

# Blessed Discipline

by Elisabeth Elliot

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*Elisabeth Elliot's sermon emphasizes the importance of discipline as a loving and necessary aspect of spiritual growth and obedience to God.*

**Duration:** 45:53

**Scripture:** Hebrews 12:5

**Topics:** "Discipline"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of discipline and obedience in the context of God's love for his children. He shares a personal story of his father's discipline when he disobeyed his grandfather's rule against using firecrackers. The preacher also gives an example of a mother struggling to discipline her young daughter in a public setting. He concludes by reminding the audience that God's discipline is a sign of his love and urges them to embrace it with gratitude. The sermon references the Bible verse that compares God's discipline to a father disciplining his son.

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## Transcript

It's a great privilege for my husband and me to be here, and we're just very grateful. I can't imagine how you come out on a Friday night. I hardly ever heard of such a thing, but thank you for being here.

There have been very many blessings in my life, and I'm sure that if we had opportunity to hear the blessings of your life, we would hear some wonderful things, but I kind of imagine that my talk tonight would not be at the top of most people's lists. I've entitled my talk, Blessed Discipline, and I do recognize that discipline is a great blessing, but we don't begin with that notion, do we, especially when we're small? The psalmist wrote in Psalm 94, verse 12, Blessed is the man you discipline, O Lord. And the word blessed means happy, doesn't it? Happy is the man you discipline, the man you teach from your law.

And then in verse 18, he says, When I said, My foot is slipping, your love, O Lord, supported me. Discipline and love are closely linked in God's word. He disciplines us because he loves us.

I have four brothers, as was mentioned, and one of them is named Tom. We called him Tommy when he was little. I'm number two of six children, so Tommy was just a little boy, eight years younger than I. And when he was about two years old, he had one favorite pastime.

He would love to take the paper bags out of the drawer in the kitchen and spread them around on the floor of the kitchen. Well, my mother allowed him to do that. We used to tease our parents, we three older ones, because we never got away with some of the things that the younger three got away with.

And I don't remember being allowed to spread anything around on the kitchen floor, but Tommy was allowed to do that on one condition, that he put the paper bags back in the drawer when he was finished playing. Mother came into the kitchen one morning and there were the paper bags all over the floor, but Tommy was not to be found. She discovered that he was in the living room where my father was playing the piano.

And so she said, Tommy, I want you to come and pick up the paper bags. And he looked up with his beautiful blue eyes, with long dark lashes and a charming smile, and he said to my mother, but I want to sing Jesus Loves Me. My father took the occasion to press home the lesson of 1 Samuel 15.22. Does the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the voice of the Lord? To obey is better than sacrifice.

I don't think my father gave Tommy the whole verse, but I think he did make very clear to this little boy that it was no good singing the praises of Jesus if you're being disobedient to your mother. Blessed discipline. So I'm very glad that I grew up in a very disciplined family.

Both of my parents were godly people and they were seven-day-a-week kind of people. There was no dichotomy between the way they behaved on Sunday and the way they behaved on Monday. And we children knew that what our parents said they meant.

And there was discipline when we were disobedient. There were three things that I think are absolutely fundamental in learning discipline. And if we are in the position of teachers or parents who are responsible to mete out discipline to younger people, we certainly have to start with authority.

The second thing, we must require obedience. And the third thing, we must mete out punishment if punishment is necessary. Let's think about this business of authority.

To whom are we answerable all of our lives? If we call ourselves Christians, we must be answerable to God, mustn't we? Of course, all of us will be answerable to God whether we are Christians or not at some point. But a true disciple of Jesus certainly wants to accept his authority, to learn what it means to put oneself under that authority. But long before we understood discipleship and adult responsibility, we understood that we had to be subject to our parents' authority.

I have opportunity, my husband and I have many opportunities to observe young parents with their children, sometimes in Christian settings, very often in airplanes and airports where it's just dreadfully appalling to see the failure of authority, of young parents accepting the position of authority over their children. It seems that the children more or less rule the parents. Whatever the kids want to do, the kids get to do.

