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The Limits Of Patriotism

Dr. T. D. Worthington



In my opinion, many of my older readers may never need this message, however, I am afraid that many of our children and grandchildren will. So, since they are unlikely to read what I have written, perhaps it is something you might share with them.

Have you ever wondered how the Christians in Germany became so foolish as to accept Adolph Hitler? Why did the Christians in Italy accept Mussolini? I understand as the tyranny progressed many accepted these wicked men out of fear, but why did they embrace these tyrants in the beginning? Perhaps the answer lies in patriotism that exceeded its proper boundaries. Misplaced patriotism is dangerous because it conditions us to cheerfully accept the unacceptable. It is proper to love our country, but we must have the right kind of love.

Most churches I have visited have an American flag somewhere on the premises. It may be in the auditorium,

or it may be in the lobby or on a flagpole in the parking lot. I know some churches may not have a flag displayed, but most do. I think that is a good thing.

Patriots also stand for the National Anthem and from childhood we have learned the Pledge of Allegiance. Most church hymnals I've seen have several patriotic hymns printed in them. Oh, how it stirs our souls to sing about God's blessings upon our great land. I love these songs, and singing them stirs our hearts. Christianity and being a patriot go together, just like Satan and being a traitor would go together. Christians *are* patriots, and even with all her faults, Christians love America; the land of the free and the home of the brave.

When we see someone burn a flag, it makes our blood boil. When we see attacks upon our nation, it shakes us to the core. It is not just a fear of attack, it is the emotion of dealing

with something you love being hurt. You want to stop the hurt, and you are willing to put your life on the line to do it. I am proud to be an American; somedays prouder than others, but still proud. Patriotism and Christianity just seem to be a natural fit; *but is it?*

Consider this, do you think underground churches in North Korea have a North Korean flag behind the pulpit? Do they recite a pledge of loyalty and sing songs of praise to that nation? We think patriotism is a good thing, but is it always a good thing? Does it mean the same thing to North Korean Christians that it does to us? If patriotism is right, are they wrong? How about in Iran? Do they have a flag in their persecuted churches? Do you suppose the early church in Jerusalem had a Roman flag behind the pulpit? What did patriotism mean to them?

What kind of love are we supposed to have for our country? How deep



should it go? Actually, *the Bible does not instruct us to love our country.* We are commanded to honor those in authority and to be good citizens and neighbors, but God does not tell us that loving our country and being a good Christian always go hand in hand. It is certainly acceptable to love our country, but *how deep* should that love go? Is it more than a civic duty? Is it also a Christian duty? What kind of love should it be? Is it an unconditional love? Let's remind ourselves of a couple of important points:

First, we are commanded to pay taxes and give honor to rulers. Scriptures are clear in that to the extent possible we are to honor those in authority. *“let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God” Romans 13:1.* Part of this honor goes with the responsibility of paying taxes. *“For this cause pay ye tribute also” Romans 13:6. “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s and to God the things that are God’s” Mark 12:17.*

Now, all of this doesn't have as much to do with politics as with the general principle that Christians are to show honor and respect to those in positions of authority. This is common theme in the New Testament. *To me, this seems to be unconditional in nature.* We may not honor their actions, but we must honor their office. We may not agree with how they spend our taxes. After all, tax money was used to buy the cross and the nails and to pay the Roman soldier that drove those nails in our Saviour, but we are still commanded to pay them. I don't like that my tax money may be spent on abortions, but I still must pay them. Not just for fear of jail, but *because*

God says so. Again, this seems to be an **unconditional** requirement.

Second, we are commanded to place ourselves under the government's authority, *“Whosoever therefore resiseth the power resisteth the ordinance of God” Romans 13:2.* The relationship between rulers and citizens seems clear in Romans. The ruler is *“God's minister for your good” Romans 13:4.* However, we know this relationship is conditional because we are also told that if government's command goes against God's command, we are to follow God. *“Then Peter and the [other] apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men” Acts 5:29. “For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ” Galatians 1:10.* This command seems to be **conditional!**

Third, we are to pray for our leaders. We need not agree with them. But it

is clearly sin to slander them, even if we do so in the name of patriotism. It is our charge to honor them in our language, as we also commit to pray for them. *“I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour;” I Timothy 2:1-3.* We pray for wisdom, insight, and courage as they guide the nation *“for our good.”* Because if our country prospers under their leadership, we will prosper also. Again, this seems to be **unconditional** in nature.

