



*the*  
*Bridge of Celebration*

**The Celebration Journey: Crossing  
the Bridge of Celebration  
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.

## Step One: What is Celebration?

### Planned Event

**Read:** Numbers 9:2

Celebrations are often held at specific times, and most are annual events. Celebrations can also be spontaneous (discussed below); however, planned celebrations have a unique value. It sets a time that we can look forward to with anticipation. It builds excitement within a relationship and usually celebrates a certain event (birthday, anniversary, holiday, etc.).

**Couple Discussion:** What celebrations do we have?

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**Couple Discussion:** What is your favorite celebration and why?

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### Spontaneous

**Read:** Luke 15:22-24

Spontaneous celebrations can sometimes be the most memorable. These celebrations typically celebrate a specific person or action by the person. They communicate that you value them and are willing to change your schedule to focus on them. In this passage, the father decides to spontaneously celebrate his son coming home. It communicated to his son, that he was not rejected based on his past actions and demonstrated the genuineness of his father's forgiveness.

**Couple Discussion:** What types of spontaneous celebrations have we done?

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**Couple Discussion:** What makes celebrations most memorable for you?

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## Purposeful

**Read:** Numbers 9:14

Celebrations have a purpose. The purpose of the celebration often influences the development of traditions. Traditions are not rules to constrain the celebration, but are activities to provide an expectation and anticipation for the celebration, as well as help us understand what is being celebrated. Couples that develop their own traditions create a unique experience for them to share intimately. It allows them to express themselves as a couple.

**Couple Discussion:** What types of traditions do we have?

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**Couple Discussion:** What are some other types of traditions we could establish?

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## Remembrance

**Read:** Exodus 12:14

Celebrations are often about remembering past events. This is done to establish an importance of an event in our lives, so we (and others) don't forget the past, and to appropriately honor others.

**Couple Discussion:** What were the 5 most significant events in your life? Do you celebrate them?

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## Step Two: Why is Celebration Important?

### Protects Your Relationship

**Read:** Isaiah 30:29 and 2 Samuel 22:46

Celebrations help your heart rejoice. A heart that regularly rejoices is less likely to become hardened and lose faith. When you lose heart in your marriage, then you leave the defenses established to protect your marriage. A hardened heart loses the desire for the relationship.

**Couple Discussion:** What was our most memorable evening?

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**Couple Discussion:** What do we currently do to protect our marriage?

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### Highlights the Value

**Read:** Luke 15:32

Celebrations give you the opportunity to bring attention and focus on what you want to celebrate. It highlights the value of what is being celebrated. In his passage, the father wanted to celebrate his son. Not just so that his son would realize the importance his father saw in him, but to also let the son's brother know the value the father saw in him. A celebration can help communicate that with more than just words.

**Couple Discussion:** What are some things you value but may not demonstrate how much you value it?

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## Brings Blessings

**Read:** Deuteronomy 16:15

God promised to bless the Israelites in their harvest. He gave this promise with respect to the Feast of Tabernacles, which was done after the crops of the land were harvested. The Israelites were to give a portion of their harvest as part of the festival to honor God's provision. When we give up part of ourselves (financially, time, etc.) to celebrate others, it demonstrates a level of appreciation and can bring blessings into the relationship.

**Couple Discussion:** What is the hardest thing for you to give up?

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**Couple Discussion:** What could you give up as part of a celebration of your marriage to demonstrate your level of appreciation?

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## Shows Love

**Read:** John 13:1-3

Just before Jesus and the disciples began the Passover Feast, Jesus got up and demonstrated the extent of his love by washing the disciples' feet. In the midst of the feast, Jesus took the opportunity to demonstrate love in an astounding way. Celebrations offer us the opportunity to show our love for others in many ways, whether it be a toast, planning the celebration, giving gifts or other acts of service and appreciation.

**Couple Discussion:** What are some ways you would feel most loved by your spouse?

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## Step Three: What Hinders Celebration?

### Fear

**Read:** Nahum 1:15

When we are scared, we often don't feel like celebrating. Fear can be a crippling force and prevent us from even the desire to leave our home, let alone celebrate (Job 31:34). However, God is there to take away our fear (Psalm 46:1-3). When we free ourselves from fear, it opens up our heart and desire for celebration.

**Couple Discussion:** What do you fear the most and why?

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### Resentment

**Read:** Luke 15:29-31

The response of the prodigal son's brother revealed a sense of resentment, and even entitlement. He refers to himself as "slaving" for his father and was never "given" a goat so he could celebrate with his friends. He clearly reveals that he felt that he was not compensated enough. However, the father's response was astounding. He said that everything he had was always available to his son. In other words, he didn't have to ask for a goat to be given.

When we allow ourselves to become resentful, we will become unaware of the blessings and opportunities that are already before us. Resentment makes us look for reasons to express anger; instead of reasons to celebrate.