And you see a young father racing around the airport following an 18-month-old child. The child makes the decision where he wants to go, and Papa trots along behind him. Well, it wasn't like that in our home, I can assure you.

We knew that our parents meant exactly what they said. And here's something very unusual in today's world. They meant it the first time.

They didn't repeat commands. And my mother made it very clear to us that delayed obedience would be treated as disobedience. And disobedience was treated by an 18-inch rod, about that long, that was picked off the bush in the backyard.

And my mother kept one of those over the door in every room in the house. So we knew that the implement of torture was available at all times. And there were many occasions when we were subjected to the very embarrassing position of having to go back out in the yard and pick another switch because she had broken one of them on us.

But that little switch, believe it or not, really didn't get used very much. A few years ago, I wrote a book about my parents, it's called *The Shaping of a Christian Family*, because I wanted to just describe the kind of a home in which we grew up and which we feel very grateful to God because of. And I realized that there are a good many young parents who are honestly and earnestly seeking to raise Christian families, but they didn't always come from one and they don't always know where to start.

And so I thought, well, it might be helpful to write a book which describes what my parents did. It's not a prescription of how all parents ought to do it, it is a description of how one set of parents did it. And we six are very, very grateful that they did that.

But when my mother told us to do something, we knew that she meant it immediately. And delayed obedience would be treated as disobedience. Well, when I was writing that book, I talked with my brothers and my sister, asking for suggestions from them, things that I might have forgotten to put in.

And we all agreed that we very seldom remember receiving that switch. Undoubtedly, we received it many times up until the age of two or three, but our memory doesn't go back that far. And so by that time, we had already learned that when mother spoke, mother meant what she said.

And if we didn't, if we were not immediately galvanized into action, then the switch would come into play. So it was very seldom. I had told this story to an audience many years ago, and a man came up to me afterwards and said, boy, am I glad I'm not your brother.

And I said, well, what do you mean by that? And he said, oh, I could never have stood up to all that rigorous discipline that you described in your house. Well, of course, what I had forgotten to mention was that we had a tremendously happy family and lots of roaring good times with a tremendous lot of laughter. I hadn't put that in.

I had just talked about the discipline. So of course, this man thought he would never have survived. But we had faithful parents and faithful Sunday school teachers and faithful public school teachers.

I think of my sixth grade public school teacher. Her name was Miss Evanson. She kept order with her eyes.

I read not long ago that in New York City public schools, a teacher spends 80 percent of the classroom time saying, shut up and sit down. I cannot even imagine any of us getting out of our seats in Miss Evanson's room unless we had permission. Certainly we never opened our mouths without first putting up our hand and being acknowledged.

We understood authority. And as Christians, we need to be reminding ourselves again and again and reviewing the fact that we are meant to be under the authority of Jesus Christ. And my parents were

certainly under the authority of God himself.

And my father had hung a little brass plate over the doorbell on the front door, which said, Christ is the head of this house, the unseen guest at every meal, and the silent listener to every conversation. Anyone who came up on that porch to push that doorbell had at least an inkling of what kind of a home this was. And as I grew older and began to think about what the words meant, I was sobered to realize that I was the silent listener to every conversation.

I meant with all my heart to put myself under the authority of Jesus Christ, and I did that at the age of 12. Obedience is the second thing. Having recognized authority, then of course we must be obedient.

And as in my brother Tommy's case, his punishment had to be physical. Obedience very often is either physical or verbal. Now if verbal authority is not taught, then physical action is necessary.

And I'll give you an illustration of that. I was sitting in the Boston airport one time waiting for my bags to come off the carousel, and there was a young mother sitting next to me with her daughter Jennifer. Jennifer was about two years old.

And Jennifer went and climbed up on the carousel, which fortunately had not started to move yet. But her mother said, Jennifer, would you get back here? Jennifer, did you hear what I said? Jennifer, get off that thing. That's a machine.