Fourth, it is also appropriate to want the best for your country, to want to see it blessed. When the prophet Jeremiah was writing, the Israelites had been forcibly removed from Jerusalem and taken as hostages to Babylon by enemy soldiers. Nevertheless, God encouraged the people to make



themselves at home. *“Build ye houses, and dwell in them; and plant gardens, and eat the fruit of them; Take ye wives, and beget sons and daughters; and take wives for your sons, and give your daughters to husbands, that they may bear sons and daughters; that ye may be increased there, and not diminished”* **Jeremiah 29:5-6**. Not only should they improve themselves, but they should also *“seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the LORD for it: for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace”* **Jeremiah 29:7**.

In other words, it is the duty of the people of God to seek stability, peace, and prosperity wherever they go. This includes supporting the nation in which we live; although, this must always be balanced by the awareness that we are aliens and strangers in this land. This command seems to be **unconditional** in nature.

So, patriotism, at a minimum, denotes love, devotion, and a commitment to protect one’s country. But, is this always appropriate for all citizens in all countries at all times? What makes sense in America may not make a lot

of sense in China. What makes sense in Japan today may not have made sense in 1940. What makes sense in America today may not make sense 20 years from now. If patriotism involves love, what kind of love is it? As you know there are several words translated love in the new Testament. Let’s review to find out what kind of love we are to have for our country.

“**Agape**”, we all know about that Greek word. That’s the unconditional love we are to have for God, our spouse, our family, our Christian brothers and sisters, and even our enemies. It is the noblest word for love in the Greek language. I don’t think that is the kind of love we are to have for our nation.

“**Philia**” (*Philia*), that’s another Greek word translated love in the Bible. It denotes a fondness for something. It is a conditional love. It is the way you love ice cream or fresh baked cookies. This love is conditional, but I don’t think this is the kind of love we are to have for our country either.

“**Eros**”, that is the sensuous erotic kind of love. It is more of a fleshly love. Obviously, this word has nothing to do

with patriotism. I am running out of words. Fortunately, there is one more. “**Storge**” (*Storgē*), is a seldom used Greek word and it refers to being appreciative of something. Being comfortable with something that you have found favor in. Others may not have a “storge” love for the things you have a storge love for, and your love is conditional—it can change—and likely will change in intensity over the years. It may even go away. It is a quiet, abiding feeling within a man that rests on something close to him and that he feels good about. The word is not popular in the Bible, but often used in society. Actually, this is the most common type of love that we see today.

This is the kind of love you might have for your favorite sweater. It has holes in the elbows and two buttons are missing. You would not think of wearing it to church, but around the house on a cool day you always go for it; it’s comfortable and you love it! You find favor and appreciation in something that others may not be able to see; like an old pair of shoes. One day your feelings may change, but as of right now it is the object of your love.





You can have this kind of affection for a house, a tree, a pet, a flower pot, a city, a culture, or a country; and you have this love because it fits you; it makes you comfortable. That's storge.

This form of love is not static. The intensity of the love I have for America is always changing, because America is always changing. Remember, this love is not unconditional. The America today is not the America of the 1950s, which means that there is a sense of conflict in my mind between what America was, what America is, and what America is becoming. Germany is far easier to love today than it was in the 1940's. Korea is harder to love. That's why it is called "*storge*" love. Since the kind of love we are to have for our country is constantly changing, it is dangerous to link patriotism and Christianity too close together.

First, it can lead us to believe that the essence of being a good Christian is being a good citizen. The focus of our discipleship then becomes not spiritual but national, and we begin to view the nation as God's primary way of accomplishing His goals. So my main

ministry is helping get America on the right track because that is the only way God can do His work. This is not true. I desire revival in America as much as anyone, but I have little faith that government is going to bring it about.

