

# God - No Absentee Landlord

by Bill Wright

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*God's omniscience and love give us the freedom to be honest with Him, and His presence with us gives us security in our faith.*

**Duration:** 46:39

**Scripture:** Psalm 139:1-16, Proverbs 15:3, Matthew 6:33, Romans 8:9

**Topics:** "Love Of God"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the need for transparent honesty, security, and encouragement in the family of God. He shares how the 139th Psalm has personally encouraged him in specific ways over the past two years. The sermon's title, 'God, No Absentee Landlord,' highlights the speaker's belief that God is always present and involved in His creation and in the lives of His children. The speaker encourages listeners to be honest with God, as He already knows everything about them, and to trust in His love and grace.

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## Transcript

Now, let's pray. Our Father, we have come to this hour and we come as a needy people. We need to hear from you.

Father, if we do not hear from you, we would confess that this hour really will have been of little avail. And so, Father, we ask that you would open our hearts, open our ears to hear your Spirit has to say to the church today. God, I pray that by your Holy Spirit you would teach us that which we need to know and that you would motivate us to respond to your voice.

And we would praise you in Jesus' wonderful name. Amen. Psalm 139 in your Bibles is a passage that God has greatly used in my own life.

It is a passage that brings us to honesty, to security, to encouragement. Honesty, security, encouragement are three things that I would believe today that the church of Jesus Christ needs. It is those three.

We need transparent honesty in the family of God today. We need to be secure, secure in Him. We need to be encouraged.

The 139th Psalm meets every one of those three needs in my life. Personally, I have met them many times, but in the last two years in some very specific and some very wonderful ways, God has chosen to use this portion of the Word of God to encourage me as one of His children. If I was to give a title to this message, I would entitle it, God, No Absentee Landlord.

Isn't that wonderful? God is not an absentee landlord to His own creation, whether it be the creation of planet Earth or whether it would be the new creation of His blood-bought bride. He is not absent where you are today. Wherever you are, He is.

Wherever you've been, He's been. Wherever you're going, He's already been there. There is great ability to be honest with that kind of God.

You suddenly awaken one day that you do not need to inform Him about anything. You do not have to disclose any hidden secret, any hidden passion, any hidden heartache, any hidden sin. You're one of His.

He's been there. When you sinned, He was there. He wasn't absent.

I said to your young people yesterday, as a teenager, one of the things God helped me learn was that I could no longer hang Him up like a pair of dirty clothes in the back of the closet door and go out and do my own thing. He would allow me to go do my own thing, but when I went to do my own thing, He went to do my own thing with me. I never left Him.

He never left me. We talk theologically a great deal, as pastors, many times about the indwelling Holy Spirit. The Spirit of God dwells within our body.

Oh, but I'll tell you, I can get honest with God when the reality of what that really means is that wherever I am, He is. Then the indwelling Holy Spirit becomes a reality that sets me free, free to be honest. There's a great deal of dishonesty in the family of God today.

We play games. We sing the hymns. We say the words.

We pray the prayers. And all the time, God knows there is death, spiritual death, lurking in the hallways of our lives. And all the time, God is trying to get His children to trust Him.

You trust God today? Oh, we'd say, oh, of course I trust God. I'm a child of God. I'm a member of the Rived Baptist Church.

I'm a member of some other group that call themselves children of God. Of course I trust God. The 139th Psalm was a passage that brings a man to the reality that you can really trust God and you can really be honest.

It's one of those passages that's extremely familiar to many. It's one of those portions that religious orators love to recite. It just kind of flows.

You know, there's a lot of beauty in the language. As soon as I get out of Isaiah 9, I will read it. I wonder if God wants to say something out of Isaiah 9. Oh Lord, you have searched me and you have known me.

And you know when I sit down and you know when I rise up. And you do understand my thought afar off. Thou dost scrutinize my path and my lying down.

And you're intimately acquainted with all of my ways. Even before there is a word on my tongue. Well, I like that.

Even before there is a word on my tongue. Behold O Lord, thou dost know it all. Thou has enclosed me behind and before.

And you've laid your hand upon me. God knows it all. The language of this passage is extremely specific.

The psalmist said, Oh God, you are so omniscient. We love that word, don't we? Sounds like we know something. What does it mean? It means exactly what this passage says.