**Couple Discussion:** Are there any things that you feel resentful about?

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**Couple Discussion:** What are some ways to overcome a resentful attitude?

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## Disobedience

**Read:** Zechariah 14:18-19

Disobedience tends to remove a desire to celebrate. This can happen from feelings of guilt or the results of our actions that have dire consequences.

**Couple Discussion:** What are some ways we can be disobedient to the ways God wants us to treat our spouse?

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**Read:** 1 Corinthians 10:21-22

Celebration either glorifies God or it doesn't. We need to be careful that our celebrations are honoring to God and our spouse.

**Couple Discussion:** What are some examples of dishonoring celebrations?

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## Unprepared

**Read:** 2 Chronicles 30:3

The priests were not prepared for the Passover celebration at the appointed time because they were not expecting to celebrate. Under the rule of the prior king, Hezekiah's father, the people of Judah had not celebrated the Passover at the temple in accordance with what was written. It is much harder to be ready to

celebrate when we do not expect to celebrate. Being ready to celebrate is about having a heart and an attitude that embraces celebration and looks for those opportunities.

**Couple Discussion:** What are some ways that we could be prepared to celebrate more frequently?

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## Step Four: What Promotes Celebration?

### Cheerful Heart

**Read:** Proverbs 15:15

This is a great verse. A cheerful heart has a continual feast. When we focus on having a positive attitude, we are able to celebrate more freely. We can often choose how we view the world. We can view it through a negative or positive lens. Some people just choose to be negative. Choose a positive attitude and be ready to celebrate.

**Couple Discussion:** What are some positive things currently going on in our lives?

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### Understanding

**Read:** Nehemiah 8:8, 12

When we lack understanding of a situation, it can cause confusion or stress. This can make it difficult to celebrate. Confusion and stress can easily creep into a marriage relationship when couples don't communicate regularly. Without communication, there inevitably will be a lack of understanding within the relationship. Take time to talk regularly with your spouse about their views, feelings, dreams, goals, etc.

**Couple Discussion:** How often do you spend time talking intimately with your spouse without distractions?

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**Couple Discussion:** What makes it difficult to communicate more regularly?

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## Requests

**Read:** 2 Chronicles 30:5

King Hezekiah sent an invitation throughout Israel calling people to the Passover celebration. Ask to celebrate! Some couples might find it helpful to take turns on a regular basis making a suggestion for a reason to celebrate.

**Couple Discussion:** What are some ways to could ask each other to celebrate more frequently?

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## Focus

**Read:** Psalm 145:7

When you focus on the goodness of God and understand how he is working in your life, it softens your heart and creates a desire to celebrate. Similarly, when you focus on the goodness of your spouse and take the time to appreciate their acts of kindness, it softens your heart and creates a desire to celebrate with them.

**Couple Discussion:** What are the ways that your spouse feels the most loved?

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**Couple Discussion:** What qualities do you appreciate most about your spouse?

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## Cleansing

**Read:** 2 Chronicles 29:15-17

Before King Hezekiah was able to have the Passover celebration, he had the temple cleansed. When we cleanse ourselves spiritually through repentance and cleanse our marriage through forgiveness, we enable ourselves to celebrate.

**Couple Discussion:** Are there any things that we need to cleanse in our marriage?

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

### Forgiveness

**Read:** Luke 15:20-24

The parable of the prodigal son is a story about God's forgiveness. Jesus describes God's desire to forgive as a father running to his son. The father's forgiveness not only made the father ready to celebrate, but it also freed his son of guilt to be able to celebrate. When we receive God's forgiveness, he wants us to celebrate with him.

**Couple Discussion:** How do you celebrate with God?

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### Provision

**Read:** John 2:7-10

The miracle of Jesus turning water to wine is an expression of his desire to provide for us in all aspects, including celebration. God wants us to celebrate and is willing to provide in miraculous ways.

**Couple Discussion:** What are some ways that God has provided for you in the past?

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**Couple Discussion:** What are ways that you provide for your spouse?

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## Sacred Assemblies

**Read:** Leviticus 23

Certain celebrations have a spiritual significance. They are times to give reverence to God and to focus on our own spiritual health. God clearly saw an importance in these celebrations and established seven separate celebrations for Israel. Each celebration had a unique spiritual purpose.

**Couple Discussion:** What celebrations do we have with a spiritual significance?

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**Couple Discussion:** What do we do differently for these celebrations to recognize the spiritual significance?

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## Instruction

**Read:** Matthew 26:17-30 and John 13-17

In the midst of the celebration of the Last Supper, Christ used it as a time to give instruction and guide the disciples' understanding of the events that would soon take place. This Passover feast had a particular importance, as Christ was about to become the Passover lamb. Christ used this opportunity to reveal the new covenant that was occurring in their midst. Celebrations are not always times for just rejoicing, but can also serve as a means of communicating an important message with an impact.

