

Encouragement to read the biography *Peter Fleming: A Man of Faith*

Peter Fleming exemplified faith that sees the unseen God, as he went forward with God in the divinely-given burden to reach unreached people groups in Ecuador in the 1950s. Being stirred up by the Lord, he and Jim Elliot zealously went to Ecuador in their early 20s. Though they were among the five speared by the Auca Indians in 1956, the gospel did eventually reach these souls. Pete had journalled that he was committed to the work of “laying down my life for their faith.” ¹⁵⁷

The biography challenged me to the following:

1. Be devoted and zealous for the Lord

May we be like Pete who learned to pray, and through that to share God’s heart for souls that caused passion to lay down his life so others could come to faith in the Lord Jesus! I personally was inspired as a college freshman through reading about Jim Elliot. This biography of Pete Fleming shows the same loving heart of devotion to the Lord and His gospel. Beautiful!

Pete was a thoughtful young man, studying philosophy in school and known as an intellectual. Yet “his well-reasoned conclusion was that life only had purpose for a Christian completely dedicated to the Lord Jesus Christ.” ³³ He wrote early in his time in Ecuador:

“I would gladly give my life for that tribe if only to see an assembly of that proud, clever, smart people gathering around a table to honor the Son – gladly, gladly, gladly. It would be worth a lifetime of work and I would be glad to give mine to it. What more could be given to a life?” ⁴⁹

Yet he confessed, “It shames me to think that men in business and sports are more diligent than I in the King’s service.” ⁵⁶

2. Be devoted to prayer

Pete was motivated by “great prayer longings... in particular [for] the Aucas.” ⁴⁶ When he had fruit in the gospel, he spoke of the saved ones as those “for whom we have been praying for a long time.” ¹³⁹ His sixteen-page prayer list included their names. “Prayer is the language of faith and Pete had become an expert.” ¹³⁹ What an example to imitate!

3. Have active faith in God for everything

Pete wrote that “Ecuador, as it seems, is a God-given opportunity to place God’s principles and promises to the extreme test.” ³¹ What an excellent perspective! His going there with all its uncertainties and challenges was an opportunity for the living God to be seen and the reliability of God’s Word to be demonstrated. He saw it as “a test of God Himself as well as us. Our responsibility is to believe and to work and expect God to vindicate His Name by displaying His power.” ³⁹

He depended upon God even for faith in God. He begged, “God give me faith!!!!” ⁴¹ He was convicted that

“we get what we ask for. A really sincere and constant prayer of mine is that we may be ‘full of faith.’” ⁴⁶

This faith showed itself in real ways such as his waiting on his local assembly to agree that God wanted Pete to go to Ecuador though he was only 22 years old. ³⁴ Flesh would fight against those in authority, but faith trusts the ultimate Authority and is able to submit and wait.

By faith Pete had to do hard work that he was not particularly skilled for. He was more of a thinker and not so skilled with his hands, yet when there was concrete to be poured, he trusted God to help him. Sometimes he was bothered by his inabilities as he looked at other’s abilities such as those of Jim. “I seem a slave in great areas of my life to what people

think of me, or better, to my estimation of what they think... But it is all wrong. God does not need a perfectly trained, perfectly acceptable, perfectly capable person to do His work well... He has encouraged me this afternoon to believe that He will use [me]... even though I look young and act young...”⁹¹

4. Actively depend upon God to guide

Pete wrote

“I am glad that God places Himself responsible to guide His disciples; it is not a job for men.”⁵¹

He diligently and continuously sought the leading of the living God for each of his decisions. He was convinced that he should not move forward in a way that is inconsistent with what God has said in His Word. Near the end of his life he wrote to his brother that “we could cover the jungles with native evangelists if we would pay them to go. But we feel it would be a wrong beginning.”¹⁴⁸

When a devastating flood destroyed the mission station, their response was to look for God’s guiding in it. “The deciding evidence in the flood was the timing of it. We were just poised to launch an intensive building program”¹⁰⁷ and God directed them otherwise through the flood.

5. Be on the front lines of the work of God

He was burdened to be close to and among the people. “I don’t like this distance from native believers. In order to train men we must live with them.”⁵⁷ Pete wrote after several years of much labor and difficulty, “The external stimulants to godliness are so much stronger when involved in the work itself... Youth is a time to be soldiers... instead of getting ever more critical and ever less active...The life of obedience is a committal to the work at the point of turbulence... To ease up means to invite trouble from inside, and to find ourselves a long way down the road of useless criticism.”¹³⁴⁻¹³⁵

6. Be encouraged that God brings fruit

The last Sunday before Pete left for America to get married was the first Sunday when a local assembly met where he had been laboring for years. “That day they began to observe the Lord’s Supper in the Quichua language at Shandia as a local church... This is what Pete had believed God for, prayed earnestly for and actively worked for ever since he arrived in Ecuador.” ¹²⁹

When they returned, they moved to a new outreach location. God gave blessing there as well. He wrote in November 1955,

“Today the angels are rejoicing over Puyu Pungu. How faithful God is. This morning a number of Indians decided for Christ...
This is what we came for.” ¹⁴⁶⁻¹⁴⁷

The chief in that area was saved more than 20 years later. ¹⁴⁸ Praise the Lord for His gospel!

Over the years Aucas were also saved “including the five men who killed the missionaries... In heaven Pete will be rejoicing at what God has done.” ¹⁵⁹

The biography suitably ends, “may the testimony of his life stimulate us to follow in his train.” ¹⁶⁰ Amen!



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The referenced biography is:

Ken Fleming, *Peter Fleming: A Man of Faith* (ECS Ministries, 2013) available from EmmausWorldwide.org or GospelFolio.com

Superscripts indicate page numbers