You're going to get hurt. Would you come back here? And of course the whole time Jennifer is just having a good time and not paying the least bit of attention. And so finally the mother, in utter frustration and by this time anger, gets up off the bench, rushes over, grabs Jennifer, brings her back, plunks her down next to me on the bench and says, now Jennifer, sit still.

Now how long do you think it took Jennifer to get back onto the carousel? This happened two or three times, and I, with great difficulty, did keep my mouth shut, but perhaps I shouldn't have. I think back on it, and I think it probably would have been better if I had spoken, but I didn't. But what was happening? Jennifer knew that she did not need to come when Mama said come.

She knew that Mama would come and get her. So verbal authority meant absolutely nothing. It was physical authority when Mama went and grabbed her and put her back on the bench, which obviously didn't last very long.

As obedient children of God, do we listen to his word? Do we accept his authority in our lives? Does he have to at times physically punish us? And you know there were many times in the Old Testament where God did give physical punishment to his children, and they suffered as a result because they had not been obedient to his verbal authority. So authority and obedience now bring us to punishment, and punishment is done because of love. You fathers and mothers and grandparents know that if you said to your child, I must spank you because I love you, the child would never believe that, would he? My mother would say, this hurts me worse than it hurts you, and of course we didn't believe a word of that when we were children, but when you become a parent then you do know that that's the truth.

It does hurt you more than it hurts the child. And surely it hurts God when he has to punish us. It is because we have a loving Heavenly Father.

And if any of you listen to my radio program, you have heard me say, you are loved with an everlasting love. That's what the Bible says. And underneath are the everlasting arms.

But God has to discipline us, and the sooner we accept that discipline, the sooner we will be at peace with our Heavenly Father. The Bible says, as a man disciplines his son, so the Lord your God disciplines you. My father told us a story many times which illustrates this point, the difference between physical and verbal obedience and punishment.

His father, my grandfather, had forbidden his sons to have firecrackers for Fourth of July because firecrackers can be very dangerous. But when my father was 12 years old, he decided that he'd had enough of that, and so he went out, sneaked out of the house at about 5 o'clock in the morning of Fourth of July, and managed to get his buddy next door, and they got a hold of some dynamite caps. And they took the dynamite caps over to a farm, and they got the farmer to help them light them, and they did so, and ran as far as they could run, waiting for the big bang.

But nothing happened. So they finally closed in again, and the farmer kicked the pile of dynamite caps with his shoe, and there was an explosion. A piece of copper went into my father's left eye, and my father was blind in that eye for the rest of his life.

We thought it was wonderful to have a father who had a glass eye, because we could bring our friends in to see my father take his eye out. Of course, he took it out every night. But you can imagine we heard that story a few times.

Physical punishment because of verbal disobedience. His father had told him, and he went against his father's word, refusing his father's authority. And I want to ask you tonight, who is your master? Under whose authority do you live, and why? Is it yourself, or is it Jesus Christ? Is he Lord of your life? A great prison reformer of the 19th century said, Oh God, make us masters of ourselves, that we may be the servants of others.

And as we grow up, of course, we have to accept authority. And for the rest of our lives, we have to be obedient to certain authorities. We have many passages in Scripture about discipline and the great lessons that go throughout our lives.

Let me read to you from Hebrews 12, verses 5 to 11. My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son. Endure hardship as discipline.

God is treating you as sons. Sometimes we wail and cry and blubber over the fact that God is treating us in a way that we don't understand and we don't like. Why is God doing this to me? Here's the answer.

He is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father? If you are not disciplined and everyone undergoes discipline, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us.

That may have been true back then, but it certainly isn't true anymore. We don't all have human fathers who discipline us. And we respected them for it.

I certainly had to respect my father for that. How much more, says the writer, should we submit to the Father of our spirits and live? Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best. But God

disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness.

