

Note: The video on the 1968 Olympic Games Marathon can be found [here](#). Go to 5:40 to see the end of the race and the finish of John Stephen Akhwari.

## :: Summary

The apostle Paul had a life race. All the people of faith in Hebrews 11 had a life race. You have a life race too. It's *your* race, no one else's. And there is a finish line. The writer to the Hebrews cheers us on in this way: *"Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses ... let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us ..."*

This series, THE CODE, is designed to inspire you to have a personal code for your life in Christ, a code rooted in God's Word and lived out in relationship with Jesus. The code for this week is: *"I will fight the good fight, I will finish the race, I will keep the faith."*

## :: Share

Life is full of marathons. Seasons or situations that are particularly hard or drawn out or crushing in spirit, or conversely, full of more opportunity or activity than can be easily handled. Share a marathon you have experienced. How did you get through it? What motivated you along the way?

## :: Explore and Discuss | Read Hebrews 12:1-3; 2 Timothy 4:7-8

What is involved in throwing off "everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles"?

How does spiritual perseverance (hope-filled endurance, sustained effort, gritty determination) make a difference in running the race marked out for you?

What is the meaning and implication of "fixing your eyes on Jesus" in order to keep from growing weary or losing heart?

## :: Apply it to Your Life

In his personal letter to Timothy near to the end of his life (2 Tim. 4:7-8) Paul reveals a part of his life code. What element(s) from this text inspire you to "finish well" in your life race?

In sports, athletes talk about "leaving it all on the playing field" to describe an all-out effort that leaves nothing at the end of the contest. When asked why he kept running after a horrible injury-producing fall, John Stephen Akhwari of Tanzania gave this answer: "My country did not send me 5,000 miles away to start the race. They sent me



5,000 miles to finish it." From a faith perspective, how might you translate this answer to fit running your spiritual race over the course of your lifetime with all you've got?

In a sentence or two, what experiences or situations in our current world make you want to give up spiritually and just coast? (these may be topics of prayer at the end of your gathering).

:: Pray

Jesus, at the end of our life race, we want to be able to strongly say, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith." Help us Lord, to keep our eyes on you, to be rigorous in casting aside everything that impedes us, and to joyfully embrace both the opportunities and challenges that come in the race you have marked out for us. We look forward to that day when you will award the crown of righteousness to all who are running to get the prize. We praise you that in your grace we will be among that company of saints. Amen.

