

## Running with Endurance Sermon Introduction

One of my all-time favourite Olympic moments involves a man named John Steven Akhwari. Akhwari ran the marathon representing Tanzania in the 1968 Olympics in Mexico City. You are probably aware that a marathon covers over 26.2 miles. It's a grueling run. About the twelve-mile mark in the race (about half way), Akhwari got tangled up with other runners and took a nasty fall. He tore up his shoulder and his leg; worst of all, he dislocated his knee. But John Steven Akhwari got up and insisted on continuing the race. He hobbled the last 14 miles on a dislocated knee. He finished dead last—over an hour later than the winner. By the time he arrived in the stadium, only a few thousand people were still there.

After the race, Akhwari was interviewed on why he continued to run when he was hurt and so far behind. I love his answer. He said, "My country did not send me 5,000 miles to start the race; they sent me 5,000 miles to finish the race."

I tell you that story because it makes a point that all of us need to hear. The Bible compares the Christian life to a race, a long-distance race. The race begins the moment you put your faith in Jesus—and it continues for as long as you live, The race ends when you cross the finish line in heaven. God calls every Christian to run the race of faith and finish it well. He didn't save you just to start the race. He saved you to finish it!

But that's not always easy. Sometimes the Christian race will feel uphill and against the wind. Sometimes you will get weary and worn down. Sometimes you'll take a nasty fall and find yourself dislocated and discouraged.

So how do you keep running the race of faith when you feel like slowing down or giving up?

This morning, I want to take you to a passage of Scripture that can help you keep going. Even when the race seems uphill and against the wind. It was written to some Christians who were flagging in their race of faith, ready to give up. In this passage, we learn what it takes to keep running with endurance. We'll learn what it will take to finish the race well.

If you could use some encouragement to stay strong in the race of faith, today's passage will help you. So, please, open a Bible and join me in Hebrews 12. I want to talk with you today about **Running with Endurance** from Hebrews 12:1-3