



*the*  
*Bridge of Humility*

The Humility Journey: Crossing the  
Bridge of Humility  
A Study Guide

## Introduction

We believe that the strongest marriages are those that have found a way to integrate seven foundational attributes of a healthy relationship. We like to call those attributes The Seven Bridges. Bridges help us get from where we are to where we want to go, and help us to avoid unnecessary obstacles. They connect two parts of a singular journey.

Relationships are also a journey. Along that journey there are many gaps, gorges, obstacles and other impediments. These obstacles make it more difficult to continue on that journey. Some of those obstacles are so challenging that many people give up before they reach their destination. Some couples just need a bridge in their relationship.

The Seven Bridges represent the relational characteristics of God found in a covenant relationship. God often describes his covenant relationship with his people as a marriage. A marriage that is thriving and exhilarating. By taking the time to understand the relational characteristics of God, we will begin to gain some insights into what a healthy relationship looks like. When we apply these attributes into our relationship with our spouse, and with God, we will start to experience the kind of relationship that only a perfect and almighty God can design. The Seven Bridges are:

**The Bridge of Fellowship**  
**The Bridge of Purpose**  
**The Bridge of Celebration**  
**The Bridge of Humility**

**The Bridge of Healing**  
**The Bridge of Forgiveness**  
**The Bridge of Patience**

We cross a bridge one step at a time. Some bridges take longer than others. The goal is to have a clearly defined path where we can begin to move forward.

## Journeys

We have developed a study guide for each of The Seven Bridges to help you more fully understand these relational characteristics of God. They are great for couples to explore together or for use in small groups. Each Journey has seven steps and will allow you to understand how these characteristics apply in a marriage. We hope that they will also help you develop a greater appreciation of the relationship God desires with you.



# The Humility Journey

## Step One: What is Humility?

### Spiritual Character

**Read:** 2 Chronicles 12:1-7

Our humility is a reflection of the spiritual character of our soul. It is about how we perceive ourselves relative the holiness and power of God. Humility allows us to evaluate our circumstances and desires based on an understanding of God and not our sinful nature. Humility says, "God is greater than I; therefore, I will accept his direction and perspective."

**Couple Discussion:** How would you describe God's perspective?

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**Couple Discussion:** How would you describe your perspective?

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**Read:** Colossians 2:6-23

It is important to recognize that humility is more about spiritual character and less about how we respond or interact with others. True humility is not concerned with whether others consider our actions as being humble...that is false humility. True humility is a constant thankfulness for the willingness of God to save us in spite of our past. When that is the greatest influence in our perspective, it changes our views about everything.

**Couple Discussion:** What would our actions suggest is the most important thing to us?

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## Focus on Others

**Read:** Philippians 2:3-5

We are called to consider others better than ourselves based on humility. Doing this out of humility is an important distinction as we could consider others better than ourselves out of idolatry, self-hatred, etc. Instead, this verse carries a meaning similar to how one would respond to others based on military rank. We are called to act as if we have a lower rank.

**Couple Discussion:** How would someone with a lower rank respond to others?

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Having an attitude of humility does not mean that we believe others are better than we are, instead it means that we treat them with respect, are willing to serve, and do not put our interests before them. Christ's attitude was that he came to serve (Mark 10:45).

**Couple Discussion:** What would a marriage look like if both couples applied the principles in Philippians 2:3-5?

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## Decision

**Read:** 1 Peter 5:5

Peter asks us to clothe ourselves with humility. Being humble is something that you decide to do every day. We are not born humble; we are called to be humble. The Greek word for clothe in this verse is *egkomboomai*, which means a knot that fastens two things together. This suggests that we can't just take a casual approach towards humility. It must be intentional and purposeful.



# The Humility Journey

**Couple Discussion:** When is it difficult to act in humility toward others?

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## Step Two: Why is Humility Important?

### Teachable

**Read:** Psalm 25:9

Humility allows God to guide us into his will and teach us to make wise and godly decisions. God knows your spouse better than anyone. If you take an attitude of humility towards God and your spouse, God can guide and teach you to connect intimately with your spouse based on how he created him/her. Humility is the key to intimacy.

**Couple Discussion:** Why is humility an important part of being teachable?

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**Couple Discussion:** What would you like to learn about your spouse?

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### Connection

**Read:** James 4:6

When there is a lack of humility (pride is present), it creates a separation between you and God. Humility breaks down those barriers and allows God to connect with us. Similarly, when you are humble in your relationship with your spouse, you will connect with your spouse at an intimate level. When you give grace to your spouse, they will draw close to you.

# The Humility Journey

**Couple Discussion:** What are some things you do that causes your spouse to "oppose" you?

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**Couple Discussion:** What are some ways you could give grace to your spouse?