Next time something unexpected and unpleasant happens to you, do you immediately say, Why God? What are you doing to me? If that's your first reaction, check Hebrews 12:10. He disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. Why should the God of the universe want us sinful creatures to share his holiness? He loves us. He created us with the ability to disobey.

Isn't that incredible? God's omnipotence is crowned in his creating creatures capable of defying him. He did allow us to say no to him, didn't he? The winds don't say no to God. The tides go up when they're supposed to go up and down when they're supposed to go down.

And the birds do what the birds are supposed to do. And the giraffes and the clams do what giraffes and clams are supposed to do. They glorify God by being giraffes and clams.

But God has created us, human beings, capable of doing our own thing. And you know what happened back in the Garden of Eden. The writer goes on to say in verse 11, No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful.

Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it. I'd like you to think just for a moment now. In what way is God training you for that harvest of righteousness? What is the discipline that he is meeting out to you at this juncture in your life? I look back over a very long life and I realize that there have been many, many kinds of discipline that God has had to administer to me.

Over and over and over again, lessons I should have learned. But as the Bible says about the discipline of little children, it's line upon line, line upon line, precept upon precept, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little. And it's the same story with us old children of his.

It produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it. Are you willing to be trained? I went to a boarding school when I was 14 years old. I had been there just about two weeks when I was called into the office, the most terrifying moment of my life up to that point.

And there sat the headmaster and his wife, the headmistress. And mind you, I was 14 years old, just as tall as I am now, skinny, scared to death, shy. And they started in on me immediately on the fact that I was shy.

And Mrs. DuBose, the headmistress, calling me by what my name was in those days, Betty Howard, she pointed her bony finger at me and she said, Betty Howard, you are shy because you are selfish and you are selfish because you are thinking about yourself. And she said, we do not need you in this school. If you don't snap out of this, we will help you pack your bags.

We will give you a free trip down to the train station and you can go home. We can do without you. That was discipline.

I was trembling literally from head to foot. I knew I was shy, but I didn't know that shyness was selfishness. But of course, it is, isn't it? Because we're thinking about ourselves.

We're thinking, what are these people thinking of me? Do these people like me? I don't know what to say to these people. It may be my temperament. I don't suppose I will be able to slough that off in all the rest of

my life.

But that is a description, but that is not an excuse. And I think she was right. I know she was right.

She was pretty tough, I have to say. I don't think she was that tough on anybody else in that whole school. And I'm not sure whether I was the worst student.

But at any rate, it was a severe discipline. But I can look back now and I call it a blessed discipline. And I can call my parents' disciplines blessed as well, which, of course, I couldn't do when I was in the middle of it.

But God is constantly dealing with us through other people very often. One of the things that Mrs. DuBose used to tell us in the evening vespers that she always spoke in, we had morning chapel and Dr. DuBose spoke in morning chapel, and in the evening Mrs. DuBose spoke. And one of the things that she would say to us over and over again was don't go around with a Bible under your arm if you didn't sweep under the bed.

Now what in the world has sweeping under the bed got to do with carrying a Bible under your arm? Well, she made it very clear to us. In those days, we lived in a dormitory. We didn't have wall-to-wall carpeting.

We had rugs, throw rugs. We did not have a vacuum cleaner. We had brooms.

But every single morning we had to sweep those rugs, roll them up, then sweep the floor, put the rugs back down, make our beds exactly the way they were supposed to be made, hang up our clothes before breakfast. And while breakfast was in process, one of the teachers would be going around to all the rooms inspecting, and if anyone failed the inspection, their names would be read out at lunchtime that day. So what Mrs. DuBose was saying was it's no good talking about spiritual things when you're being disobedient to the rules.

Don't go around with a Bible under your arm if you didn't sweep under the bed. Now young people often wonder what in the world has sweeping under the bed or housework or anything like that, what's that got to do with this book? What's it got to do with spirituality? Ladies and gentlemen, it's got everything to do with spirituality, hasn't it? Jesus learned obedience by the things that he suffered. And I think he went through some severe disciplines before he was 30 years old.

