

WISDOM SESSION

Finishing Strong: John Akhwari

“Pain is inevitable. Suffering is optional.”

The year was 1968. The place was Mexico City, site of the 1968 Summer Olympic Games. It happened late one night in the main track and field stadium. Out of the cold darkness, John Steven Akhwari from Tanzania entered the stadium. He hobbled slowly and unsteadily. Pain filled his every step and blood ran down his bandaged leg. His dreams of Olympic glory had long since faded into the shadows of the night. More than an hour earlier, the winner of the Olympic marathon had already been declared. The other finished began streaming across the line shortly thereafter. By the time Akhwari approached the stadium, only a few spectators remained in their seats. There was no cheering, no flag waving. Yet the lone runner pressed on.

As he neared the Olympic stadium, word circulated that there was one runner still struggling to complete the 26.2 mile course. Other Olympians and spectators quickly came back to the stadium and watched the scene unfold. The stadium lights flickered back on. Akhwari entered the stadium and began to wearily pound out his final lap around the track. As he neared the finish line, the small crowd that had gathered began to roar with appreciation. They stood and cheered the lone runner all the way to the finish line. After crossing the white stripe, an exhausted Akhwari nearly collapsed. Yet in his anguish, he managed to stay on his feet and acknowledged the faithful few who had witnessed his final steps.

After it was all over, a reporter asked Akhwari why he had not retired from the race, as he had fallen so far back and had no chance of winning.

Akhwari seemed confused by the question but fondly answered. “My country did not send me 5,000 miles to Mexico City to start the race,” he said. “They sent me 5,000 miles to finish the race.”

“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.” -2 Timothy 4:7

NFOO - No Failures Only Outcomes

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David Trent, founder of Trent Capital Management (www.trentcap.com), believes that wisdom comes from continually seeking to learn and grow through relationships and reading, which leads to personal development. In an effort to inspire learning in others, David Trent sends out weekly Wisdom Sessions. He recommends purchasing and reading any book source used in these Wisdom Sessions.