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## Peace

**Read:** Psalm 37:11

"The humble shall inherit the earth, and delight in abundant peace." This verse has great significance for marriage. God blessed mankind with the authority to rule over the earth with no opposition (Genesis 1:28). That authority and peace was disrupted due to mankind's lack of humility (Genesis 3:6-7) which created a competing rule on earth (Luke 4:5-6). Humility is required to get back our rightful inheritance, which is why Christ came in humility. The peace in your marriage can also be destroyed through a lack of humility. However, if you show humility in your marriage, then you can get back the relationship that God wants you to have with your spouse and experience peace.

**Couple Discussion:** In what areas do we experience a lack of peace in our relationship?

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**Couple Discussion:** How could humility help our relationship experience peace in those areas?

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## Brings Wisdom

**Read:** Proverbs 11:2

We often need wisdom within relationships. It allows us to understand others, respond effectively, and to make correct choices on important decisions. It also brings clarity and direction to a relationship, so that couples know where they are going and to define their purpose. Wisdom and humility are a package deal. With humility comes wisdom.

**Couple Discussion:** Why do you think humility makes us wiser?

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**Couple Discussion:** What are some areas in your relationship where you would like more wisdom?

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## Step Three: What Hinders Humility?

### Arrogance

**Read:** Proverbs 18:12

The Hebrew word for proud and haughty is *Gabahh*, which carries a meaning of arrogance. Arrogance is about believing you are better than others. It is an attitude where one believes their greatness is so unique, that it was self-developed and gives no credit to God or others. When your heart is arrogant, there is no room for humility. An arrogant heart is often revealed through our condescending words about others.

**Couple Discussion:** Are there any ways that we talk about others in a condescending way?

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**Couple Discussion:** What are some cures for arrogance?

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### Pride

**Read:** Proverbs 29:23

Pride occurs when we seek self-focused pleasure. The Hebrew word for pride in this verse is *Ga'avah*, which is the same word that describes the rising up or swelling of the sea. A wave in the sea only rises when it takes water from other areas of the sea. When we are prideful within our marriage, we take away from our spouse (or children) in order to focus on our own needs. It is important to remember that a wave always returns to sea level.

**Couple Discussion:** What are some ways that a couple could compete against each other?

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## Selfish Ambition

**Read:** Philippians 2:3

When our focus is to succeed for our own glory, we destroy relationships. We become so self-focused that we ignore the needs of others, and our ambition is solely for the purpose of feeling good about ourselves.

**Couple Discussion:** What are the differences between good and bad ambition?

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**Couple Discussion:** What are some ways that selfish ambition can harm a family?

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## Step Four: What Promotes Humility?

### Trust

**Read:** Deuteronomy 8:16

When we learn to trust *God* and others, we acknowledge our willingness to rely on others. Trust is a decision, which is often hard to make. We also need to take great care in whom we place our trust, as broken trust can also hinder our ability to develop humility. As a spouse, it is very important to maintain the trust of your spouse.

**Couple Discussion:** What are some ways that trust is built and broken?

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### Praise God

**Read:** Philippians 2:5-6

When we praise *God*, we demonstrate that we are aware of our lowliness relative to his greatness. We focus on his power, love, faithfulness, and holiness. We see that we are incapable of equality with *God* and are only left with the ability to praise him.

**Couple Discussion:** What are some ways that we can praise *God*?

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**Couple Discussion:** When do you feel closest to *God*?

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## Obedience

**Read:** Philippians 2:8

God asks for our obedience to his word. When we are obedient to God, we acknowledge that his ways are better than ours and we are willing to be led by him. Conversely, our disobedience suggests that we believe that our ways are better than Gods. Is the created greater than the Creator? By spending time understanding God's word and practicing obedience, we will begin to develop greater humility.

**Couple Discussion:** What are some areas where it is difficult to be obedient?

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## Serve

**Read:** Philippians 2:7

Look for opportunities to serve. Serving others involves putting ourselves in a more vulnerable position. It brings perspective and a dose of humility into almost any situation as it takes the focus off of you and toward others.

**Couple Discussion:** What are some ways that we can serve others together?

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## Step Five: How is Humility Demonstrated by God?

### Heart

**Read:** Matthew 11:29

Christ described himself as humble in heart. The Greek word for heart in this verse is *kardia*, which describes the center of ones physical and spiritual life, including the senses, soul, mind, will and character. In other words, he viewed humility as the central expression of who he was.

**Couple Discussion:** What are some areas where we can make humility our central focus?

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### Actions

**Read:** John 13:5-14

Christ not only was humble in his attitude, but he also showed his humility physically. He was intentional about his humility and in serving others.

**Couple Discussion:** How have you demonstrated humility in the last year?

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**Couple Discussion:** What are some new ways you can serve your spouse?

