk away that last time to get in the plane. The style presents a well-rounded look at the life and death of Jim Elliot from an earthly perspective and then carries the reader to take a renewed look from God's perspective and the overall purpose of life on earth.



## Tone

Elisabeth Elliot's conversational tone weaves the story of her husband's life using Christian terms in her storytelling without sounding preachy. Some may not realize how seldom words like church are used, but instead the word assembly marks the gathering of believers within the text. Her use of selected words such as this echo Jim Elliot's own choice to follow biblical church patterns found in the New Testament instead of practicing modern church traditions. Phrases like "facts over feelings" and "approved unto God" are easy to understand and make important points as Jim Elliot fights to base his life on the facts found in God's Word rather than to be led by the whimsy of his mood, feelings or sway of world pressures. Her writing style uses balance and rhythm to help deliver her meaning with dramatic results. Her self-explanatory style makes the book easy-to-understand no matter a reader's background and keeps it interesting because the pace consistently moves forward.

Scripture quotes are not overused, but quoted only as they applied to Jim Elliot's life, mood or thinking or when he uses them to encourage or admonish another believer or reached out to unbelievers. The quotation of Scripture always adds meaning to the context of the story and is often backed up with the use of dialog taken straight from Jim Elliot's journals or personal letters.

The author effortlessly paints an image of Jim's unconventional thinking on things like the uselessness of his education in a positive light but with a direct approach. When Jim Elliot questions its usefulness in preparing for the mission field his father who had to quit school early in life thinks it is of the utmost importance. Jim addresses education in one of his letters to his father and explains that his education seems useless for God's purposes and more pertains to philosophy, culture, politics and the like. He not only questions the value of education in a Christian's life, but actually thinks it can be dangerous by filling the head with things that are not true. It's written in a way that does not tell the reader what to think, but causes them to think for themselves.

His unconventional thinking on dating and marriage are mimicked by the author's own struggle with the issues and portrayed in a way that shows the human struggle between what they feel and seeking God's purpose in life. Beyond this, it also reflects how God provides the desires of the heart if those desires come into line with His Word.

Finally, the author resolves the conflict of why bad things happen to good people when she shines a light her own reservations about Jim going to the Aucas. She brings the storyline to completion by not only showing what she wants, but takes the reader a step further by sharing her own understanding of a Spirit-led life and the seeking God's purpose. The story resolves all these issues as it takes the reader beyond this world to consider things of eternal consequence.

## Structure

The story is takes the reader immediately to the climax, introducing the young missionaries and pulling them into the excitement of fulfilling their dreams of making first



contact with a primitive tribe of Indians known as the Aucas. It opens a window into who the young men are, their thoughts feelings and hopes, and then introduces the reader to the thoughts and thrills of the young native nicknamed "George" as he is taken up in the missionary plane for a ride and a chance to see his world from a different perspective. Details are filled with emotions, faith and the excitement of being used by God along with sensory information that makes the scene come alive. By the end of the prologue the author has hooked the reader when the young missionaries lay dead on the beach leaving the reader to question how God could do such a thing or why did this have to happen. This introduction establishes the framework for the rest of the story as the author uses journal entries, personal letters and memories of friends and family members to fill in the details in a free flowing style that allows readers to gather a little more information in each chapter. The reader is able to not only get to know Jim Elliot better, but to understand the purposes of God in his life and death.

The story picks up with Jim Elliot's ancestors coming to the United States and how God brings them together. The author continues to build on a theme of God's plan and how he orchestrates it in the lives of obedient believers taking readers quickly through Jim Elliot's young years with enough detail to experience the loving, Christian upbringing he experiences along with an introduction to his strong personality, childhood friends and his interests including hunting and mountain climbing. Through the brief look at the early years of Jim Elliot's life she paints a diversity of interests and friends that give the reader the impression of a young man with a likeable disposition. In large steps, she gives just enough detail to introduce and then get to know him in a personal way. When he goes off to college, the reader has a clear understanding that he is following God's purpose for his life, and yet already knows the outcome presented in the prologue. The conundrum keeps the reader curious and wanting to know more. She continues this approach as the story progresses from adolescence to young adult college student. Here she takes time to focus on his maturing as a man of God—not in the conventional way through religious rules and regulations, but God's way through his Word. Even his desire to become a missionary takes root in the unconventional and the author does well to convince the reader that it is the right way. She brings the story to conclusion with as much emotion and detail as she uses when it opens on the beach with the five missionaries. The reader walks away with a deeper understanding of who Jim Elliot was, why he was on that beach, and resolution that it was God's will for him to not only be here but to die there. It's surprising she does it in a way that leaves a sense of peace that it is all right.

