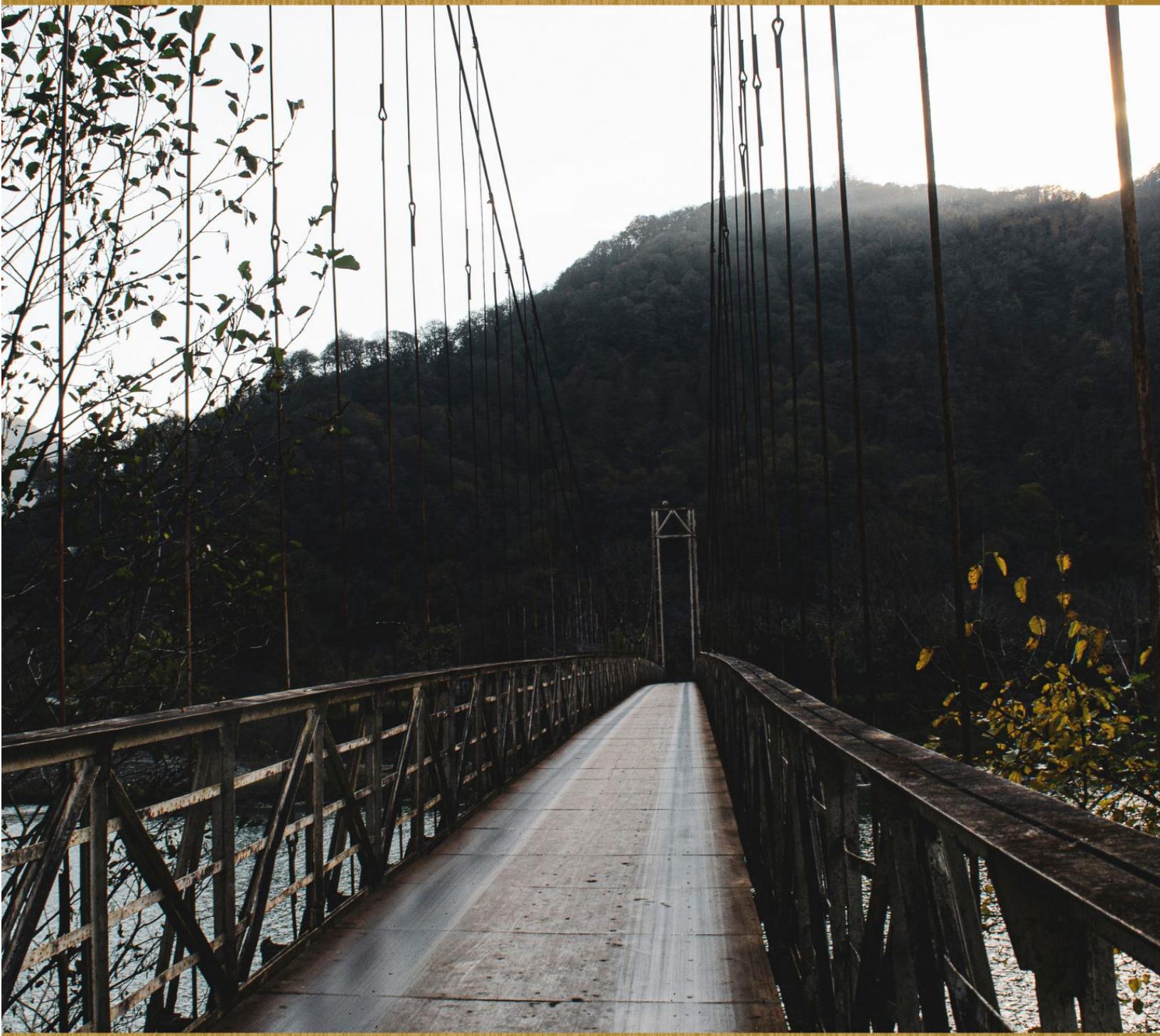


YOU ARE A B.R.I.D.G.E.



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We are called to be durable, well-built bridges that connect people to God, capable of bearing weight and lasting for generations. This requires intentional construction through faith, the Word, community, the Spirit, and enduring strength found in Christ Jesus.

B: Believe you are a Masterpiece with a Mission (Blueprint).

A bridge must be built to a precise blueprint; its integrity depends on the designer's plan. You are God's masterpiece, designed for a purpose.