**Couple Discussion:** How do you typically communicate important messages?

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

### Passion

**Read:** 2 Samuel 6:5

Just as David and the whole house of Israel celebrated with all their might, couples should make a point to celebrate with passion. Get your heart into it. It is far too easy to become stagnant in even our celebrations. We choose the same restaurants, the same gifts, cut corners, etc. For your anniversary this year, do something different, and do it with passion.

**Couple Discussion:** What was your most memorable evening with your spouse and what made it so special?

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**Couple Discussion:** What are some new ideas for celebrations?

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### Special Occasions

**Read:** Hosea 13:6

A spouse forgetting their anniversary is one of the great fears shared by many. Certain events carry such a great importance that forgetting them can leave scares for many years. However, forgetting them is not the only thing that can leave a scare. Not taking them serious and showing little interest can also leave similar, if not even greater scares. Know what is important to your spouse and take great care in celebrating those events.

**Couple Discussion:** What are the most important events that you feel should be celebrated?

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## Gifts

**Read:** Esther 9:22

A gift can communicate many things to your spouse. It can communicate your level of passion for them. How much time did you spend finding the right gift? How much did you sacrifice? Does it reveal that you took time to really think about the perfect gift? Does it reveal that you have been listening to their comments about particular interests? Does it show that you thought about them in a special way when there was not special event? Remember, that the cost of gifts rarely come close to meaning as much as the thought and passion behind the gift.

**Couple Discussion:** What was your favorite gift you have ever received? What made it so special?

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## Children

**Read:** Genesis 21:8

Couples need to make a point of celebrating their children. Look for opportunities to celebrate. It may be their first time sleeping through the night, when they are potty-trained, their first day of school, a time when they showed a caring heart, when they showed good sportsmanship, or when they did well on an exam at school.

Celebrating your children builds their confidence and shows them that you value and care about them.

**Couple Discussion:** What types of celebrations did you have as a child?

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**Couple Discussion:** What are some ways you could celebrate your children?

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## Step Seven: Steps to Celebration

### Be Joyful

**Read:** Deuteronomy 16:14 and Ezra 6:22

Make all efforts to approach your current situations with joy. Remember that God is our source of joy (Psalm 19:8). Seek his guidance and counsel of God to bring you joy the in the midst of your circumstances.

**Couple Discussion:** When do you feel most joyful?

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**Couple Discussion:** What are some things you could do to make your home more joyful?

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### Atmosphere

**Read:** Esther 8:17, Proverbs 12:20 and Proverbs 17:1

Creating an atmosphere in your home that embraces celebration is critical in giving your family the since that celebrating is okay. This includes the emotional stability of the home, as well. It is important that your family does not fear celebrations, as times of anxiety, anger or guilt.

**Couple Discussion:** How would you describe the atmosphere of your home?

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**Couple Discussion:** How would you describe the emotional stability of your relationship during the holidays or other special occasions?

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## Seek God's Guidance

**Read:** John 2:5

During the wedding celebration when Jesus turned water into wine, his mother instructed the servers at the wedding to do whatever Jesus asked. Jesus asked them to do something that would be considered odd by any account. During times when things look grim, seek God's guidance and do whatever he asks regardless of how odd it may seem. That is when the greatest miracles and times of celebration occur.

**Couple Discussion:** How do you seek God's guidance?

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**Couple Discussion:** When do you feel you connect most with God?

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**Couple Discussion:** What circumstances are you currently going through that you would like God's guidance?

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## Resolve Conflict

**Read:** Matthew 5:23-25, Romans 12:18 and Ephesians 4:26

We are called to everything on our part to resolve conflicts quickly. When we allow unresolved conflict to continue, it begins to build up bitterness in our lives and hardens our hearts. Set aside your desire to win arguments and be the first to forgive.

**Couple Discussion:** Do you have any unresolved conflict in your relationships?

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**Couple Discussion:** What do you find the most difficult about letting go of past conflicts?

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## Plan It

**Read:** 2 Chronicles 30:1

Don't try to make all celebrations spontaneous. Take the time to plan out some celebrations. Make it a priority.

**Couple Discussion:** What are some celebrations you could start planning?

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## Summary

Throughout scripture we find God's people engaging in festivals and celebrations as a means expressing their relationship with God. We see Jesus participating in a wedding celebration and celebrating the Passover with his closest friends. Relationships should be celebrated. Celebrations bring new life into the challenges of everyday life and remind us to take time to enjoy our marriage. It also demonstrates that we care about our spouse. Finding creative ways to celebrate your relationship with your spouse will bring passion and excitement into your marriage.



*the*  
SEVEN BRIDGES