

# Atlanta Braves Pitcher Tim Hudson Uses Platform to Glorify God

This is an era when many professional sports figures dismiss their opportunity to be role models. Hudson embraces it as a God-ordained mantle for living out the gospel.

“When you’re blessed and you’ve been given things, a lot is expected in return,” says Hudson, who recently won his 200th career game to earn a place in Major League Baseball history. “You don’t want to lose perspective of the platform you have, and you need to understand that you can do good with it.”

Hudson, who has a \$9 million salary this season, and his wife, Kim, say their life Scripture passage is the mandate given by Jesus in Luke 12:48: “For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more.”

“That’s something we kind of use as our family motto,” Tim says.

Tim and Kim established the Hudson Family Foundation four years ago to help meet the needs of children and families who reside in Georgia and Alabama. The foundation provides individual and family grants and scholarships, supports nonprofit organizations and gives away children’s books and Braves tickets.

“God definitely put children on our hearts,” Kim says. “[He] opened our eyes to so many needs. It became very obvious that was where we needed to plug in.

“A lot of people look for their purpose and don’t always know. God made it crystal clear for us.”

Kim and Tim, who have a son, 8, and two daughters, 9 and 11, were moved by families with ailing children who were struggling to pay household bills and by parents who couldn't afford high gas prices to drive to a far-away hospital every day to see their children.

"We couldn't pretend we didn't know what was going on," she says.

Even more important to the Hudsons than the impact they're making is their personal relationship with the Lord.

"Jesus is everything to me and my family," Tim says. "Just knowing that somebody loves you that much, to do what He did on the cross for you and your sins. I always think about my relationship with my kids and how much I love them and absolutely would do anything for them. It's overwhelming to know somebody loves me more than I love my kids. That's mind-boggling to me."

Hudson's 15-year baseball career has been a statement in consistency and underrecognized excellence. He's hardly a household name outside of the sport's most loyal fan base, yet already he has earned a place among baseball's elite.

Upon winning his 200th game on April 30, Hudson had the seventh-best winning percentage (.656) among the 110 pitchers with 200 or more career victories, trailing only Hall of Famers Whitey Ford, Lefty Grove and Christy Mathewson and more contemporary stars Roger Clemens, Pedro Martinez and Roy Halladay.

Hudson has appeared in three All-Star games and has won 15 or more games in eight seasons, including one year with 20 wins.

"When you start putting it in a historical context, his numbers are pretty impressive," says Braves general manager Frank Wren.

Hudson, who turned 38 on July 14, turned in a dream performance when he won his 200th game 8-1 over the Washington Nationals. He allowed only three hits in seven innings and excelled as a batter, hitting a home run—only the third of his career—and a double. He became only the second pitcher to homer while getting win No. 200. The other occurred 56 years ago (Cleveland's Bob Lemon).

Hudson's pre-game prayer on the pitcher's mound that night was similar to most games: He prayed for his safety, that he'd pitch to the fullest of his ability and remain calm, for his family's health, and a special petition that the hearts of his three children would be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Hudson's Christian walk hasn't always been a priority. He strayed during the first nine seasons of his Major League career, which began in 1999 with the Oakland A's.

"I chose to turn my back on Him," says Hudson, who married Kim in October 2000. "I grew up in a [family] that loved the Lord, but there are a lot of things in this game that can sidetrack you in that area.

"You're on the road a lot, you're by yourself a lot, you're in your hotel room a lot, and you have a lot of guys on your team that are single. You go to dinner with guys, and the next thing you know you end up at a hotel bar for a while, or you end up doing or thinking things you know a Christian shouldn't be doing."

Hudson had received Jesus as his Lord and Savior as a young boy, but as his career progressed, he began to feel guilty that he was living contrary to God's will. That led to a meeting with then team chaplain Tim Cash during a 2008 road trip to Philadelphia, in which Hudson re-surrendered his life to Christ.

"It was like the beginning of the healing process for me," Hudson says. "It wasn't like a total reformation right then,

but since then it has gradually gotten much better.”

Late in the 2008 season, Hudson’s renewed faith was tested when he ruptured and tore ligaments in his right (throwing) elbow, requiring him to undergo the famed Tommy John reconstructive surgery at age 33. It sidelined him for more than a year.

“I honestly thought I wasn’t going to be able to play again, and I wasn’t mentally ready to hang it up at the time,” he says. “I felt a sense of guilt that I had wasted the platform God had blessed me with, and I didn’t want that to happen.

“It was a slap in the face, an eye-opening moment when all of a sudden the one thing I had let define my life, which was baseball, was taken away from me. That’s not necessarily what I wanted my legacy to be when I was 80 years old.”

Hudson’s recovery allowed him to be at home with Kim and their children for months when normally he would have been playing baseball almost every day and traveling. That drew them closer together, Kim says, and it was during that time that they decided to establish their foundation.

“We got so much advice to not start it when we did because the timing was hard with the economy and Tim not pitching, plus we were so busy anyway and our kids were small,” she says. “But when God tells you to do something, you know in your gut it’s the right thing to do, and He’s blessed it ever since.”

Tim’s spiritual growth accelerated while he physically recovered—in part, he says, because of his wife’s close walk with the Lord.

“I became and am still becoming more of the spiritual leader of our family,” he says. “For a lot of years, it was my wife. That’s something that’s the husband’s job, to be the spiritual backbone for his family.”

Hudson's elbow healed fully, and he resumed his career late in the 2009 season, then went on to have three consecutive stellar years from 2010-2012, combining for a 49-26 pitching record.

Teammates call him "Huddy" and say they consistently see the fruit of his Christian faith in his actions as well as his words.

"He lives it out," says second baseman Dan Uggla, an eight-year veteran. "He's just a great guy all the way around—a great dad, a great husband."

Uggla says Hudson regularly keeps players abreast of when chapel service begins and that players often seek his advice.

"Whether it's home or on the road, he's always there for you to talk to," Uggla says. "If you've got problems, he's great at listening."

Wren, the Braves' general manager, lives in the same suburban Atlanta neighborhood where the Hudsons have their second home. The Wrens and Hudsons attended the same church before the Hudsons moved to a farm in Auburn, Ala., where Tim attended college.

Wren says Tim and Kim readily share the blessings God has given them to spread His love to people far less fortunate.

In addition to their foundation, the Hudsons support needy youth through their involvement with the Make-A-Wish Foundation and Children's Healthcare of Atlanta. Tim has won national, local and team awards for outstanding community service.

"I would hope that people could see Jesus simply through our words and actions," Kim says.

Hudson believes he's been divinely positioned to make an impact for Christ, especially since he wasn't considered a pro

prospect in high school.

"I realized early on in my career that this is not by accident," he says.

"I know it's not me. He's the One who had the plan for me, and I'm just an instrument for Him to use ... to glorify Him and further His kingdom."

Click here to read the original story at .