

Introduction:

Hiram was only seventeen years old when he set foot on West Point soil. He ran his race well. Hiram Ulysses S. Grant (Class of 1849) became General in Chief, Armies of the United States during the Civil War. He became the President of the United States, 1869-77.

Douglas MacArthur (Class of 1903) became Superintendent of the U.S. Military Academy 1919-22; Supreme Commander of the Pacific 1941-45; hero of the Filipinos in World War II.

Fidel V. Ramos (Class of 1950) One of the Academy's international cadets, Ramos served as a Philippine Army officer after graduation. He later served as the 12th President of the Republic of the Philippines from 1992-1998.

Roscoe Robinson, Jr. (Class of 1951) Commanding general, 82nd Airborne Division 1976-78; first African American four-star general in the Army, 1982.

These have run their CFT Run Back, if you will, with endurance. In the words of the Author of Hebrews (11), "And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of..." Pershing, Patton, Bradley, Schwarzkopf, Robert E. Lee, of Buzz Aldrin, Michael Collins, and Eisenhower!

Who, through the training they got from this place, "quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, were made strong out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight."

(Text: Hebrews 12:1-2)

"Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God."

(Title: Finishing a Micro-Marathon)

Declaration: The basis of your running the race of life is found in the examples of the champions of faith mentioned in chapter 11. Your finish line is Christ. Why? Because He has already blazed the trail and finished the course!

Transition: Just as there is a list of the Long Gray Line of cadets who have completed the run before you, there is a long list of heroes of the faith who have completed their individual race recorded for us in Hebrews 11. And Hebrews 12:1-2 gives us a conclusion in a form of motivations that you can apply for your own “micro-marathon” tomorrow:

Outline:

I. Learn from the witnesses, v.1a (and entire chapter 11)

A. Abel: was second born son. Abel was a witness to God’s righteousness as the only ticket to admission into heaven. (Preach Christ here.)

B. Noah: was witness to the fact that God righteously judges the wicked. (The ark was a picture of Christ.)

II. Lose the weights, and run with perseverance v.1b-c.

A. Weights are not necessarily evil. But you don’t need them. Get rid of them.

B. “euperis-tatos” (Break this word down and illustrate.) The sin that is always around us is the sin of faithlessness. Break through this!

C. This micro-marathon is not timed.

D. It’s not who gets there first, it’s you getting there to the finish line and completing it

III. Look to Jesus, v.2.

A. He is the perfect example, follow Him.

B. He completed it with perseverance, so should you.

Concluding Thought:

Emil Zatopek was known to be one of the greatest runners of the 20th century. Emil became recognized by all and famous when he won the 5000m, 10000m and the marathon at the 1952 Olympic Games in Helsinki. He was known all over the world as “The Locomotive” or the “Bouncing Czech”.

He was sixth in a poor family. Worked at a shoe factory when he was only 15. Shoe factory sponsored a race. He joined having never trained before in his life. In the 100 participating runners, he finished second.

Later, he achieved the impossible in the 1952 Olympics held in Helsinki. He won the 5000m, the 10000m and the cross country marathon within a space of 8 days. His doctor had advised him not to compete in the Games as he was suffering from a gland infection but it was his grit and determination that made him participate in the Games and made him achieve this spectacular feat.

This is the exhortation for you: go home to your barracks, get some rest tonight, dream of the many champions of West Point who ran this race before you; learn from them. Put off the things that weigh you down. Get rid of them. Dis-entangle yourself from the sin of unbelief. Break through it. And tomorrow, run with “grit and determination” towards the finish line.

(For those of you who have yet to know Jesus as the Author and Finisher of faith, I invite you to seek to know Him. I'll wait for you after the service.)