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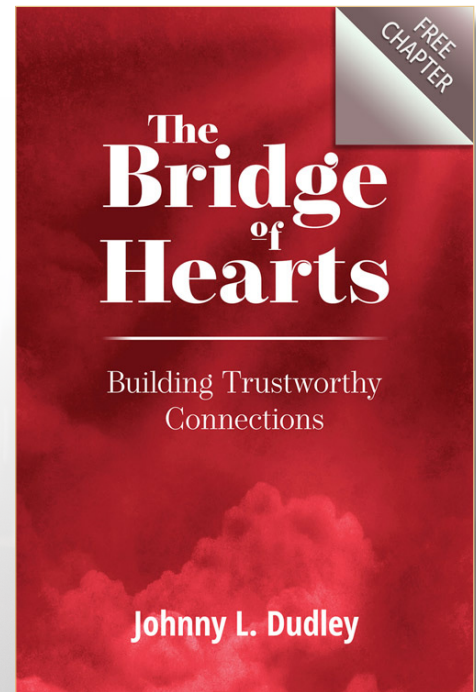
The Artist

Johnny L. Dudley

A never-before seen chapter from

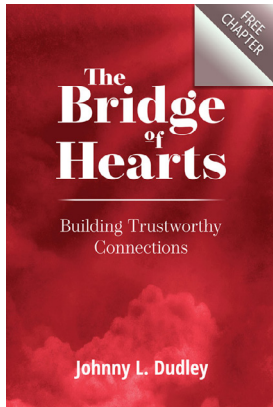
The Bridge of Hearts
Building Trustworthy Connections

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The Artist



I was two miles above sea level on the high plains of the Rocky Mountains, under the chilly shadows of summer clouds, when I watched a man make glass beads one day. He knew exactly what he was doing, yet unwittingly, through his skillful actions he was demonstrating the heart of the gospels' message to me.

In Paul's letter to the Ephesian church he told us we were chosen in Christ from before the foundation of the world to be holy and without blame before him in love. He said we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for the good works that God has preordained us to walk in.

When Scripture says we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus and chosen before the foundation of the world, it is giving us a brief glimpse at two very important facts about the mystery that was hidden in the heart of God from the beginning. First, it's telling us how God created us, and second, it's telling us why. As to how, it says all things are created by Christ Jesus, and as to why it's saying he foreordained us to be holy and without blame before him in love. So to walk before him in love is the goal of his workmanship in each of us and also the goal of this book, but, I must acknowledge that according to 1st John 3:2, we will not be completely like him until we see him as he is.

In the writing of this book, I've gained a better understanding about why we will not be completely like our Creator until we see him as he is. This has been more clearly etched in my mind through time and personal experiences like the experience I had when observing a Colorado artist who was a lot like Jeremiah's potter. In Jeremiah 18:2, God told the prophet to arise and go down to the potter's house where he would cause him to hear his words.



I was two miles above sea level on the high plains of the Rocky Mountains, under the chilly shadows of summer clouds, when I watched a man make glass beads one day. He knew exactly what he was doing, yet unwittingly, through his skillful actions he was demonstrating the heart of the gospels' message to me. The artist had to heat the glass ever so slowly to keep it from shattering, carefully form it, and then slowly cool it under a protective covering of thick insulation. Like a master craftsman he gently heated, molded, and shaped the common sand into beautiful glass beads that

would serve his purpose, and then he tempered the beads through time.

As with any crafted treasure like a cherished violin, a grand piano, or a polished jewel, careful workmanship gave the artist's beads a

much greater worth than sand. And because we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus, we have a much greater worth than the dust we are made of. The prophet Malachi confirmed our great worth to our Creator when he wrote, "And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him" (Malachi 3:17).

I suspect making the dust of the earth into priceless jewels who refract God's glory is not an easy challenge, not even for God, considering he gave us an independent will that treasures and exercises its freedom of choice. Perhaps that is the reason the author of Hebrews told us that God works with the spirits of just men. Like Antonio Stradivari's priceless violins God chooses good stock.

God chooses just men and women who are hungry and thirsty for his righteousness but cannot attain it in their own strength, then he fills them with himself and shapes them in the heat of the furnace. He calls them to himself, molds them through affliction, and then tenderly cools them

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under the shadow of his wing to temper their nature through time. King David spoke about God overshadowing protection when he wrote, “Because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice” (Psalm 63:7).

Through the heat of the furnace and the tempering of time, God’s word is transforming many hungry and wanting souls into the likeness of Christ so we can be glorified together with him. Our omniscient Father didn’t just haphazardly exalt us as the heirs of his glory without patiently preparing our hearts first.

To bring us into his eternal kingdom, as joint heirs of himself with Christ, our heavenly Father prepared a habitat for our spiritual development, a glorious universe that contained the extraordinary blue planet that he created for the nurturing and development of his spiritual seed. It is a natural environment where our Creator heats and chills us under death’s impending shadow, until we can be presented faultless before the presence of his glory as a completed work. Our planet is a place of high adversity and extreme challenge for raising and strengthening God’s children—it’s his nursery for spiritual giants.



Author Johnny Dudley

The author [John L. Dudley](#) is passionate about researching and studying God’s Word and sharing the lessons he’s learned along the way with others. He is the owner of Consecrated Press and his book titles include *The Bridge of Hearts*, *The Harvest* and *Angels Unaware*.

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God’s word and work are right in front of us; we just need to see it and embrace it.

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