We know nothing about what happened between his 12th year, just that one little incident in the temple when he confounded the teachers of the law in answering their questions. All those silent years from 12 to 30, he was being disciplined, we suppose, in the carpenter shop under the tutelage of his earthly father Joseph, learning obedience, learning faithfulness. But he was the spotless lamb of God.

But that's what the Bible says, Jesus learned obedience by the things which he suffered. He had to go through all the lessons that you and I have to go through. Well, I've told you just one little incident from my high school days, the age of 14, and of course I went to college.

And in my junior year in college, I took Greek. That was a severe discipline, and I was trembling in my boots as I went into that class. It turned out that there were 42 boys in the class and two girls.

And I was literally shaking, thinking I won't even be able to learn the Greek alphabet, let alone anything else. Our professor was 21 years old, and she had just graduated three months before that. I will never

forget her opening lines.

She stood up there. She was just the sweetest, most petite, feminine little lady, just a year or two older than most of us in the class. And I thought, this is our professor.

And the first thing she said was, Anybody can learn Greek. And it was absolutely the most thrilling year of my college years because that woman so loved Greek that she instilled a love for Greek in all of us, making it that much easier. It was a discipline, of course.

It was a severe discipline, but it was a blessed discipline. And I thank God for the privilege of having her for my first year. Then I took second and third year.

Now, I took second year Greek in summer school and third and fourth year in my senior year and loved it because of the foundation that she had laid. Well, then, when I was just about to graduate, some of you, I presume, I hope that there are one or two people here, perhaps young people, that have read my book called Passion and Purity. So you know the story that I'm about to tell.

It was just shortly before I graduated, about two or three weeks before I graduated from Wheaton College in Illinois, that a young man who had caught my eye during that senior year, his name was Jim Elliott. He asked me to go for a walk. Well, I almost died of the shock.

Everybody knew that Jim Elliott was a non-dater, and he was a good-looking guy and a very well-known leader on the campus and a champion wrestler and the president of the Foreign Missions Fellowship and a great guy, a clown that could be called upon to do stand-up comedy at a moment's notice in front of any group, just a very popular one of those BMOCs, as we called them back then, Big Man on Campus, or BTO, Big Time Operator. I was just a TWO, Teeny Weeny Operator, and it didn't appear to me that there was any chance at all that this young man would ever look twice at me. But my brother Dave had called my attention to him because they both happened to be on the same wrestling team.

And Dave kept saying to me, You need to get to know Jim Elliott. You'd like him. Well, I wasn't interested in my younger brother's friends, but I became interested during that last semester of my senior year.

So when Jim said, Will you go for a walk with me one sunny May morning? I said, Yes. Just ecstatic at the thought, but trying very hard to do just as my mother told me years before, Don't give them anything to work on. Always keep them at arm's length.

And never chase boys. Now, my mother gave me those rules when I was about 13. I never forgot them, and they do work.

Anyway, we were walking down the sidewalk, not more than a block or two, when Jim said, I think we need to get squared away how we feel about each other. And I thought, Well, of all the cheek, what in the world makes him think that I have any feelings for him? The arrogance of the man. But of course, I was thrilled to think that he had some feelings for me.

But remembering my mother's words, I said, Well, what do you mean? And he said, What do you mean? What do I mean? You know what I mean. I'm in love with you, and I've been in love with you for months. Didn't you know that? And I said, No, I didn't know that.

Well, he said, You must be deaf, dumb, and blind, because, he said, I've been trying to show you in every way except verbal, but now, he said, I'm telling you, I love you. But, then he followed that stunning announcement with a more stunning one, which was, I think maybe God is asking me to remain single, perhaps for the rest of my life, because I'm going to be a jungle missionary in South America, and I have been told by older missionaries that there are great areas where single men are needed, people who will not be encumbered with wives and children. So he said, I have given myself to God for that kind of work, if that's what God wants me to do.