## Structure

The conclusion of the story is revealed in the prologue of this book, and the author uses this as the framework to go back in time to answer the question of why God would allow such a terrible thing to happen as the death of these eager missionaries. With the use of extensive journals kept by Jim Elliot, the author is able to create the feel of the late 1940s to the mid 1950s and takes the reader from Canada to the Midwest and then to the northwest coast during the early years. Jim's earlier years include mountain climbing at Mount Hood with breathtaking scenes of snow and season changes. However, the



heart of the story takes place in Wheaton, Illinois where Jim attends college and grows as a Christian through experiences in everyday life. He is friendly to the workers in the cafeteria, and considered a bit standoffish by many of the other students as he busies himself with memorizing Scripture while standing in line or refusing to take part in social events because he considers them foolishness and not something that works toward God's purposes. It is here that Jim feels called of God to the mission fields of South America.

Visits home include simple living conditions with a joy of spending time outside, doing handyman work and enjoying time with family and friends. During his high school and college years the simpler culture of the 1940's and early 1950s allow safe travel by hitchhiking allowing for insight into the culture of the time. Jim even hitchhikes home from Mexico the summer between his Freshman and Sophomore years in college.

College travels also take place as Jim serves as part of a gospel team that also includes Elisabeth's brother Dave Howard, Roger Lewis and Verd Holstein. The trip takes them through the Midwest from Michigan to Montana.

The college atmosphere is one of openness. While in college Jim is allowed to express his faith to other students and carries his Bible without interference from those who run the school. Dating is not taken lightly and marriage is the accepted practice for two people who fall in love, plus the marriage relationship is looked upon as one of a lifelong commitment.

No matter where the story takes Jim Elliot, the reader experiences vibrant details of nature. Once he arrives in South America we see vast skies, mountains, fast flowing rivers and dense jungle. Living within the jungle setting is primitive with one-room thatched-roof huts providing common housing. It is a life filled with hard physical work. Things like electricity are not taken for granted; and even building homes and other structures require making the planks from scratch. Cement is mixed and poured by hand, and even using the radio required hand cranking. The rainy season makes mud floors turn gummy and slows work to a crawl. It ushers in the tension of floods, which wipe out most of the work accomplished only to be started again. Jim's love of flowers and interest in gardening provide vivid details that otherwise might have been overlooked in this setting. He collects orchids as he walks through the jungle and brings them back to the station in Shandia where he gathers a collection of a multitude of varieties. Fresh pineapples are planted to help hold back the encroaching jungle, and a vegetable garden helps to put food on the table.

The Quichua Indians are a bronze-red people who live within the setting where most of the missionary work of the story takes place. They are a people addicted to drink and most of them can't read. It a new inroad for the gospel message and gradually these people embrace the gospel and some of them step into roles as teachers and preachers.



## Quotes

"When Jim was twenty years old he prayed, 'Lord make my way prosperous, not that I achieve high station, but that my life may be an exhibit to the value of knowing God.' (p. 11)

"One day near Jim's last year in high school I saw him running around the outdoor track, training. I asked him what he was doing that for. He said, 'Bodily exercise is profitable for a little.' He was building his body for the rigors of missionary life." (p. 32)

"The principle of nonresistance which Jesus demonstrated once and for all on the Cross was one which Jim felt must be obeyed, in public life as well as in personal." (p. 33)

"You speak of it as 'rounding out one's manhood.' It rounds it out, all right, but I'm afraid sometimes it's more in the style of I Corinthians 8:1, 'knowledge puffs up.' 'Culture,' philosophy, disputes, drama in its weaker forms, concerts and opera, politics—anything that can occupy the intellect seems to turn aside the hearts of many here on campus from a humble life in the steps of the Master, though we sing about this most delicately!" (p. 41)

