

FINISHING THE RACE

On an October evening in 1968, a group of diehard spectators remained in Mexico City's Olympic Stadium to see the last finishers of the Olympic marathon.

More than an hour before, Mamo Wolde of Ethiopia had won the race to the exuberant cheers of onlookers. But as the crowd watched and waited for the last participants, it was getting cool and dark.

It looked as if the last runners were finished, so the remaining spectators were breaking up and leaving when they heard the sounds of sirens and police whistles coming from the marathon gate into the stadium. And as everyone watched, one last runner made his way onto the track for the last lap of the 26-mile race. It was John Stephen Akhwari from Tanzania.



As he ran the 400-meter circuit, people could see that his leg was bandaged and bleeding. He had fallen and injured it during the race, but he hadn't let it stop him. The people in the stadium rose and applauded until he reached the finish line.

As he hobbled away, he was asked why he had not quit, injured as he was and having no chance of winning a medal.

"My country did not send me to Mexico City to start the race," he answered. "They sent me to finish the race."

Akhwari looked beyond the pain of the moment and kept his eye on the big picture of why he was there.

That remarkable story of courage and perseverance inspires us all. Akhwari's tenacity reminds us of the important principle of finishing well. For us, in Life Care and Century Park, we've entered a race far more important than an Olympic marathon. It's one of caring for God's children.

We may be hammered and emotionally (and sometimes even physically) battered by trials along the way, but let us complete the course.

As you make the success journey, keep in mind that your goal is to finish the race – to do the best you're capable of doing.

Let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us (Hebrews 12:1 NIV).

– Beecher Hunter