

## READING AND DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR

# *Shadow of the Almighty*

## The Life and Testament of Jim Elliot

by

Elisabeth Elliot

1. In Elisabeth Elliot's preface to her book about her husband, Jim Elliot, she asks, "Is the distinction between living for Christ and dying for Him, after all, so great? Is not the second the logical conclusion of the first?" (p. 9). What do you think is the difference between living and dying for Christ?
2. Unlike Elisabeth Elliot and others of her generation, young people today seem to lack heroes or role models they aspire to be like (p. 13). Do you believe this is a problem? If, as Elisabeth says, people ought to have

heroes to guide them, how might this lack of heroes affect young people?

3. Jim was raised in a home that welcomed new and different people (p. 26). How do you think this affected his interactions with the people he encountered throughout his life? How did the way you were raised affect your outlook on meeting people from different cultures or backgrounds?
4. In college, Jim refused to deliver a speech about a favorite political candidate because he believed “that a follower of Jesus could not participate in war or politics” (p. 33). What is your response to this? How is this similar to or different from the way many Christians conduct themselves regarding politics in our culture?
5. Jim was disciplined in all aspects of his life, such as his eating habits and schedule (p. 38). How do you attempt to exercise discipline over different areas? How might you benefit from exercising more discipline?
6. “No one warns young people to follow Adam’s example. He waited till God saw his need. Then God made Adam sleep, prepared for his mate, and brought her to him. We need more of this ‘being asleep’ in the will of God. Then we can receive what He brings us in His own time, if at all” (p. 50). Do you agree or disagree with Jim’s view that we should wait on God to act? Why or why not?
7. What are some differences between delighting in God’s will and putting up with it (p. 63)?

8. Jim was intentional in his relationship with Elisabeth. He thought about how his actions toward her would affect her and her relationship with God (p. 68). How did this intentionality affect their relationship in the long run? How might your relationships with others benefit from increased intentionality on your part?
9. Almost every day around noon, Jim would take the time to refocus himself on his purpose, which was to serve God (p. 74). Do you take time during the day to refocus yourself on the things that are important to you? Do you think this would be a helpful practice? What hinders this practice?
10. Jim wrote to his family in one of his letters, “Remember you are immortal until your work is done” (p. 81). How might living with this in mind change the way you live your life?
11. In our culture, being a leader is often emphasized as a good quality. In contrast, Jim emphasized the attributes of training to be a servant to others (p. 93). How is training to be a servant different from training to be a leader? Which do you think is more important, serving or leading others?
12. Jim lived by the principle that although he might want to participate in certain activities while at school, he would not participate if other students took offense at his actions (p. 97). How is this different from the way many people in our culture act?

13. Although Jim tried to make the most of each day, he often found that days would go by without him having accomplished something he considered meaningful (p. 105). Do you ever find that days go by without you having accomplished something meaningful or taken steps to achieve your goals? How might you better use each day to complete these tasks?
14. It seemed to Jim that the accumulation of things did little to solve one's problems. Furthermore, he thought that each met need only resulted in more needs to be met (p. 117). Do you find the same to be true for the things you've accumulated in your life? How might you simplify so that there are fewer needs you feel compelled to meet?
15. Jim tried to live his life by remaining in the will of God. If he wasn't sure what God's will was, he waited until he had the confidence to act (p. 166). Have you ever felt confident that you were on the path God intended you to be on? Explain.
16. How is Jim's view of marriage different from modern ideas about marriage (p. 173)? Do you agree with Jim? If not, how does his view differ from your own?
17. It is not uncommon for one to shed tears when encountering difficult circumstances. Jim, when faced with separation from Elisabeth, was comforted by the saying "A Father's hand will never cause / His child a needless tear" (p. 182). What is the difference between needless tears and necessary tears?

18. While living in Shandia, Jim experienced a flood that washed away many of his possessions (p. 203). How did this weaning from material things affect him? How can you learn from Jim's example of holding lightly to material things and let this practice positively affect the way you live?
19. Jim believed that there should be a strict division of labor between husband and wife (p. 225). Do you agree or disagree? What are some advantages and disadvantages of this view?
20. In the weeks before Jim and his companions went to visit the Aucas, he told his wife that he was willing to die for them (p. 241). What is your response to this statement? What people or principles would you be willing to die for?
21. Now that you have finished the book, has your answer to the first question changed? Is there a difference between living and dying for Christ? If your answer has changed, will this affect the way you live your daily life? If it hasn't changed, why not?