"Don't follow the example of those you left in the world, nor those you find in the church. Rather, the law of God, found in His Word, shall be my standard, and as I see it, there are few examples of this sort of living anywhere." (p. 53)

"Father, take my life, yea, my blood if Thou wilt, and consume it with Thine enveloping fire. I would not save it, for it is not mine to save. Have it, Lord, have it all." (p. 55)

"Oh that Christ were All and Enough for me. He is supposed to be, . . . but oh, to be swept away in a flood of consuming passion for Jesus, that all desire might be sublimated to Him." (p. 61)

"He has given me a hunger for Himself I never experienced before. He only promises water to the thirst, satiation for the unsatisfied (I do not say dissatisfied), filling to those famished for righteousness." (p. 66).

"I covenanted with the Father that He would do either of two things: either glorify Himself to the utmost in me or slay me." (p. 73)

"There are too many good preachers berating people night after night about a lost world who have never faced the challenge of sacrificial foreign service themselves." (P. 75)

"Likely the same struggles will be faced anywhere else, but I like to dream of less activity and little more production beyond that sheepskin which will make of me a B.A., whatever that means." (p. 77)



"Father, forgive me for being so academic and material in my outlook, so much feeding of the mind and outer man, so little genuine concern for spiritual things." (p. 92)

"I learned to recognize no 'spiritual planes,' but simply to love, purely, in every group. Trying to 'be a help' even has a smell of good works in it, for it is not pure. Our motive is only to be—do nothing, know nothing, act nothing—just to be a sinful bit of flesh, born of a Father's love." (p. 100)

"Remember that the shadow of thing casts often far exceeds the size of the thing itself (especially if the light be low on the horizon) and though some future fear may strut brae darkness as you approach, the thing itself will be but a speck when seen from beyond." (p. 118)

"I think God wrought wonders—nothing emotional (except in me personally, where I felt much conviction for my inward corruption) but a sane and scriptural building process, done, I trust, in the Spirit." (p. 126).

"Understanding the will of the Lord is believing Him, that He will—in all situations where I have obeyed—make that way His own way, effectual for eternity." (p. 128)

"Men who live and never understand what they were created for may be said indeed to be 'dead' as the Scriptures say. 'Where there is no vision the people perish.'" (p. 131)

"None know the Scriptures well because of the devilish schemes of the clergy to keep them from thinking for themselves." (p. 137)

"All are willing to admit that the assembly patter of the New Testament is ideal, [. . .] but none are willing to commit themselves, particularly the men . . . Let those who claim New Testament conformity beware: we commit ourselves to a way of life which must be conditioned by the New Testament, and disciplined by all the principles therein." (p. 138)

"Privacy before the God who sees in secret in an integral part of true prayer [. . .]." (p. 159)

"God must do the work, or it will not be done, and we stand waiting for him here." (p. 202)





## Topics for Discussion

What are the two close calls experienced by Jim Elliot and what relevance do they have on his story?

Jim and Elisabeth loved one another but chose not to get married for years. Why did they choose to stay single? List 4 reasons and the Scripture they used to make these choices.

The Bible teaches one to honor his father and mother, and Jim claimed to love his family and that he looked up to his father as a spiritual mentor. Yet often he chose to spend his vacation and summer breaks doing things like attending conferences or visiting missionaries. What do you think this reflects about Jim and his true feelings towards his family and God?

Jim and Elisabeth agreed to stay single unless God showed them differently. Even when the Lord led her to Ecuador, the two regularly corresponded and even enjoyed one another's company on a regular basis but still chose to live unmarried. What circumstances did God put in place to show them that the time for marriage had finally come?

Jim Elliot and his friends tried to make friends with the Aucan Indians before they made first contact. What did they do and how was it received?

Jim's father's opinion of the importance of education differed from Jim's. What did his father think and why? How did Jim's outlook differ?

At the last moment, Elisabeth Elliot had reservations about Jim going to make first contact with the Aucan Indians. She expressed this concern to Jim. How did he receive it and what was Elisabeth's reaction to his reasoning?