

# The Life of Eric Liddell

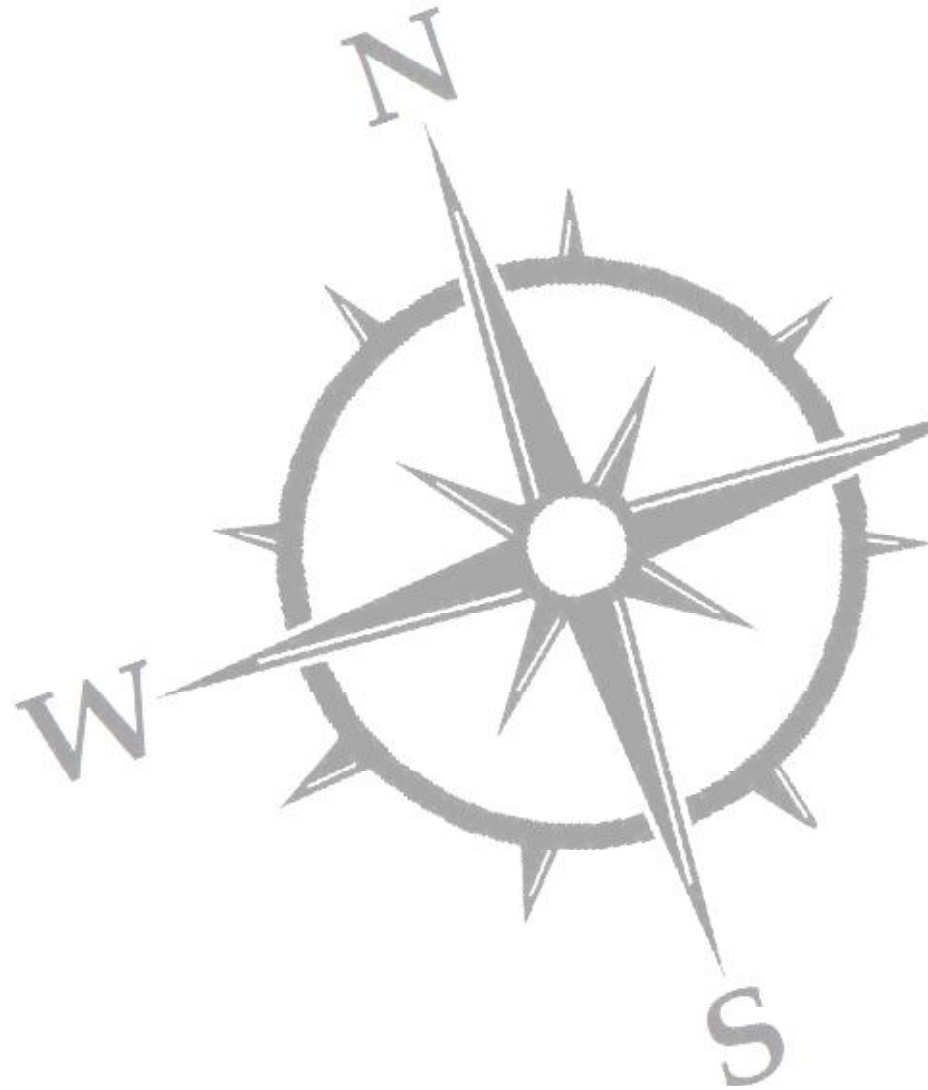
(1902-1945)

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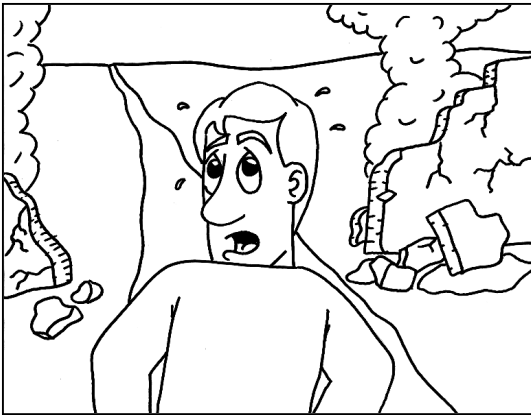
## Lesson: 5.28 – Determined Missionary Snapshot Series

This lesson reminds us not to quit in the service of the Lord. The Devil often uses opposition to the cause of Christ to discourage us and make us want to stop. Endure to the end for the Lord! The Bible reminds us that Christians are to endure and not give up even when the fight is tough. Eric Liddell continued serving the Lord even when things got difficult.

*"And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." - Galatians 6:9*







### **Introduction:**

How many of you have ever had to run for a long period? Maybe you ran in a race or a soccer or football game. After we have been running for a long time, our bodies get tired, and they tell us to stop running and relax a little bit. Our story today is about a missionary to China. Many things could have made him want to quit. Will our missionary keep going in the face of warplanes, guns, and even a prison camp? Let's listen carefully and see what happens in this story about Eric Liddell...