So he said, Let's go and sit down in the park and talk about this thing. So we went and sat down on the grass in a park, at least more than arm's length apart, I'm sure. We were sitting facing each other.

I was keeping my mother's rule there. And he said, I'm not going to lay a finger on you, because, he said, I have no rights over you. He said, You go ahead and go to Africa, which is where I thought I was going.

He said, I'm going to South America. If God wants to bring us together, he knows how to do it. I lived in New Jersey.

Jim lived in Oregon. I was graduating. He had another year of college.

I was going to Africa. He was going to South America. How in the world would God ever bring us together? But you know, one of the things that really blew my mind in those seven hours that we sat in the park was not only discovering Jim's feelings for me, but the fact that through that whole school year, God had been disciplining both of us by certain scriptures, by certain incidents, by certain difficulties that we were having in our studies, and by the use of certain hymns, and to my utter amazement, through the poems of Amy Carmichael, the great Irish missionary to India.

Now I could not imagine that there was a man in the world that ever heard of Amy Carmichael, let alone read her books and memorized her poetry. And one of the poems says this in the first stanza. From prayer that asks that I may be sheltered from winds that beat on thee, from fearing when I should aspire, from faltering when I should climb higher, from silken self, O Captain, free thy soldier who would follow thee.

And that absolutely blew my mind to realize that Jim Elliott had also memorized that poem. And so we talked and we talked and we talked. We realized that God had taken us through these scriptures, hymns, poetry, the whole year before either one of us was interested in the other one.

It had begun. Anyway, a few nights later we went for another walk. I had about two weeks left, I think, before my graduation.

And one evening we walked without really noticing where we were going. We wandered into a cemetery and found ourselves seated on a stone slab. And we began to discuss the things that God had been teaching us since that day in the park.

And Jim said, well, I said to Jim first, I said, now, if we're really serious about what we said to each other then, and Jim had said, I'm not asking you to marry me. I'm not asking you to wait for me. You go ahead and do what God wants you to do and I'm going to do what God wants me to do.

But I thought over a few days, I thought, now, does it really make sense? Are we being honest with God if we carry on a correspondence, which Jim had suggested we could do after graduation? I thought, if we are absolutely sure that we have got to leave this whole thing with God, probably it would be best if we did

not correspond. And so I suggested this to Jim. And there was a long silence, a thunderous silence.

And finally he said, yes, that, he said, I think you're right. I know you're right, because this morning when I was reading my Bible, it was in the story of Abraham and Isaac. God asked Abraham for the sacrifice of the most precious thing in his life, his son.

And I realized that God was asking me for the sacrifice of the most precious thing in my life, which is you. So he said, I put you on the altar this morning and you're going to stay there unless God has an alternative, which of course he did in Abraham's case. So we sat in silence again for a long time and then realized, just gradually it dawned on us that the moon was rising behind us and it was casting the shadow of a stone cross on that slab between us.

A very important message from God. Will you remain in the shadow of the cross? Will you take up the cross, which is the second condition of discipleship? Jesus said, if you want to be my disciple, you must give up your right to yourself. The word disciple comes from the same root as discipline, doesn't it? It means learner.

Do you want to learn from Jesus Christ? First condition, give up your right to yourself. That was what Gemini meant before God. We would give up all our rights and we would take up the cross.

What is the taking up of the cross if not suffering? Suffering is mentioned about 80 times in the New Testament. People say to me, why do you talk so much about suffering? Well, because I find it in this book, that's why. And because we cannot be sanctified without it.

And so God was disciplining us. I graduated and in the graduation ceremony, to my absolute delight and astonishment, the president of Wheaton College, Dr. Edmund, read that poem by Amy Carmichael that I quoted a minute ago. And the last stanza of that poem says, give me the love that leads the way, the faith that nothing can dismay, the hope no disappointments tire, the passion that will burn like fire.

Let me not sink to be a clod. Make me thy fuel, flame of God. Jim Elliot wrote in his journal, let me burn out for you, Lord.