It means that there's not one detail of your life that God is not on the inside track of. There's not one thought you can think God doesn't know. There's not one word that will be on your tongue that before you ever speak it, God already knows that word.

There's not one attitude in your heart. There's not one tendency to wander that God does not know. He knows it all.

So get honest. He says He knows my down sitting. That's an interesting word.

It is a word which means He knows where I've pitched my tent. He knows where I'm abiding. We're told in John 15 that we are to abide in Christ.

The word abide there in John 15 simply means we are to get to the place where we are at home with Him. Where we are coming underneath willingly in submission to the authority of His life in us. Where we take Him out of the realms of heaven or a black hole in space and we consciously willfully recognize He is here and we begin to abide in Him.

We begin to find our place of dwelling in Him. But in this passage when he says God knows my down sitting, the Spirit of God is saying to you and me, listen child, God knows where you're at home. Christian, God knows where the affections of your heart are dwelling today.

God knows where you're most comfortable. He said I not only know you're down sitting, I know you're uprising. The word uprising is a word which when that original reader read it he understood.

I know your tendency to wander. I know your wanderings. Lord I'm prone to wander.

Are you prone to wander? Of course you are. I am. You see when I accepted Jesus Christ as my Savior in 1958, one thing I didn't lose was an old Adamic nature.

I still got it. That old Adamic nature has a lust to wander. It has a drive to wander.

It has a tendency to wander. That's the nature of that old man. And so is the child of God.

There are times in my life when God knows that I wander. I wander in affection. I wander in thought.

I wander in deed. I wander in relationship. God knows.

He said I know that. So get honest. You're wandering today.

Do you mind wandering in this hour to be somewhere else? Be honest. God already knows. I am more convinced today than I've ever been as a child of God that honesty is the track upon which liberty in Christ runs.

We need to lay down a track of honesty in our Christian life. He said I know you know my thoughts. The word thought here is more than the ability to think.

The word that was used by the psalmist here is a word that goes much deeper than just the mechanism of that frontal lobe of your brain. He was actually saying I know the mental attitude that is within your heart. I know the attitudes that drive you.

I know the attitudes that make you who you really are. It's the same concept that you have in Philippians chapter 2, where the Apostle Paul instructed his children let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus. Same truth.

Let this mental attitude, let this mental bent be in you which was also in Christ Jesus. It's more than just those individual thoughts that go off in your mind and in mine. God was saying know this, I know, I know the attitude of your heart.

I know the motivation of your life. I know what drives you in the deep recesses of your being. I know what satisfies you in the deep places of your life.

And he said I know your walk. Every time I think of this word in the scripture, I think of my mother. My mother usually called me Bill.

If she was really feeling affectionate, don't you ever call me this, but if she was really feeling affectionate she had called me Bill boy. But if I wasn't paying attention and I wasn't doing what she thought I had to do, there were those times in my life where my mom would say, William John Wright, behave yourself. All mothers have that in their vocabulary, right? Just the way of mothers.

Behave yourself. That's what the word walk means. The word walk is a word which has to do with manner of living, manner of behavior.

God says I know how you're behaving. I feel guilty. God knows where I'm abiding.

He knows my wanderings. He knows my attitudes. Now he knows my behavior.

I feel guilty. I didn't come to church to feel guilty. Don't feel guilty, just get honest.

There's nothing to feel guilty about. It is something to get honest about so that you can be set free. If your wanderings are wrong, if they're sinful, if they're fleshly, if they're self-directed, get honest about them.

If your thoughts are not what they ought to be, if your attitudes are not what they ought to be, if your behavior is not what it ought to be, don't be guilty. Walk out of here free. But you'll never be free until you face the truth and get honest.

Jesus said you shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free. The truth is Jesus. When you know Jesus and you know what Jesus knows about you, you don't have to play any more games.

You can rip away the facade. You can quit playing all these religious rhetoric games and you can just get honest and you can say, yes Lord, yes, you're right. I am wandering.

I do have the wrong attitude. I don't have your mind. Thank you.

Thank you. I agree with you. Listen, that's where joy comes.

Joy doesn't come by playing games. The most miserable people I know in the world are Christians who play games. Sometimes we get mad at the world, don't we? We look at our unsaved friends and man, they seem to be having a ball.