Second, we can go to the other extreme and rather than believing the nation is God's primary partner, the nation becomes God's primary enemy. With all the corruption and anti-Christian sentiment in America today, it is easy to fall into this trap. This is when we begin to acquate being a good Christian with working against the nation because we believe that God can only accomplish His goals through social reform. This is not true either!

We are pilgrims. We are exiles, refugees in a very anti-Christian culture. The Bible says, "***Our citizenship is in heaven.***" We are citizens of heaven. We are sojourners and pilgrims on the earth. So, whatever form the intensity of your patriotism takes, let it be a deep sense that we are more closely bound to God, to His kingdom, to His word, to His church, to His people regardless of their nationality, than we are to our

closest unbelieving fellow citizen or family member right here in America. To miss this means our patriotism is drifting over into idolatry.

God is our King, not man. His kingdom is our final allegiance, but under that banner it is right to be thankful that God gave us our land. God gave me my citizenship as an American. I didn't deserve to be born here. It wasn't my choice. I don't deserve this place any more than I deserve any other common or special grace. It is right to be thankful that people paid a high price to preserve our land with its freedoms and its distinctives and blessings.

Could we one day decide it is best to remove the flag from our church and cease to be patriots as we understand the word today? Yes, although it saddens me to say it, that day may come. Patriotism is conditional. When this flag no longer stands for what is right, when this flag becomes a lie, when this flag represents a hatred for God and for what is right; it will have no place in the church. That is exactly what many patriot preachers determined about the British flag during the American revolution.

Should a Christian be patriotic? Within reason, yes. At the same time, a Christian's ultimate faith, love, and obedience are to be reserved for God and His kingdom alone.

***God bless America,
land that I love.***



Dr. Worthington has been in the ministry over forty years and serves as President of Pathway Ministries.

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July, 2018
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On July 1st we will cross a milestone in the history of *GoMix Christian Radio*. On this day we will **celebrate 20 years of broadcast** service from our flagship station, **WAGO**. I would like to take this occasion to thank each of you for being such an essential part of our ministry team. What began as a small dream of Eddie Mazingo and I has been elevated up by our Lord to stand tall among Christian broadcasters. We have experienced numerous achievements and accomplishments while enduring our share of defeats and setbacks.

Our success story remains incomplete without mentioning the support of our excellent staff and a team of *Faith Partners, Business Underwriters, and Programmers*. Each of you play a very important role in our history. Without your prayers, enthusiasm, support, and dedication, we could never have reached where we are today. Not only have you made us a part of the local landscape, you have also helped us reach out to the world. And now we praise our Lord and celebrate our success together. We have established a track record of doing the impossible. However, now is not the time to rest!

think ahead to what the next 20 years will hold, if Jesus tarries.

In summary, while we have come a long way, our work is not done! The future will challenge us. The work will be hard, but the rewards will be high. It remains a great comfort to us to know as long as we stand faithful with Christ, you will stand faithful with us.

Again, I say "Thank You."



Although we may be tempted to indulge in a self-congratulatory moment on our **20th Anniversary**, we remain mindful that the world needs the message of Christ more than ever, and if anything, we must accelerate and not relax. We must

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Artist Spotlight - The Horrell Family

The Horrell Family is a Southern Gospel Group from Wallace, NC. They share the message of Jesus Christ through music and song. The mission of **The Horrell Family** is to minister to all and reach the lost. By testimony, they are born again Christians and thank God for the opportunity to witness to others through their music. According to **The Horrell Family**, “We serve an awesome God and give Him all the glory and praise. Our hearts are uplifted with His presence each and every time we sing. Our hearts are uplifted with His love and presence as we minister through song to create an atmosphere that will lift, inspire, and propel people to Christ so that ultimately, He will transform lives.”

Group members of **The Horrell Family** consist of Rene Hoxie, Janice Horrell and Scott Bradley. Also, included are Skylar Bradley and their Driver, Wade Horrell.

Rene Hoxie has been with **The Horrell Family** for four years. Previously she traveled with *Bill and Renee Morris Ministries* singing Praise and Worship music in crusades and churches and also sang with the *TBN Praise and Worship Singers* for several years.

