

Real Leaders

Seven Realities of HBF

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

About 19 years ago I travelled to western Pennsylvania to spend Christmas with my wife's family. While visiting, Amy's grandfather took me to visit Fort Necessity. I had grown up a mile from historic Fort Osage in Sibley Missouri, so I was envisioning seeing a replica of some revolutionary trade outpost like the one I used to spend hours playing in as a boy. To my surprise, when I arrived at Fort Necessity it was just that, the basic necessities. I would hardly call it fortified. It was a circle of rough cut lumber standing on end in an open field with a cabin in the middle used to store munitions. British Colonel George Washington fought valiantly against the French and Indians at the battle of Fort Necessity but ultimately lost having to leave the fort to the French.

One of my favorite leaders in American history is George Washington. General George Washington was **refined** through the battles he fought! We rightly honor George Washington for the strategic surprise attacks on Trenton, New Jersey and Princeton. Without doubt the crossing of the Delaware River to seize nearly 1000 Hessian troops was a monumental moment in Washington's leadership and the development of our nation. History often glamorizes its great leaders, as is fitting, but with a closer study of history, what draws me to the first President our country is the position of complete weakness in which he operated.

Before Washington and his army saw substantial victory in the Revolutionary War they were run off after losing New York City to British General Howe. August 22, 1776 Washington and his troops lost the battle of Long Island. George lost battle after battle both before and after his two successive victories. When you finally tally the results the numbers do not match the outcome. What made General Washington great was not his tactics or his army, but his resolve to win the war while losing battle after battle!

While I would not hold George Washington up as a Christian and certainly not as a Christian leader, the circumstances he faced remind me of the war we are engaged in to free men and women from tyranny of sin and death. **Even in loss the faithful saint wins!**

2 Corinthians 4:7-10

But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. 8 We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; 9 Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; 10 Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.

There is no doubt that Real Battles Refine Real Leaders. It is in the impossible battle we witness God do His miraculous work! It is when we appear to have nothing that everything that is eternal is made available. The lessons of God's character and grace are not lost on those who engage in real battles. This leads me to the sixth reality of HBF.

HBF Reality Number 6: Real Battles Refine Real Leaders

There is much talk both in the church and in the world today about leadership. Much has been written on the subject. We could go on for days about what a leader is, what they do and how they do it.

The reason this subject is so popular and so pervasive is because people both in the world and in the church are looking for leaders. When we boil the definition of a leader down it really comes down to this.

Definition of a Leader: ***One who goes first.***

When a person chooses to go first, they manifest the character of a leader. Anytime leadership is studied it boils down to one thing..... Character. There are many leaders, but character is what sets leaders apart. Character tells people who we are, not what we do! What we do manifests who we are. Therefore it is often scary to go first, because many people are afraid "who they are" will be manifest.

1 Corinthians 11:1

Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.

For the believer going first simply means following Christ! We should not fear following Christ into real battles. Real leaders learn that the safest place to be is in the center of God's will no matter the spiritual, physical and emotional circumstances. It is in the real battles of communicating the gospel of Christ that we see the **faithfulness** of God and experience the **fruitfulness** of abiding in the vine (**John 15**).

Real Battles Refine Real Leaders

- 1. Real Leaders Are Faithful**
- 2. Real Leaders Are Fruitful**

Faithfulness in answering the call of God is what separates the proverbial men from the boys. God places people in positions of leadership who will follow Him where no one else is willing to go! The little shepherd boy David became the greatest leader the nation of Israel ever knew because of his willingness to go first into situations that paralyzed the king himself in fear. God needs men who have developed His character in the field. Not the field of combat but the field of a Shepherd. David was ready to lead when he stepped out against the giant because he had already followed Christ into other victories.

This year's Vision Conference is April 5-8. Please join me as we listen, learn, pray and participate in the mission of God. It is through engaging in real battles that God will continue to reproduce real leaders by His grace for His glory.