

Real Relationships

Seven Realities of HBF

- 1. Real People***
- 2. Real Christians***
- 3. Real Relationships***
- 4. Real Ministries***
- 5. Real Battles***
- 6. Real Ministers***
- 7. Real War Zones***

Have you ever seen an exotic animal? Have you ever touched an exotic animal? Have you ever touched a lion?

Years ago, Amy and I were at the Kansas City Zoo looking at the lion exhibit when we happened upon the male lion sleeping with his paw against the wire cage and his tail sticking out within reach of the barrier next to his cage.

You probably know where this is going. That's right, you guessed it, I couldn't resist. As the lion lay on his side basking in the sun, enjoying his afternoon nap, I slowly leaned over the barrier and touched the pad of his paw.

He didn't move an inch! So then I moved over and touched the tip of his tail, and again, no motion other than the movement of his chest cavity rising and falling as he lay sleeping on his side.

Of course this opportunity to touch a real lion was too much for Amy to pass up, so she slowly leaned over to touch the lion. Just as she lightly touched the lion he awoke and sprang toward us with an enormous roar. You should have seen us sprinting away as fast as our legs would carry us. The lion's roar was so intense I was fifty feet away before I even knew what happened. To this day, we talk about that incident every time we go to a zoo.

This month I want to highlight the third reality of HBF; ***“Real Relationships Reach People”***. There is a lot of talk today about touching God or being touched by God. One thing is certain, if you have met the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, you will know it.

Real relationships touch God. During Jesus' earthly ministry a woman with an issue of blood sought to be healed by touching the hem of Jesus' garment. Because of her condition she was unclean. She understood her condition made her unholy according to law of Moses. Nevertheless, she was out of options and simply trusted that if she could just touch Jesus her condition would change.

She was right! As the woman extended her hand in the midst of a throng of people, her hand reached out and touched the hem of Jesus' garment. Immediately she was healed and immediately Jesus turned around and asked, "Who touched me?" Trembling, she came before Jesus and opened up to him and told him all the truth concerning her condition and her life. Jesus is touched when we reach out to him in faith. There is no doubt that this woman's life was forever changed.

When we endeavor to reach out to Christ for power to make us whole, it is inevitable that we will then **reach families**. The Philippian jailor saw something so exotic that he had to touch it. It was the Apostle Paul. While Paul had every opportunity to run from the jail after God freed him, he stayed around to allow the jailor, who was ready to kill himself, an opportunity to repent and receive Jesus as Lord and Savior. That jailor was saved and so was his entire house because he was drawn to a man named Paul who had been touched and was in touch with God. Because of Paul's relationship with the lion of the tribe of Judah, a man's family was eternally impacted with the gospel.

Real Relationships

- 1. Reach God**
- 2. Reach Families**
- 3. Reach Cultures,
Communities,
Countries, and
Continents**

Would others consider your relationship with Christ exotic? In the first century, those who trusted Christ as Lord and Savior were called Christians. They had a real relationship with a real God that produced real power in their lives and the lives they influenced. That miraculous transformation, and their subsequent adherence to Jesus Christ's teaching, earned them the name Christians or "little christ's". While this name was initially intended to be derogatory, it underscores the power of God in the lives of those who serve a mighty God. Those called Christians were credited for turning the world upside down because they had a real relationship with a real God that really reached the world as they knew it in the first century. It is my prayer that your relationship with Christ is exotic enough to cause people to want to reach out and touch it. A real relationship with Jesus is eternally powerful. I encourage you to learn of him, call out to him and see if he doesn't heal your issues and revolutionize your life.