Growing up with an evangelist for a father, Janice Horrell began singing in churches at an early age. Later on she traveled with her family group, *The Jenkins Family*, for nine years and now manages and is the alto singer for **The Horrell Family**.

Scott Bradley says, “Singing has always been my passion. I’ve mostly sung as a soloist or in a church choir. Now I have had the opportunity to become a member of **The Horrell Family**. Since then I’ve been a lot of places, and I have met so many wonderful people on this great journey. It is such a blessing to me and my family.”

The Horrell Family would like to invite you to their Annual Anniversary Concert with special guest, *Safe Haven*, on Saturday, October 13th, at 6:30pm at the Wallace Church of God in Wallace, NC. They will also be appearing at the East Coast Gospel Music Association Convention in Kenly, NC, on November 9th and 10th! If you would like more information about **The Horrell Family** or their upcoming schedule, they can be reached at 910-381-0796 or at www.thehorrellfamily.com.

Upcoming Events:

Sept 22 @ 7:00pm - Faith Chapel in Roseboro, NC
Oct 13 @ 6:30pm - Wallace Church of God, NC
Oct 14 @ 10:00am - Penderela Pent. Church, NC.
Oct 28 @ 11:00am - Vander COG, Fayetteville, NC
Nov 9 @ 7:00pm - ECGMA Convention in Kenly, NC
Nov 10 @ 6:00pm - ECGMA Convention in Kenly, NC
Nov 18 @ 11:00am - Vander COG, Fayetteville, NC
Dec 31 @ 7:00pm - Praise Sanctuary in Princeton, NC

Victory Within

Dr. Glenn Mills



Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.

I John 4:4

This Scripture begins by reminding us of who, and Whose we are. If you are a believer in Jesus Christ, then you belong to God. If you belong to God, then you have overcome and defeated Satan and his agents by the blood of Jesus.

Our victory is not of our own doing, but by accepting what Jesus has done and is doing for us daily. What we could not do in fulfilling the Law, Jesus did for us by His perfect and sinless life. Now we live under His covering and anointing. We are new creatures in Christ, and the old sin nature is passing away.

Because we are now in a relationship with God by His Son Jesus, we have something the world does not have - The very Spirit of God living within us. Note again the above Scripture says that greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world. Greater is God, the Almighty One. Is it not amazing that the most powerful force in the created universe lives inside us?

Satan and his agents do not fear us as individuals; they fear greater the God who lives inside of us.

No one understood this better than David when he was facing Goliath in battle. This was not David's first fight, nor would it be his last. Prior to facing this giant, he boldly stood before King Saul and gave God glory for helping him defeat both a lion and a bear that were trying to steal his sheep.

Saul tried to give David the armor of men, but he refused it. David knew the battle was the Lord's. When David left Saul's tent and headed to the battlefield, he walked through many men who were far better trained for battle than he was. David knew he had something none of them had. He had the Spirit of God on him and in him.

Upon reaching the battlefield, David was soon threatened by Goliath with spear, shield, and sword. None of that mattered because David had come in the name of the Lord.

While the stone from David's sling brought Goliath down, it was the God in his heart that defeated the

enemy. The Spirit of God within David was bigger than the lion, the bear, and even Goliath. While King Saul and the entire army of Israel felt Goliath was too big to hit, David knew he was too big to miss with the Lord on his side.

The victory outside of us will be determined by what lives on the inside of us. If we have little room for God, then we shouldn't be surprised when our victories are few and small. This boldness in David did not happen overnight. It was a process in the wilderness where David spent a lot of time alone with God. While David would sing praises to God and worship Him, God would fill David's heart with His presence little by little. When the enemies arose, so did the Spirit of the Lord in David.

So each of us must ask ourselves how much of the Spirit of God we have living and reigning in us. Can we truly say, "Greater is God in me, than Satan that is in the world?" If not, then let us get alone with God often and let Him empty

us of any sin, self, or worldliness and fill us with His Spirit.