Light these idle sticks of my life and let me burn out for you. I think he got the idea from Amy Carmichael. Make me thy fuel, flame of God.

Lord, here I am, all of me for you forever. Do anything you want with me. Is that the kind of a commitment you have made? Have you accepted the blessed discipline of this blessed Lord and Savior? Are you angry with him? Bewildered? Mystified? Upset? Bitter? He loves you.

That's why he disciplines. He loves you. Well, from that night in the cemetery forward, there were five and a half years of separation, loneliness, longing, uncertainty.

Jim and I had no commitment of any kind except to Jesus Christ. As he said, I'm not asking you to wait for me. I'm not going to ask you to marry me.

But God in his merciful kindness years later did bring us together in Ecuador and we were married in the capital city of Quito. After we had been in separate sides of the Andes, I was in the western jungle, he was in the eastern jungle. And he was working with the Quechua tribe and I was working with the Colorado tribe.

But those were very, very severe spiritual disciplines. Loneliness, longing, uncertainty. Neither one of us had any certainty that the other would be our mate.

And just a good many lessons in the discipline of waiting. And during that first year, when I was a missionary with the Colorado Indians of the western jungle, there were three major blows to my faith. God had given me some severe disciplines up to that point.

I don't think any of them quite measured up to the three things that happened during that year. I can't go into detail about all of them, but I was working on the reduction to writing of the Colorado language, which was an unwritten language. That was what I went to Ecuador to do.

And I had to have an informant, somebody who spoke the language and could work for me and teach me, read or speak the language over and over again. Obviously, there's no alphabet in the language. He only spoke it because he had grown up with Colorado children.

He spoke Spanish and Colorado. He was a wonderful helper. Turned out to be a Christian.

He spoke Spanish and Colorado, which meant that we could speak together in Spanish and he could interpret into Colorado for me. But we hadn't been working very long when he was murdered. And as I looked at that corpse with a big hole in the head, he'd been shot at point blank range.

You can guess the three-letter word that I asked God, why? Why would God take the only man in the whole world that spoke both Spanish and Colorado? There was literally nobody else, bilingual. Why would God allow him to be killed? And God rarely answers our irritated questions. He simply says, Will you trust me? Then, before that year was over, the station on which Jim Elliott had been working way over on the eastern side of the Andes was completely demolished in a flood.

All the buildings went down the Amazon in one night. And a few weeks after that, I had by that time moved to the eastern jungle because Jim had asked me to marry him and said, I will not marry you until you learn Quechua, so you better learn Quechua in a hurry. So I went to the eastern jungle to start learning Quechua.

And while I was there, on a different station, not on the same one where Jim was, I heard Jim's voice on the shortwave radio reporting that the entire station on which he had been working, here I am repeating, when people get as old as I am, they repeat themselves. They repeat themselves. I already told you about the flood.

I got a letter from one of my British colleagues in the western jungle, the ladies that had been working with me on the Colorado language, telling me that all of my language work had been stolen. Never recovered. A murder, a flood, and a robbery.

Blessed disciplines. Do you ask, did you ever find out why God let those things happen? Well, I would hope that the rest of my life is testimony that every day, the Lord is giving me lesson after lesson after lesson. He loves you with an everlasting love.

And he is asking us, will you trust me? Will you love me? Will you praise me? Even when something senseless seems to happen, such as the robbery of my language material was never going to do anybody else any good. And God might have brought that suitcase full of data back to us. We prayed for that, of course.

We never saw it again. Everything that I had done in one year swept off the board. Everything that Jim had done in rebuilding those buildings and building three new ones all down the Amazon River.

Remember, God moves in mysterious ways his wonders to perform. He plants his footsteps in the sea and rides upon the storm. Blind unbelief is sure to err and scan his work in vain.

God is his own interpreter and he will make it plain. Do you understand why he's dealing with you as he is? Will you say, thank you, Lord? Yes, Lord. Thank you for loving me enough.

Thank you for these blessed disciplines. God bless you.

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