### **Missionary Story:**

“Boom! Boom!” I turned to see the walls of a nearby building fold in on themselves and then crumble to the ground. I looked up just in time to spot a Japanese plane disappear into the smoky sky above. “Over here Mr. Liddell... come and see!” Wang shouted waving his arms towards an old warehouse building. I ran to see what he was looking at and spotted a man inside with a deep cut on his neck. “Just let me die! Let me die!” the man said. “No, my friend,” I

said as Wang and I carefully picked the man up, “I am here to help you.” We quickly loaded the man into our cart and then Wang and I began pulling the cart down the road to the tiny hospital as fast as our legs would move it. “Here comes the planes again Mr. Liddell!” Wang shouted waving towards the sky again. We darted here and then on the road trying to avoid the planes’ gunfire on the road all around us. I looked up to see the gate of the hospital in front of us. “Just keep running... keep running,” I shouted out of breath over my shoulder to Wang. Finally, we passed under the gate of our make-shift hospital and carefully moved Hui-shu onto a bed. As I walked out of the room, I wiped the sweat from my forehead. “It’s like when you ran in a race isn’t it Mr. Liddell?” Wang asked. I smiled and nodded my head as my mind traveled back to several years before.

“Runners take your marks!” The official shouted. I looked around the stadium near Edinburgh University and noticed my friend sitting up in the stands. That same friend had heard that I was a good athlete and had encouraged me to try out for the university’s teams. Here I was, about to run a race and if all went well, I just might be selected to represent Britain in the 1924 Olympics.

I had already spoken to each of the other racers and told them, “best wishes for your success in today’s event.” Then I took the place that I had drawn for the quarter-mile race: the inside track.

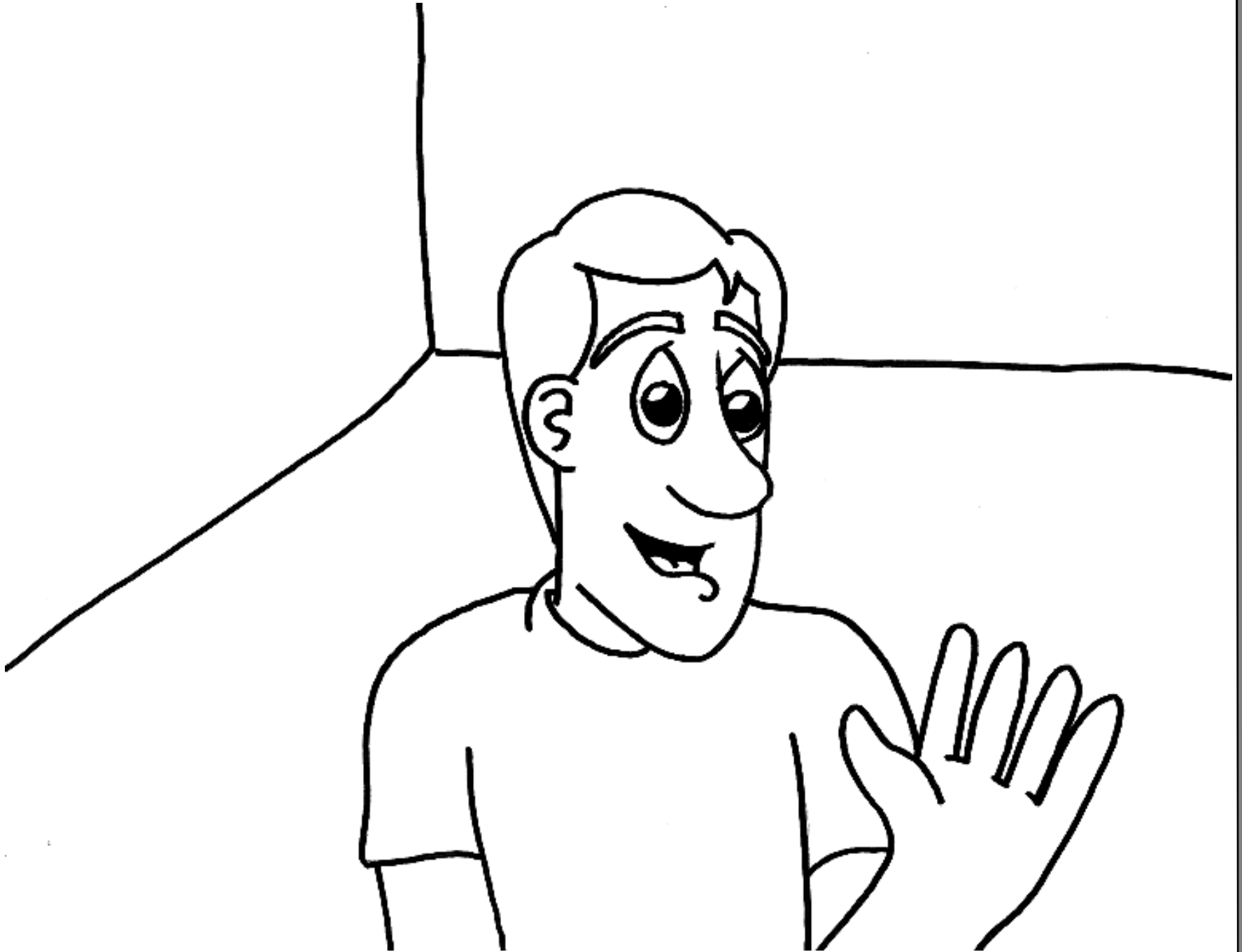
“Get set!” the judge shouted and then the starting pistol cracked and I sprang from the starting line. It was a great start... or so I

