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BIBLE ADVENTURES SCRIPT:

A1754 ~ Run with Patience.

Welcome to Bible Adventures. Help for today. Hope for tomorrow. Jesus is Lord of all.

In the 1870s, a United States' inventor by the name of Thomas Edison opened an industrial research laboratory with a team of workers to test out his many inventions.

Edison realised that for his inventions to be of any value in making money and helping people to improve their lifestyles, he must mass produce them. He wasn't the first inventor to try to make a long-lasting practical electric light bulb. Inventors had been trying to do this since the turn of the century. But no one had invented one that could become a commercial venture. People still had to use their wax candles after dark.

Edison's laboratory was extended until it took up two blocks and stocked many different types of raw materials for use in his experiments. His team tried 10,000 attempts to improve the length of time a filament inside the light bulb could burn. When people questioned Edison about so much effort that he was putting in, he replied that he had not failed but just found 10,000 ways that didn't work. He was quite unconcerned about the situation, but most people wondered how he had the patience to continue the task.

Eventually Edison did get a filament to burn for 13½ hours and he applied for a patent on it. By the time the patent was issued, Edison found one that burnt for 1,200 hours. This proved a great success for people all over the world and Edison is remembered for never giving up on making a light bulb.

Edison had a few sayings to encourage people to work patiently. He said: “I never did anything by accident, nor did any of my inventions come by accident; they came by work. The reason a lot of people do not recognize opportunity is because it goes around wearing overalls and looking like hard work and there is no substitute for hard work. Many of life’s failures are people who did not realize how close they were to success when they gave up.”

Although Paul sometimes became discouraged in his preaching and teaching work around first century Asia, he never gave up.

DRAMA - [The Bible In Living Sound](#).

Back in history, there was no postal service where anyone could take a letter to the post office, pay a stamp and post the letter off to wherever it needed to go. All mail had to be hand-delivered and rich people usually had servants who were good runners to perform the task for them. Because people are naturally competitive, the rich people liked to think that they each had the best runner.

You may recall that Paul had his co-worker Titus deliver his letter to Corinth for him. The Apostle Paul had a theme in many of his letters about life being like a marathon race and that all believers are runners in this race of life.

In 1st Corinthians, Chapter 9, Paul spoke about using self-control: “Every athlete in training submits to strict discipline, in order to be crowned with a wreath that will not last; but we do it for one that will last forever.” In that same chapter he said: ‘Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it.’ Of himself he said: “So I do not run aimlessly.... But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.”

In 2nd Timothy, Chapter 2, Paul also said that we have to compete according to the rules: “An athlete is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules.” If not, he’s disqualified from the race.

The writer of Hebrews highlighted the need for endurance when he said: “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.”

Perhaps you have heard of the famous modern Christian runner named Eric Liddell? He was born in 1902 in northern China to Scottish missionary parents. Eric went to school in China until the age of five. When six, Eric and his 8-year-old brother were enrolled in a school for missionaries’ children back in England. The brothers only saw their parents a few times growing up when they were home on leave.

Eric excelled as an athlete at school. In his senior years, he became captain of both the school’s cricket and rugby union teams. His headmaster described him as being “entirely without vanity”. When Eric joined his brother at university, sports played a large part in his life. He competed in the 100-yard and 220-yard races and he became known as the fastest runner in Scotland. Newspapers carried stories of his wins at track competitions and his name was often put forward as a potential Olympic runner. Yet Eric had a very unorthodox running style to win – he ran with a huge sprawling stride, with his head thrown back and his arms clawing the air. People laughed at him for his strangeness of effort but yet he won time and time again.

The 1924 Summer Olympics were held in Paris. As a devout Christian, Eric refused to run a heat held on a Sunday, as he believed Sunday to be God's appointed day of rest. Eric withdrew from his best event, the hundred-metres race. The event had been scheduled and published several months' earlier and Eric's decision not to run on a Sunday had been made clear before the Games started. So in the subsequent months, Eric trained to run the 400-metres distance.

