

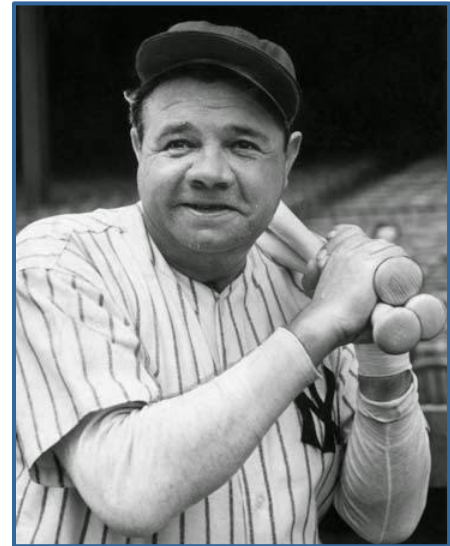
When the Babe Needed a Hug

One of the all-time greats in baseball was George Herman “Babe” Ruth Jr., whose career in Major League Baseball spanned 22 seasons, from 1914 through 1935.

With nicknames of *The Bambino* and *The Sultan of Swat*, he began his career as a left-handed pitcher for the Boston Red Sox, but achieved his greatest fame as a slugging outfielder for the New York Yankees.

Ruth is considered by many to be the greatest baseball player of all time. In 1936, he was elected into the Baseball Hall of Fame as one of its first five inaugural members.

Among his records are career home runs, 714; runs batted in, 2,213; bases on balls, 2,062; slugging percentage, .6897; and on-base plus slugging, 1.164 (the latter two still stand today). His record of 714 home runs remained unbroken until Hank Aaron hit 715 in 1974.



Fans packed baseball stadiums around the country to see Ruth play. He was the idol of sports fans but time and age took its toll and his popularity began to wane.



Finally, the Yankees traded Ruth to the Boston Braves. In one of his last games in Cincinnati, Ruth began to falter. He struck out and made several misplays that allowed the Reds to score five runs in one inning.

As the Babe walked toward the dugout, chin down and dejected, there rose from the stands an enormous storm of boos and catcalls. Some fans actually shook their fists.

Then a wonderful thing happened. A little boy jumped the railing, and with tears streaming down his cheeks, he ran out to the great athlete. Unashamedly, he flung his arms around the Babe's legs and held on tightly.

Babe Ruth scooped him up, hugged him and set him down again. Patting him gently, he took his hand and the two of them walked off the field together.

(more)

Here was a kid who was loyal to his hero, even when the tide had turned against him.

Loyalty – in business, government, the military, education, athletics and religion – is a treasured characteristic trait. When things are going well, it is trumpeted and admired. But in the bad times, loyalty can dim and disappear.

Loyalty implies a faithfulness that is steadfast in the face of any temptation to renounce, desert or betray.

Loyalty can be an important key to success, whether it's a football team, a church or a business organization, because it is an indicator of commitment, a testimonial of the heart.

The Bible highly regards loyalty. Jesus Christ calls on his followers to be loyal to Him. And in our day, we read about Christians being persecuted around the world – some having their heads cut off – because of their witness for our Lord. They remained loyal, even though it cost their lives.

God remains loyal to believers. Proverbs 18:24 states: “A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.”

Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love (1 Corinthians 16:13-14 ESV).

– Beecher Hunter