

EXCERPT



**Grace to Overcome**  
*31 Devotions on God's Work Through Black History*

June 3, 2025 | \$19.99, 160 pages, casebound | 978-1-5140-1191-1

## The Black Babe Ruth?

American history often gets things backwards. Nowhere is this clearer than in the case of Josh Gibson (1911-1947), known for years as “The Black Babe Ruth”—a nickname Josh should have been offended by.

Gibson hit somewhere between eight hundred to a thousand career home runs. Ruth hit seven hundred and fourteen. Josh Gibson boasted a lifetime batting average almost twenty points higher than the Babe. The most home runs Babe Ruth hit in a season was sixty. Josh maxed out with sixty-nine. And Josh compiled his statistics while playing the last four years of his life with a brain tumor, which led to his untimely death at age thirty-five (Andrew Simon, “Josh Gibson: A Larger-Than-Life Legend,” mlb.com). Babe retired at forty.

Josh never got a shot to play in the major leagues because of the “gentlemen’s agreement” that banned him and his fellow Black ballplayers. Eventually, Josh would get his due, though he never lived to see it. In 1972, Josh became one of the first players from the Negro Leagues to be inducted into the Major League Baseball Hall of Fame. And in 2024, Major League Baseball incorporated Negro League statistics, making Josh Gibson the all-time leader in batting average and slugging percentage (among other categories).

Most people still have never heard of him, because Josh Gibson is a reminder that to be Black and great in America often comes with an asterisk. People wrongly assume that Josh played against inferior talent, which is why they saw his astronomical numbers as being inflated. In their eyes, Josh and the whole system he played in are second class, glorified minor leagues, weak.

“Weak.” Now, that’s a word Paul uses to describe how the Corinthians viewed him. Like any city steeped in first-century Greek culture, the Corinthians were obsessed with those who possessed extraordinary gifts of speech. You know the type: those who could move a crowd from laughter to tears with the flip of a phrase or the telling of a story. And then came Paul, who didn’t rely on powers of Greek rhetoric, but on a man who, he said, had died on a cross and risen from the grave for the forgiveness of their sins. Paul was so convinced by the message of the cross that he intentionally stayed away from catchy phrases or moving stories. He didn’t want their faith to rest in the messenger but in the message. Most in Corinth rejected that message, and even people in the church considered Paul to be in the minor leagues of speakers—boring and weak.

Now as one who makes his living with words, I can tell you nothing would keep me up at night more than the ridicule Paul experienced at the hands of the Corinthians. Do you know how many times I’ve berated myself over the mediocre (or downright bad) sermon I preached? How often I thought the story I told wasn’t a good one, or how the joke didn’t resonate, or how no one responded? It’s unthinkable to me that what I flog myself over, Paul boasts in.

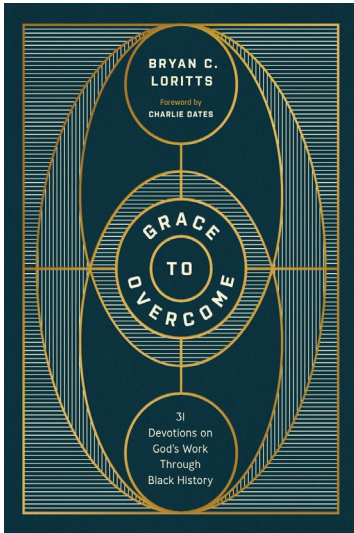


---

Krista Clayton, Director of Publicity  
800.843.4587 ext. 4013 or [kclayton@ivpress.com](mailto:kclayton@ivpress.com)



[ivpress.com/media](http://ivpress.com/media)



EXCERPT



**Grace to Overcome**  
*31 Devotions on God's Work Through Black History*

June 3, 2025 | \$19.99, 160 pages, casebound | 978-1-5140-1191-1

Feeling weak? Feeling a touch like Josh Gibson, in that you've accomplished so much and gone unnoticed all at once? Don't think you've received your just due? Yeah, there's a place for standing up for yourself, but while you are in pursuit of justice, remember that God sees.

It's been said that white fans who saw Josh Gibson, the "black Babe Ruth," play were so impressed that they started calling Babe Ruth the "white Josh Gibson." Going by the numbers, they're on to something.

—adapted from chapter seven, "The Black Babe Ruth?"



---

Krista Clayton, Director of Publicity  
800.843.4587 ext. 4013 or [kclayton@ivpress.com](mailto:kclayton@ivpress.com)



[ivpress.com/media](http://ivpress.com/media)



BIO



## **Grace to Overcome** *31 Devotions on God's Work Through Black History*

June 3, 2025 | \$19.99 | 160 pages, casebound | 978-1-5140-1191-1

Crafted by Pastor Bryan C. Loritts, an influential voice in multiethnic church movements, *Grace to Overcome* is a powerful collection of thirty-one devotions that bring to life the stories of both renowned and lesser-known figures who have helped shape society. From the soulful notes of Miles Davis and Billie Holiday to the groundbreaking inventions of Jerry Lawson and Alice H. Parker, each story is an inspiring testament to resilience and faith.

## **Bryan Loritts, Advocate for the Multiethnic Church**

*"We need these historical narratives from the experience of African American Christ-followers. After all, we have come over a way that with tears has been watered, treading our path through the blood of the slaughtered. The intersection of faith and the unique African American story is perhaps the most timely message for America today. It's not just a story that we read, but a story that reads us. This is the kind of book you will want to offer to your children in years to come."*

*Charlie Dates*, senior pastor of Salem Baptist Church of Chicago, from the foreword

**Bryan Loritts** (DMin, Liberty University) is the teaching pastor at The Summit Church. He has dedicated his life and ministry to seeing the multiethnic church become the new normal in our society.

Loritts is vice president for regions for the Send Network, the church-planting arm of the Southern Baptist Convention, where he is responsible for training church planters in multiethnic church planting.

His ministry takes him across the globe annually, as he speaks at conferences, churches, and retreats. Loritts has been a featured speaker for Catalyst and the Global Leadership Summit. His books include *Insider Outsider*, *The Dad Difference*, *Enduring Friendship*, and *The Offensive Church*.

Follow Bryan on Twitter: @DrLoritts  
Follow him on Instagram: @Loritts  
Find him on Facebook: Bryan Loritts  
Visit his website at [BryanLoritts.com](http://BryanLoritts.com)



---

**Krista Clayton**, Director of Publicity  
800.843.4587 ext. 4013 or [kclayton@ivpress.com](mailto:kclayton@ivpress.com)



[ivpress.com/media](http://ivpress.com/media)