On the day of the Olympic 400-metres race, he went to the starting blocks where an American team trainer slipped a piece of paper into his hand. On it was written the words from 1st Samuel Chapter 2, Verse 30: "Those who honour me, I will honour."

The 400-metres race had always been considered a middle-distance event in which runners raced around the first bend and then coasted through the back leg. Inspired by this Bible verse, as he was in the outside lane unable to see his competitors, Eric raced the whole of the first 200 metres well clear of the favoured opponents.

With little option then but to treat the race as a complete sprint, he continued to race round the final bend. He was challenged all the way down the home straight but held on to take the win.

After the Olympics and his graduation from university, Eric continued to race but hemissed many opportunities because races were often run on a Sunday. Eric returned to northern China to serve as a missionary like his parents, from 1925 to 1943. He worked in an extremely poor area but continued to race once in a while. He returned to Scotland only twice. Once he was asked if he ever regretted his decision to leave the fame and glory of athletics. Eric replied, "It's natural to think over that sometimes, but I'm glad I'm at the work I'm engaged in now. A person's life counts for far more at this than the other." On the topic of Christians, one quote of his was, "We are all missionaries. Wherever we go we either bring people nearer to Christ or we repel them from Him."

Eric's first job as a missionary was to teach at a college for wealthy Chinese students. He believed that by teaching the children of the wealthy, they would become influential people in China and promote Christian values. While he was best known for his athletic achievements, his true passion was found in his missionary work. He used his knowledge of sport to train the boys in a number of different games. He also looked after the Sunday School at the church where his father was pastor.

During his first home leave from missionary work, Eric was ordained as a minister of religion. On his return to China, he married Florence and they had three daughters, the youngest of whom he did not live to see.

In 1941, life in China had become very dangerous as a result of Japanese attacks and all missionaries were advised to leave. Pregnant Florence and the children left but Eric moved to a rural mission station to join his brother who was a doctor there. The station was desperately short of medical supplies and the missionaries were exhausted. Eric arrived just in time to relieve his sick brother. They suffered many hardships at the mission but in time, the Japanese took it over. Eric returned back to where he had been with his parents but instead, became interned in a prisoner-of-war camp in 1943.

Life in a POW camp wasn't easy, as there was little food, medicine and other supplies. People formed into groups and they often acted selfishly but Eric kept himself busy helping the elderly, teaching Bible classes, arranging games and teaching science to the children, who referred to him as 'Uncle Eric.'

After the war was over, men remembered Eric as someone who helped others while exhausted himself. He never said a bad word about anybody but maintained a love of life, good humour and enthusiasm. The men considered him as close a saint as they had ever seen.

In his last letter to his wife, written the day he died, Eric wrote of suffering a nervous breakdown due to overwork. He actually had an inoperable brain tumour, which would have been made worse by a lack of good food. He died five months before the end of WWII and liberation in 1945. The entire camp and especially the young people were stunned for days, so great was the vacuum that Eric's death had left.

According to a fellow missionary, Eric's last words were, "It's complete surrender," in reference to how he had given his life to his God. Eric's life was made into a film called *Chariots of Fire* in 1981, even though some of the details about his life were incorrect. In 2008 just before the Beijing Olympics started, Chinese authorities revealed that Eric Liddell had refused an opportunity to leave the camp and instead, given his place to a pregnant woman in a secret prisoner exchange deal. News of this final act of Eric's sacrifice surprised even his own family members.

Have you ever wondered what people might say about your life after you're gone? During times of pressure, what our real character is like will show. So if you're not happy with what you see in yourself when times are tough, pay attention to God's character-building principles in His Bible. Just like Eric Liddell, we need to surrender our entire selves to the Lord Jesus. When we confess our pride and sin, He is faithful and He will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteous thoughts, words and deeds. Then we need to learn to live for Him through prayer, consistent Bible study and dependency on Him.

As Jesus said in Matthew, Chapter 5, Verse 16, may the same words be relevant to you: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven."

The drama is from The Bible In Living Sound.

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