

Running the Race One Day at a Time: A Testimony of Faith

Boris Jeremenko

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Running the Race One Day at a Time is a joyous memoir about emigration, war, and career and family challenges.

In Boris Jeremenko's encouraging memoir, *Running the Race One Day at a Time*, faith is a force for achievement, celebration, and getting through tough times.

In 1951, six-year-old Jeremenko and his family arrived in New York as displaced persons. They came from a refugee camp in Austria. Jeremenko's father had PTSD and was an alcoholic, but still had his son's admiration; his mother was a committed, loving parent and a source of safety.

Lively and endearing childhood scenes are included. In them, Jeremenko expresses appreciation for recycling and recounts the gift of a used bike—treasured as if it was new. Christmas memories of downtown decorations and the scents of trees are included, alongside recollections of attending Lutheran school and learning the Christian values that set the standards for his future. Later, Jeremenko served in Vietnam, where he lost friends and helped injured fellow soldiers. He recalls living in constant fear and developing PTSD himself. He also worked in a jail.

Faith and resilience are dominant themes; Jeremenko pushes through obstacles because of his beliefs, and is also compassionate in addressing others. He makes assertions such as that prisoners are human beings who should be treated with understanding and empathy; such beliefs are emphasized in an account of him standing up for a drunk prisoner whom other officers were beating. He also faced challenges following a campaign to be sheriff, after which he was involved in a fraud case. Financial struggles and abandoned dreams factor in, but Jeremenko is seen forgiving those who wronged him and moving forward.

Black-and-white photographs, some blurry, are included in each chapter to illustrate events. They show happy memories shared with family members or mark monumental stages in Jeremenko's life, as with those that complement his war memories and personal achievements.

Its tone both realistic and optimistic, the book focuses most on happy and rewarding family moments, as when it moves from painful accounts of his daughter falling in with the wrong crowd, forcing her parents to raise two of their grandchildren, to celebrations of his daughter's later return to parenting. The text is fond when addressing family members, treating memories of them as precious. But the book's chronology is too loose; some events are mentioned and then revisited, interrupting the flow of Jeremenko's story.

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EDITH WAIRIMU (October 5, 2020)

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