

## 'I Know How You Feel'

Every baseball player dreams of making it to the majors, but to set a record within the first week would be something really special.

Chase Wright, a rookie pitcher for the New York Yankees, tied a Major League Baseball record in the first week he was called up from Double-A ball – although probably not in the way he had hoped.

On Sunday night, April 22, 2007, Wright gave up a record four consecutive home runs to the Boston Red Sox, allowing the Red Sox to sweep their division rivals in their first meeting of the season.

Wright tied the record previously held by Paul Foytack, who gave up four consecutive homers in 1963. Rather than berate the young pitcher, Yankee skipper Joe Torre said, "It's just another piece of experience for that kid. It has nothing to do with what he's going to be or what's going to happen in the future. I still think he's going to be special. He's a pretty tough kid."



While Torre's confidence was certainly heartening to Wright, he received some support in the mail from someone who can empathize. Paul Foytack, Wright's partner in baseball infamy, mailed Wright a letter of encouragement the next morning. "He's kind of young to be going through that," Foytack said. "Hopefully, he'll take it to heart."



There was only one other person on the planet who knew exactly how Wright felt, and that was Paul Foytack. Not only that, but Foytack was the one person whose words of encouragement would mean the most to Wright.

God equips us – through the most disappointing experiences of our lives – for the ministry of encouragement. Had Paul Foytack not had the same experience, he would not have been able to offer Wright such meaningful encouragement.

It is through our disappointments that God empowers us to empathize with the very people who are in need of our empathy.

(more)

Are you going through some tough time, some trial? God is likely using that experience to strengthen you in the faith, to depend on Him more. And He could be getting you ready to be an important resource, an encourager, to another. Is there someone you know today who could use your empathy?

Be assured that whatever is happening, God has a plan for you.

*Even when we are weighed down with troubles, it is for your comfort and salvation! For when we ourselves are comforted, we will certainly comfort you. Then you can patiently endure the same things we suffer (2 Corinthians 1:6 NLT).*

– Beecher Hunter