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## Perspective

**Read:** John 5:19, 41 and John 14:10

Christ kept a perspective that he was here to serve and do the will of God. He did not have any interest in the praise or recognition of men. Throughout his ministry, he focused on God alone. He also recognized that everything he did and said was based on the power of God. This perspective was important from the beginning of his ministry as it is the exact area where Satan tried to tempt him (Luke 4:1-13).

**Couple Discussion:** What are some ways to keep your perspective focused on God?

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## Step Six: How is Humility Demonstrated in Marriage?

### Leadership

**Read:** Mark 9:35

Spiritual leadership is about demonstrating humility and putting the needs of your family members first. It is about serving everyone else in the family. Leadership in the home is not about making decisions and getting your way. It is a daily demonstration that the needs of your family are your greatest priority.

**Couple Discussion:** Why do you think serving is such an important aspect of leadership?

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**Couple Discussion:** What are some ways you could lead by being last?

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### Keep Your Promises

**Read:** Romans 15:8

God's promises are unwavering. He does not break his promises and was willing to become a servant in order fulfill his promises. It took great humility to choose to become a servant for a people that would turn their backs on him. However, God knew that the outcome was more important than his stature among the people. Likewise, we need to view a healthy marriage relationship as the most important outcome. Be a servant to your spouse and keep your promises, even when it hurts.

**Couple Discussion:** What promises have been difficult for your to keep and why?

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## Limiting Your Wants

**Read:** James 4:1-2

Conflicts within a relationship often result from pure selfishness. We want something and don't get it. Demonstrate humility by focusing less on your personal wants and more on the needs of your spouse.

**Couple Discussion:** What arguments do we have that are a result of us not getting what we want?

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## Apologize

**Read:** 2 Corinthians 7:9-10

It is important to distinguish between an apology due to godly sorrow and worldly sorrow. Worldly sorrow occurs when we feel bad that we were caught. Godly sorrow recognizes that we failed to live up to the standards of God and desire to deny ourselves and not do it again. This takes humility. Be willing to say you're sorry to your spouse. Not just to avoid them getting angry, but because you recognize that your spouse deserves your best efforts. You committed yourself to a high standard of love and honor with your wedding vows. Be willing to live up to those standards.

**Couple Discussion:** Do you find it difficult or easy to apologize and why?

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**Couple Discussion:** What are some things you would like to apologize for?

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## Patience

**Read:** Ecclesiastes 7:8

Patience reflects a level of humility that acknowledges that our time table and our agenda is not the highest priority. When we are patient with our spouse, we say that we care enough for them to put our immediate desires on hold.

**Couple Discussion:** What are some ways patience can create thankfulness in a marriage?

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## Giving

**Read:** 1 Chronicles 29:17

The act of giving (with honest intent) is based in part on humility. It is a result of focusing on the needs of others. It requires that we deny something for ourselves, whether it is our time, energy or resources, and using that to provide for someone else.

**Couple Discussion:** What are some things that your spouse would like for you to give them?

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## Step Seven: Steps to Humility

### Fasten It

**Read:** 1 Peter 5:5

As discussed in Step One, humility is a decision. We need to decide to practice it every day. Make it a normal part of getting ready each morning. Be proactive and look for opportunities to demonstrate humility and look towards the interest of your spouse and others.

**Couple Discussion:** What is the most difficult area to look to the interest of others?

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**Couple Discussion:** What are some ways that would help keep humility on the forefront of your mind?

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### Believe It

**Read:** 1 Peter 5:6

God promises to lift up those that humble themselves. Count on this promise as a way to cast out the fear that you are compromising yourself. We don't have to worry about defending ourselves, as we have a greater defense in God.

**Couple Discussion:** What are some ways that being humble can benefit you later?

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## Cast It

**Read:** James 1:21

Humility requires that we deny ourselves, which requires that we cast off the sins that hold us captive in selfishness. Identify any recurring sins you have that are rooted in selfishness and pray continuously to overcome that stronghold. Meditate on the word of God to give you the strength to fight those battles.

**Couple Discussion:** Why do you think that recurring sin prevents humility?

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**Couple Discussion:** In what ways did Christ's sinless life help him demonstrate humility?

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## Take It

**Read:** Luke 9:23

Denying ourselves (humility) requires that we also take up our cross daily. By taking up our cross daily, we maintain and awareness of the need to forgive others and focus on the Kingdom of God.

**Couple Discussion:** What are some ways that you can take up your cross daily?

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## Summary

Micah 6:8 says that the Lord requires us to "act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with God." Acting justly and loving mercy are personal actions and attributes. Walking humbly defines the nature of our relationship with God. God wants our daily walk with him to be based on humility. In the same way, we need to walk humbly with our spouse.



*the*  
SEVEN BRIDGES