Our goal should be to seek God's filling with His Spirit daily. Many reading this letter have already experienced great victories over the enemy due to God's Spirit living in their heart. Don't fear the giants that will arise. Our only fear should be from not being ready and filled with God's Spirit when they do arise.

But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

Matthew 6:33



Dr. Glenn Mills is a full-time Evangelist with the Open Arms Evangelistic Ministry. He can be heard each weekday on GoMix Christian Radio.



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Selling Out

Mrs. Sherry Worthington

Sometimes I have the strangest dreams. I wake up mystified! One such dream was truly weird. I was approached by someone in my dream and threatened. He told me I better vote a certain way on a piece of legislation or his people would hurt my children. I remember being afraid at the time, but I quickly forgot about it. I went on with life as usual. As the deadline approached, he came to remind me about my vote. I asked the stranger, “*What did you want me to vote for again?*” He looked at me in amazement and walked off!

I remind you this man had threatened my family, and I did not seem to care at all. Oh, when he first approached me, I was terrified. I was very concerned about my children, but soon forgot about the impending doom. Unlike my dream, real life can be much more serious. I wonder how often we sell out our children for the here and now. So many times we make soft choices

that seal their fates for years to come. The character they needed to develop when they were young is sold out for our convenience today.

Our soft choices start when our children are babies and continue right up until the time they leave our homes. Sometimes, we even make choices when they are grown that hurt their marriages and our own grandchildren. We look at the person they have become without examining ourselves to see if we are to blame. Most choices we make in life affect others.

Every stage in our children’s lives has its difficult moments. Babies can be so cute. We can act very foolish when we talk to them. Do you ever wonder what they are thinking when we coo at them and make the funny faces? We make a lot of effort to see them smile or laugh. I was talking to Hannah, my youngest grandchild, in baby talk. She was laughing and having a good

time, but quick as a wink, she began to scream. Uh, Oh! What had I done? The truth be told, nothing! Well, she wasn’t so cute anymore. I could not console her, but Mommy had the magic touch.

When babies cry, we don’t always know what the problem is. It is difficult to figure out what they may need or want. Fortunately, we learn to read our baby’s cry. We can often tell if the child truly needs something or just wants attention. Both are important, but we have to use discretion when attending to their wants. Isn’t this the battle we face while raising children? We must choose to give our child what he needs, whether he wants it or not. What do our children need from their parents?

First and foremost, our children need to see Christ in us. We must let Christ’s unconditional love shine through us to each member of the family. Displaying

God's love in all areas will show our children why they need to have Him as their Saviour. Without showing Christ to our children, nothing else really matters. Our words will mean nothing. If we have Jesus as the center of our homes, everything else will fall into place.

By showing unconditional love, we give our children the security they need to branch out and grow. In addition to love, they need to see a mutual respect in the home. They need to observe Dad being kind and gentle to Mom, and Mom being kind and respectful to Dad. Children need to observe and experience unconditional love as well as respect, no matter how old they are. If they are constantly yelled at or fussed at, they will not feel secure. Children need to be corrected, but we should use constructive criticism. While instructing them in the areas they are weak in, we need to encourage them and let them know how much we believe in them. This is a choice we have to make and be committed to. Unconditional love along with mutual respect is a lot of work. It is a hard choice!

We also have to be good examples in other areas of our lives as well. We must show our children the value of hard work and responsibility. We need to teach them the responsibility of working hard and the rewards of diligent labor. My mom oftentimes had me do a job over until it was right. She instructed me first so that I knew what was expected, and then she praised me when the job was done well. I did not know how much that one lesson was going to help me with the jobs I held in the future. It would have been easier for my mom to have done the job herself, but she invested in me. She did not take the easy way out!

We must teach our children that when we give our word, we keep it. We can be counted on. So many times in the world of work, many adults cannot be depended on to do a good job, to be on time, or to use their time wisely. They are wasteful of the resources they have available. They waste their employers' time and money. This is often passed on to the children.

Many children do not know the value of a dollar because they are given so much. Many parents are guilty, too! Just visit the buffet at a restaurant, and you will observe first-hand the waste of so many people. Many children spend time foolishly as well. Just ask most teenagers how much time they spend on their cell phones. But I guess many adults are addicted, too.

