

Excerpts From the Journals of Jim Elliot

by Jim Elliot

Jim Elliot's journals reflect his deep struggles with prayer, productivity, and the urgency of reaching the lost while emphasizing the need for genuine faith and perseverance in ministry.

Scripture: Matthew 9:37

Topics: "Faithfulness in Ministry", "The Urgency of the Gospel"

Description

Jim Elliot reflects on his spiritual journey and struggles in his journals, expressing a deep yearning for fervent prayer and a more impactful ministry. He grapples with feelings of discouragement and unproductiveness, questioning his effectiveness in leading others to Christ while longing for a genuine revival in the church. Elliot's commitment to the mission field is evident as he emphasizes the urgency of reaching the unreached and the importance of being a vessel for God's word. He acknowledges the challenges of faith and the need for perseverance amidst spiritual apathy, ultimately seeking to align his heart with God's passionate call for the lost. His writings reveal a profound desire to see the simplicity and beauty of New Testament fellowship restored in a world that often prioritizes materialism over spiritual truth.

Transcript

March 22, 1947

"I lack the fervency, vitality, life, in prayer which I long for. I know that many consider it fanaticism when they hear anything which does not conform to the conventional, sleep-inducing eulogies so often rising from Laodicean lips; but I know too that these same people can acquiescently tolerate sin in their lives and in the church without so much as tilting one hair of their eyebrows."

January 1948

"No fruit yet. Why is it I'm so unproductive? I cannot recall leading more than one or two into the kingdom. Surely this is not the manifestation of the power of the Resurrection. I feel as Rachel, 'Give me children, or else I die'."

July 1948

"Father, make of me a crisis man. Bring those I contact to decision. Let me not be a milepost on a single road; make me a fork, that men must turn one way or another on facing Christ in me."

November 1948

"Discouragement is a Satanic tool that seems to fit my disposition and the Enemy knows it. When I look at the work in the assembly, and realize that I've been there almost four years but have not seen a single soul led to Christ, my increasing tendency is to throw in the sponge and call it quits. Gospel meeting after gospel meeting, with no one strange coming out---and worse yet, none of the saints seem very deeply exercised about it. 'How long, Lord, when wilt Thou come unto me?' Why does He wait until the fourth watch to come to us instead of in the evening? Well, all of my doubts and fears (hinges on which swing the gates of Hell) can not prevail to take Him from His throne nor stop Him from the building of His Church."

November 18, 1948

"How few, how short these hours my heart must beat, then on---into the real world where the unseen becomes important. Oh my soul---what shall it be for thee in that Day when thou standest before the God Who breathed thee?"

December 5, 1948

"Deep sense of uselessness this morning...What a ragged, shoddy thing Christianity has come to be, honoring men and means, places and crowds---O Lord, deliver me from the faithless spirit of this generation. How I should long to see the simplicity and powerful beauty of the New Testament fellowship reproduced, but no one seems to be similarly exercised here, so I must wait. O Christ, let me know Thee---let me catch glimpses of Thyself, seated and expectant in glory, let me rest there despite all wrong surging about me. Lead me in the right path, I pray."

October 28, 1949

"One of the great blessings of heaven is the appreciation of heaven on earth. He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose."

July 25, 1950

"Surely those who know the great passionate heart of Jehovah must deny their own loves to share in the statement of His. Consider the call from the Throne above, Go ye, and from round about, Come over and help us, and even the call from the damned souls below, Send Lazarus to my brothers, that they come not to this place. Impelled, then, by these voices, I dare not stay home while Quichuas perish. So what if the well-fed church in the homeland needs stirring? They have the Scriptures, Moses, and the Prophets, and a whole lot more. Their condemnation is written on their bank books and in the dust on their Bible covers. American believers have sold their lives to the service of Mammon, and God has His rightful way of dealing with those who succumb to the spirit of Laodicea."

February 23, 1951

"Today Ed and I had the assembly at the Sparta High School. It was a flop and we have been brooding all day. I cant figure it out. We prayed and trusted, but the message and music seemed to have little effect on the kids. It was a real privilege and I will be sorry if we find that we muffed it by some thoughtless neglect or lack of faith or some other thing. Frankly, things have been very difficult to go on with here. There has been no real interest on the part of unsaved radio-listeners, a thing we had hoped for, and our efforts to get public places were blocked in a couple of ways, and so we feel frustrated. It is an easy thing to

wonder, as we have done dozens of times, just why God sent us here. Six weeks so far, and no natives converted except that salesman who was from out of town. We feel God must be testing us, for He has certainly given us no evidence, beyond His provision of our needs, of any special sort that this was His will. But what can one do? Doubt, after praying, waiting, and weighing as well as one can and still leaning on the Spirit to move? No. We cannot doubt, but search our hearts and pray more and believe more. It would be easy to slip into the business world and just be a good guy with a lot of religion rather than a producing son of God in enemy territory."

1951

"The argument of numbers does not hold entirely, since if my call were to go where a great number are needy, I would not have chosen South America at all, but India. The Scriptures indicate that God intends some from every tribe and tongue and people and nation to be there in the glory, sounding out the praises of the Redeemer. This is specific indication that the Gospel must be gotten to tribes who are not yet included in the singing hosts. Hence my burden for cultural groups as yet untouched."

March 5, 1951

"I am learning the vanity of words. If God does not speak through me, as it is plain He does not through most preachers today, I had better leave off trying to preach. Have been praying the prayer of Psalm 51:15, O Lord open Thou my lips and trusting that promise made first to Jeremiah, Behold I will make My words in thy mouth fire, and this people wood. Mere declaration, no matter how eloquent or impelling, will never kindle the fire Gods Word, spoken by Gods man, will kindle. Lord, give me Thy Word for this people."

May 15, 1952

"One doesn't learn to speak a language in a couple of months. It will be plugging for a good while yet. Seems that Ill never get through preparing for the mission field. But I've been comforted this week thinking of our Lords thirty silent years of readying Himself at home with His family and bending over a carpenters bench. Were those days any less of a fragrance to God than His later work before the eyes of the people? I think not. A well-made piece of furniture and a healed blind man represented the same thing to the Father---a job well done; mission accomplished. So with us here. Nothing great, but what is that to Him with Whom there is no great or small?"

November 6, 1955

"You wonder why people choose fields away from the States when young people at home are drifting because no one wants to take time to listen to their problems. Ill tell you why I left. Because those Stateside young people have every opportunity to study, hear, and understand the Word of God in their own language, and these Indians have no opportunity whatsoever. I have had to make a cross of two logs, and lie down on it, to show the Indians what it means to crucify a man. When there is that much ignorance over here and so much knowledge and opportunity over there, I have no question in my mind why God sent me here. Those whimpering Stateside young people will wake up on the Day of Judgment condemned to worse fates than these demon-fearing Indians, because, having a Bible, they were bored with it---while these never heard of such a thing as writing."

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/jim-elliott/excerpts-from-the-journals-of-jim-elliott/>

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