Devotional Thoughts :: The Lesson Of The Bambino

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By Ed Price

Herein is my Father glorified that ye bear much fruit, so shall ye be my disciples. - John 15:8

It's springtime when a young man's fancy turns to baseball. Those "young" men over 60 remember the glory days when salaries were not obscenely high, a player's life was relatively free of scandal, and an autographed picture cost you nothing. Those a little older can probably recall the greatest player the game has ever produced -- George Herman Ruth, the neglected kid from the streets of Baltimore who changed the face of baseball forever.

The children of America, who held him up as their hero, cared nothing about his faults. It was not what the "Bambino" was, it was who he was that counted. Once he appeared on the field, Ruth was the greatest slugger in the world who would hit a home run in honor of a child desperately ill in the hospital.

When a child met him on the street and asked for an autograph, the Babe treated the kid as if he was the only tyke in the world. He visited children's hospitals regularly and spent a great deal of time with his young fans. He fed the poor ones, clothed them, and sometimes sent them off to college. His love was unconditional and unfettered by pretense or ulterior motive. When young eyes focused on the Babe, they saw a valued friend they could look up to and emulate.

The lesson of Babe Ruth and his young fans is one by which Christians can profit. We tend to judge others by standards that no one, including ourselves, can possibly meet. No matter how hard we try, perfection eludes us.

Who knows for sure what God had in mind for Babe Ruth. He was blessed -- no doubt about that, but he was no saint either. By his example, however, a lot of kids kept themselves out of serious trouble.

If ministries come in many different guises, then Babe Ruth was truly a chaplain to the young. His scepter was a bat, his pulpit home plate, and his church was Yankee Stadium. A lot of duffers around today are so much the better because of his example.

The Babe faithfully practiced his gospel of love. The world is a much better place because the Bambino passed through it. Will the same thing be said of us as well?