Our world today is looking for the easy way out. We don't want things to be difficult for us or our children. Our children would have never learned to walk if we had not let them fall. Sometimes they learn their biggest lessons by failure. The school of hard knocks is what my parents used to call it. Knowing when to step in and rescue them and when to let the leaves fall where they may can be a difficult thing.

I sincerely believe the addictive use of technology has made us a lazy and wasteful generation. I wish there was no social media. I know it does a lot of good, but I feel the bad outweighs the good. How much time has been wasted on social media as well as the internet? How many affairs have been started on social media? How much have our children been exposed to on their cell phones? Parents, I beg you. This cannot be a soft choice. Don't sell out your kids. As a teacher, I try to monitor my students' social

media. I have learned of several apps that are dangerous. People can block certain viewers from seeing their posts. So parents, you may not be seeing everything that your child is posting. Do you even know what apps your children have? Take the time to find out today. Research them, and monitor their sites before it is too late. Make the hard choice!

Enjoy your children while they are young. Each stage has its own blessings. As a parent of five adult children, I know this stage can be a challenge. Sometimes it is difficult! When adult children get too much help from their parents, it hurts the marriage. The young couple never grows to be dependent on each other. A friend of mine faults her husband's mother because she never made him grow up. He was never made to face his responsibilities, and she always had an excuse for his failures. Her mother-in-law interfered with their home life, and he never had a good relationship with his wife or children. It is hard to know when to help your children and when to let them handle the situation. We have to be sure we are not encouraging our children's bad behavior in their adult life by not making them face their responsibilities. This is a difficult choice, but we must not sell out our grandchildren on the altar of peace.

So, Moms and Dads, remember that life is full of difficult choices, and when we choose the easy way we are selling out our children and their futures.



Mrs. Worthington has five children and eleven grandchildren. She serves as Principal of Pathway Christian Academy in Goldsboro.

And Finally...



Old Cars...

In December of 1953, I met my husband. Just a month before we met, he had purchased a 1954 black Chevrolet Bel Air. We married Easter Sunday, April 1, 1956. Later on in our marriage, the car stalled out on me while I was driving it one day. I wanted to get rid of the car after that. My husband's response was to inform me that the car was in the family before I was, and he was not getting rid of it. My husband passed away in 1990, and yes, I still have that black Bel Air Sports Coupe in the family!

A. T.

I have had many old cars in my lifetime. At one time or another, I've owned a 1928 4 door Whippet, a 1932 4 door Packard, a 1935 Plymouth, a 1932 Ford Model A Coupe, a 1967 Chevrolet Corvette Coupe, and many others. I remember one of the cars my father had was a 1931 4 door Studebaker. My favorite car was the 1935 4 door Plymouth. I used to drive it in the mid 1960's when I was dating. I am now 75 years old, and I have been married for 49 years. My wife and I are both thankful to be Christians.

G. S.

My first car was a 1959 Ford Country Squire, a nine-passenger station wagon with the fake wood sides. My folks offered it to me as a high school graduation gift in 1968, and I accepted. Forty years later I still own the car. Our 21-year-old son has grown up with the car, and someday it will be his.

B. S.

Our first car was a 1936 Ford Austin, which we bought in 1958. We were so proud of it. However, when it rained, my wife Brenda had to hold an umbrella up to stop the rain that came in the roof, and she also put her feet on the dash as each puddle brought a foot washing ceremony. Rain or shine though, a drive in our old Ford was the only way to get our baby son to sleep each evening.

F. J.

My first car was a 1953 Ford Tudor V-8. I paid \$25 for it. My buddies and I cruised the local hot spots at night, and on Saturday night I would take my girlfriend to a drive-in movie. Afterwards we went to a snack bar to hang out with friends. The parking lot was like a car show. Man, those were the days!

B. H.

“Meet My Pet”

We'd like your help for an upcoming edition of “And Finally...”

Write to us in 150 words or less and tell us a story about your dog, cat, or other pet. The

deadline for submission is

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