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Someone once compared writing a Ph.D. dissertation to the short story entitled “The Loneliness of the Long-Distance Runner” (1959) by Alan Sillitoe. The comparison was made between the efforts of a long-distance runner and the individual who, in order to complete the dissertation, must display a similar wit, determination and moral stamina to persevere till the finish line. At that time, I agreed with this comparison completely. But standing on this side of the finish line, I would like to add to or amend this comparison, for my finished dissertation is the result of God’s great grace and mercy upon my life, and His placement of so many individuals, who edited, proof-read, encouraged, discussed with and prayed this dissertation into completion. The journey seemed like a lonely one at the time, with no sign of the finish line, but then the constant encouragement of family, friends, professors and university administrative staff pushed me to persevere till the end and for that, I am truly grateful.

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