Ephesians 2:10 (NLT) *For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.*

Psalm 139:13-14 (NLT) *You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother's womb. ¹⁴ Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous how well I know it.*

Jeremiah 29:11 (NLT) *"For I know the plans I have for you" says the Lord. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope."*

Gideon (Judges 6) Gideon saw himself as the weakest, least important person. But God's blueprint for him was "Mighty Hero." God saw the masterpiece and the mission Gideon was designed for long before Gideon believed it. A bridge doesn't get to argue with its blueprint; it must trust the Architect.

R: Reinforce your life daily with the Word.

A bridge's strength comes from constant maintenance and reinforcement. Steel and concrete need inspection and care; so does our spirit, through daily engagement with God's Word.

Deuteronomy 11:18-19 (NLT) *So commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these words of mine... ¹⁹ Teach them to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are on the road, when you are going to bed and when you are getting up.*

Psalm 119:105 (NLT) *Your word is a lamp to guide my feet and a light for my path.*

Colossians 3:16 (NLT) *Let the message about Christ, in all its richness, fill your lives. Teach and counsel each other with all the wisdom he gives. Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts.*

The Bereans (Acts 17:11) were called "noble" because they received the message "with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day" to see if it was true. Their intentional, daily reinforcement with the Word made them a dependable bridge for truth to be disseminated.

I: Identify the people God is calling you to connect to Him.

A bridge exists for one reason: to provide a safe passage for others from one place to another. We must be intentional about seeing and reaching the people on the "other side."

Matthew 28:19-20 (NLT) *Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. ²⁰ Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.*

Jesus knew that he was a bridge and had to face fierce criticism by people who didn't understand his mission.

Luke 5:29-30 (NLT) *Later, Levi held a banquet in his home with Jesus as the guest of honor. Many of Levi's fellow tax collectors and other guests also ate with them. ³⁰ But the Pharisees and their teachers of religious law complained bitterly to Jesus' disciples, "Why do you eat and drink with such scum?"*

STAY LOCKED IN!

Luke 10:2 (NLT) *These were his instructions to them: “The harvest is great, but the workers are few. So pray to the Lord who is in charge of the harvest; ask him to send more workers into his fields.”*

D: Depend on the Holy Spirit's power and gifts.

A bridge relies on unseen forces. Think about the principle of tension and compression, the strength of its materials.

We rely on the unseen power and specific gifts of the Holy Spirit to bear the weight of our mission.

Zechariah 4:6 (NLT) *...Not by force nor by strength, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of Heaven's Armies.*

Zechariah 4:6 (NKJV) *...Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of hosts.*

Acts 1:8 (NLT) *But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere...*

I Corinthians 12:4,7 (NLT) *There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit is the source of them all...⁷ A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other.*

Pentecost (Acts 2). The disciples were hiding, a collapsed bridge of fear. Then the Holy Spirit came with power and specific gifts (tongues, prophecy, boldness). Instantly, they became a durable, powerful bridge connecting thousands to Christ in a single day. The materials (the disciples) didn't change; the EMPOWERING Spirit within them did.

G: Grow in endurance, knowing Christ's strength upholds you.

A bridge must endure storms, heavy loads, and time. Its strength is not its own, but is designed into its structure and foundations. Our endurance comes from being upheld by Christ's infinite strength.

Philippians 4:13 (NLT) *For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength.*

Hebrews 12:1-2 (NLT) *Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge cloud of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us.² We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith...*

2 Corinthians 12:9-10 (NLT) *Each time he said, “My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness” So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me.¹⁰ That's why I take pleasure in my weaknesses, and in the insults, hardships, persecutions, and troubles that I suffer for Christ. For when I am weak, then I am strong.*

The Apostle Paul: His life was a catalog of endurance: shipwrecks, beatings, imprisonment, opposition. In 2 Corinthians 11-12, he lists these "loads," but then points to his secret of sustaining power: Christ's sustaining grace. Paul was a bridge that lasted because his strength came from his foundation, not his own durability.

E: Empowerment is from Him.

We are not flimsy footbridges, built by our own feelings and emotions. We are B.R.I.D.G.E.s., engineered by God, reinforced by His Word, serving His purpose, powered by His Spirit, and sustained by His strength. Build with intention. Maintain with diligence. So that for generations, people can find a dependable passage to the redeeming power of Jesus Christ through your life.

Believe * Reinforce * Identify * Depend * Grow * Empowerment