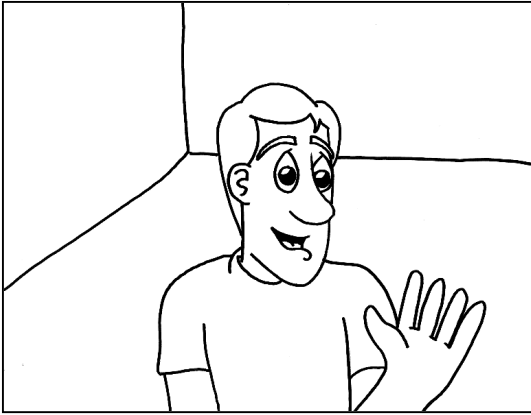
thought. I had run a few steps when another runner named Gillies tripped over his feet and stumbled into my lane pushing me off the track and onto the grass. I was sure that I was now disqualified from the race since I had stepped off of the track. Disappointment started to well up in my throat and I kicked my foot in frustration. But then... something caught my eye. The officials were waving me on! I wasn’t disqualified after all?! A quick look at the other runners and I realized that they were a good twenty yards ahead of me. Without thinking, I jumped back on the track and took off as fast as my legs would run.

A gasp went up from the audience. I knew what they were thinking. “No one can catch up being that far behind!” But I had to try, I wasn’t going to quit. I threw my head back and let my arms flail all around. Someone once told me that I looked like a circus pony when I ran with my arms going everywhere. My running style was indeed awkward, but it was the only way I knew to run.

To everyone’s amazement, I inched my way past the last place runner and then past a couple more. I was in fourth place as we rounded the final turn. Gillies who had stumbled at the beginning had recovered and was now in first place. My lungs felt like they were going to explode and my legs felt like they were on fire. Still, I had to keep going. In the last few seconds of the race, I passed the third-place runner, then the second-place runner... with a final push of everything I had, I passed Gillies and won the race by two yards.

The people in the stands erupted like





not for sports... I am sorry, but I cannot run.”

My teammates were surprised at first, but they told me they understood. The newspapers, however, weren't so kind. “He's a traitor to his country,” one writer said. “What kind of man would refuse to run for Britain, just because he doesn't like to run on Sundays?” asked another. “Why is he making a fuss about it?” a third writer said. I wasn't trying to make a fuss. I was determined to honor the commitment I had made.

Hui-shu's yells from the other room brought me back from my thoughts. Hui-shu told me how he got that terrible cut on his neck the day that we found him. Hui-shu had been in his house painting when bombs began dropping from the skies killing his family. The Japanese soldiers brought all the Chinese people out into the street and demanded that they bow to them. “I only bow to those that I respect!” Hui-shu had said. Because he refused to bow, one of the soldiers had struck him in the neck with his sword cutting him deeply.

I remembered when the British government had told all British subjects to get out of China immediately, but I could not abandon the Chinese people. I did send my wife and children out of China, but I remained to help people just like Hui-shu. It wasn't long before I was captured and taken to a Japanese prison camp. As I was being led down the road, a man suddenly appeared in the crowd along the road. It was Hui-shu. He said nothing, but when our eyes met, he bowed. My mind went back to his room at the hospital. “I only bow to those that I

respect!” he had said.

### **Application:**

You know, boys and girls, Galatians 6:9 tells us the importance of not quitting as we serve the Lord. God has promised to reward those who faithfully serve Him. Sadly, Eric Lidell passed away from a brain tumor while in that prison camp, but not before many Chinese people like Hui-shu had accepted Jesus as their Savior.

