

## VICTORY AT MARATHON

The outnumbered Greeks defeated the previously invincible Persians on the plain at Marathon in September 490 B.C. Miltiades, the Athenian general, realized that although the Persians had lost seven ships, the fleet could sail to attack the undefended city of Athens.

According to tradition, he sent Phidippides to Athens to take news of the victory and to warn of the approaching Persian ships. Phidippides raced the approximately 26 miles to Athens, delivered his message, then dropped dead from exhaustion after fighting in the battle all day and completing his run. When the Persian fleet arrived at Athens, they found the soldiers ready to protect their city, so the Persians sailed home in defeat.

Our lives and our professional pursuits are like a marathon. We might wish they were a 100-yard dash or a sprint, but discipline, training and perseverance are required if we are to achieve the ultimate goal of a life and a career of purpose, worth and positive impact on those we meet.

The same is true of our spiritual journey. Becoming transformed into the image of Jesus Christ is no simple footrace. The Apostle Paul explained that he stayed focused on one thing: He didn't dwell on his past, but he always looked forward to what lay ahead, pressing on toward doing God's will and becoming like Christ.

We live in an age when people like things to be quick and easy. Many prefer instant gratification over perseverance. Becoming like Jesus takes more than a few seminars or Bible courses, as helpful as they are. It requires a lifetime of following Him. Sometimes, we may feel as though we will drop dead from exhaustion from our spiritual battles – the trials and the temptations that come our way.

But God is able and willing to give us the strength to follow the examples of Phidippides and Paul to continue pressing on.

--Beecher Hunter