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She Finished

By Teresa Hampton

This past Sunday, 86 year old Joy Johnson ran in the New York City Marathon. On the 20th mile she stumbled and struck her head. Paramedics wanted to take her to the hospital, but she decided to finish the race. In an interview before the race she said, “I’ll be at the back of the pack, but I don’t mind. I just praise the Lord I can get out of bed each morning and run. I always say I’m going to run until I drop. I’m going to die in my tennis shoes.”* Despite a slower than normal pace, aches and pains, and a bump on the head, Joy finished the race. The next day she died.

Her story reminds me of the Christian race we run each day. *But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God* (Acts 20:23-25). Our race usually begins with exhilaration, but may become challenging or downright painful. When we fall, we need to get up, brush off the sin, and continue to run until we cross the finish line (1 John 1:9).

Running the Christian race is not about coming in first, but persevering to the end. It’s about praising the Lord because we can get out of bed each morning and run. Joy Johnson was determined to die in her tennis shoes doing the thing she loved. May each of us resolve this day to die in our “Christian shoes,” doing the work of the Lord.

Today’s Verse: *Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us* (Hebrews 12:1).

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