

## Introduction

I love the game of baseball. When I was very young, growing up in Newton, Kansas, and then Kansas City in the late 50's and early 60's, I would get up in the morning, have breakfast, and head to the neighborhood ball field. Home for lunch and back to the ball field, then home for dinner and back to the ball field, until it got so dark we couldn't see the ball. The next day, exactly the same.

At that time, the New York Yankees were the best team in baseball. I loved to watch them on TV and listen to them on the radio (especially during the World Series). I knew the name of every single player and his place in the batting order - Richardson, Kubek, Maris, Mantle, Skowron, Berra, Howard, Boyer, Ford. They were my heroes - especially Mickey Mantle - but more about that later.

Every August, for my birthday, my Mom, Dad, Gramps and Grandma would take me to Municipal Stadium in Kansas City to watch the Yankees play the Kansas City A's. Some years it would be a doubleheader – back in the days when they actually scheduled doubleheaders! Memories I will never forget.

We eventually moved to Dallas, and I played summer ball in Boys Baseball, Inc., (BBI). The baseball coach at my high school didn't think I was good enough to make the team (even though the guys on my high school team, whom I pitched against during the summer, tried to convince him otherwise). Then I tried to “walk on” during freshman tryouts at the Air Force Academy (my alma mater), but again the coach thought I was too small to play college baseball. But it never dampened my love for the game.

I played very competitive softball during my six years in the Air Force, and later while in the Air National Guard. I even played in an inter-service softball tournament during my activation for Desert Storm. My church team (First Christian Church of Plano) won many league, state and regional tournaments - but more about that, and my dad, Bill Wright, in the “Epilogue” section of this book.

## Introduction (cont.)

In 1985 I started coaching my son's T-ball team, and then my daughter's softball team, and in 1990 some friends and I started conducting baseball camps for young players. I later worked with the Doyle Baseball Schools out of Florida, an excellent program I strongly recommend to everyone. In 1993 Steve Pauley, the father of a player who had attended one of my camps, invited me to play on a Men's Senior Baseball League (MSBL) team in Dallas and then go to Phoenix in October for the MSBL World Series. Since then I have played on and managed over twenty MSBL World Series teams, including two Texas Blue Jays teams that won World Series Championships.

Over these nearly twenty years with the MSBL I have had the opportunity to meet and play against ball players from all over the country, build many more great baseball memories, develop some wonderful friendships, and taken steps (though I did not always know it at the time) that led to the formation of Baseball and Bibles.

One of my best friends and long time teammates is Vernon Wells, Jr., (I call him "V"), a very accomplished artist, great athlete, and father of Vernon Wells III (formerly of the Toronto Blue Jays, Anaheim Angels and New York Yankees). During the 2010 MSBL World Series "V" and I were talking about how great it was that our Texas Blue Jays team had such strong chemistry, and how we were all commonly grounded in our values, in loving the game of baseball, and in openly showing our faith to other teams with whom we were competing. We talked about Josh Hamilton and what a great role model he is for children and adults, and I told him of my dream of wanting to again teach young players the game of baseball, along with the Word of God and lessons of life. So "V" went back to his painting (or at least that's what I thought he was doing), and a little while later he told me to "check this out." He had created the logo you see on the cover of this book, and it brought a huge smile to my face and joy to my heart. I knew then and there that the Lord was calling us to make this a reality.

## Introduction (cont.)

I certainly do not claim to be an expert on the Bible, though I am trying to better understand it every day. (My wife Diana is an inspiration to me in her study and teachings). There are certainly ball players out there who are more talented than me, and have risen to higher levels of accomplishment in the game. Yet I am 100% convinced that God is guiding me (and everyone else involved) to bring Baseball and Bibles to the world. He has a plan for us to use the game of baseball, the Word of God, and lessons of life to help change the lives of children and parents everywhere.

I wish you the very best on the ball fields, a strong faith in your walk with the Lord, and countless blessings as you go through life!

Blessings,

*Rick Wright*

Rick Wright

Founder & President

Baseball and Bibles Foundation, Inc.

Please take a couple of additional minutes and go to the “Epilogue” on page 50, where you can read what the late Paul Harvey called “the rest of the story.”