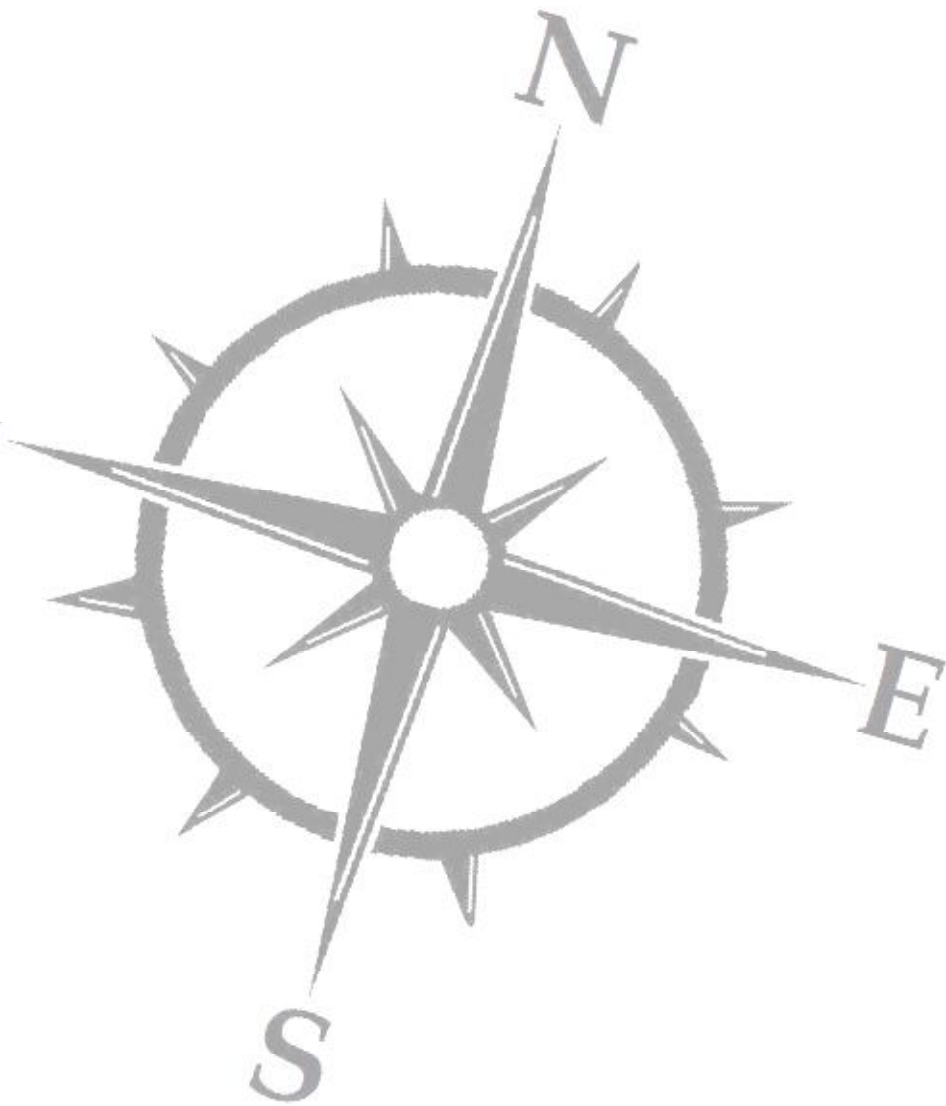
Eric Liddell worked in China for 20 years. He influenced many Chinese people for Christ. In 2009, Eric Lidell was voted as the greatest Scottish athlete of all time, he was also inducted into the hall of fame. Books have been written and even a movie *Chariots of Fire* was made about his life and his successes. Eric would probably have laughed if he had known this. He never thought of himself as anything special. He was just a man who tried to honor God and help people in need. In the end, it was those two things that made him a very special person to so many people around the world.

*(For additional information, discussion questions, and materials on this lesson please refer to lesson 5.28 on **page 90** in your Africa Expedition - Leader's Guide.)*

a volcano. After crossing the finish line, I fell to the ground, gasping for breath and my muscles shaking like jelly. A stretcher was called to carry me off the track. “How did you manage to win such an impossible race?” a reporter asked me. I smiled, “the first half I ran as fast as I could. The second half I ran faster with God's help,” I said.

My determination had won me the race and with that, the chance of being picked to be part of the Olympic team representing Britain. But my determination would also cost me something very soon.

“Hey, Lidell!” one of my Olympic teammates shouted several weeks later, “the Olympic timetables just arrived.” I hurried over and grabbed the schedule. I eagerly ran my finger down each day's events looking for the 100-meter race which was my best event. Suddenly, I spotted it and my excitement turned to sadness. “I can't run,” I said quietly. “What? You can't run... what are you talking about?” my teammates said. “They have scheduled the 100-meter race for a Sunday,” I said, “as a Christian, I believe that Sunday is a day for worshipping God,



# References

For further reading or to obtain more information on this portion of the life of this missionary, please consult the following sources from which we obtained information from:

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