I mean, they're out there sucking up all the guts to win life. Everything's going great. Nobody's auditing their taxes.

They seem to be getting away with everything. They got better cars and bigger boats and nicer houses. No, you know, everything just seems to be going downstream with a heavy wind behind them.

You know why it appears to be that way? By the way, it isn't all that it appears to be, ever. But it appears to be that way because they're doing what's natural. When you become a child of God, you enter into war.

When you become a child of God, you enter a conflict between the old and the new. You enter conflict between that which is spiritual and that which is death, that which is of the flesh. The tug of war begins and the Apostle Paul identified with that in Romans chapter 7 when he said, the things that I would do, those are the things I don't do, and the things that I wouldn't do, those are the things I find myself doing.

He said, man, I am miserable. Can you identify with that? I can. But don't feel guilty.

Just get on it. Finally, he said, you know my talk. You know the very words of my mouth.

The word talk here is more than rhetoric. It is the word of intent that is being emphasized here. You know my abode.

You know my wanderings. You know my attitude. You know my behavior.

You know my intent. And David's response is, verse 6, such knowledge is too wonderful for me. I want you to hang on to that truth.

He said, boy, it doesn't seem wonderful to me. It doesn't seem wonderful to me that God knows everything about me, that he could expose me. David said, it's wonderful to me.

It's too high. It's beyond my comprehension. Paul agreed in Romans chapter 11 when he said, oh, the depths of the rich is both of the wisdom of the knowledge of God.

How unsearchable are his judgments and his ways, man, they are past finding. Oh, how unsearchable is the wisdom and the knowledge of God about you and me. Christian, we can get honest.

He already knows. You living in sin today, he already knows. Get honest.

That's where freedom is going to come. You can risk it with him. You can risk it with Jesus Christ, who has been everywhere you've been, knows everything that you've ever done.

You can risk it. Why is it so wonderful? Jump down. We'll come to it again, but jump down in the text to verse 17.

This is wonderful truth. And if you hear nothing else out of this message, please hear this verse. David says after he has confessed that God knows everything about him.

He says it is wonderful. You know why it was wonderful? Not because he was sinless. He certainly wasn't.

Not because he had nothing that was wrong in his life. He certainly had much. But it was wonderful to David that even though God knew everything about him, it had not changed God's attitude about him.

Isn't that glorious? You say, my, that perhaps would be a patronization to sin. No, not at all. David was saying, God, you know everything about me, but your thoughts are still precious towards me.

How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God. Christian, would you accept that from the Lord today as a gift? You that are struggling here today, I've been where you're at. I'm there often in my life.

You see, guys that stand behind this desk, this sacred desk, they're no different than you. They struggle with the same things that you struggle with. Your pastor struggles for the same things you struggle with.

But I'm gonna tell you it's glorious when you can come to the place and you recognize God knows everything about you, which isn't always right. And you can say with David, O God, thank you. Thank you that your thoughts towards me have not been altered one iota.

I'm still precious to you because I am still one of yours. You can trust that kind of God, can't you? The guy you can't trust is the guy that you expose yourself to, hoping he won't reject you, and he rejects you. God isn't that way.

But God says, you can trust me, so get honest. I know everything about you, and you're precious. You're still the most precious thing in my life, God says.

And there's no other God like that, is there? All the humanistic gods that man is creating today and have been creating for thousands of years cannot be compared to that God. I agree with Isaiah in Isaiah 40 when he said, who can be likened unto our God and who can be equaled unto him? Nobody. Nobody.

But no matter where I've been, no matter what I've done, it has not changed God's attitude about me. I am still precious. He may hate my activity.

He may hate the attitude of my heart. He may hate the sin of my life. But by his grace, he comes to deal with me as one of his, like a parent who comes to a child.

The child disappoints you, breaks your heart, goes contrary to everything you have taught them. They're still your child. The greatest cause for that kind of pain in a parent's heart is the depth of their love for that child.

The pain is not being caused by hating the child. The pain is being caused by the depth of the intimacy of the love for that child. That's the way it is with God, except a million fold more.

I got to hurry. Don't I? Verses 7 to 6 says you can be secure. You can get honest because God knows it all anyway, so you don't have to play any more games.

Isn't that fun? Man, you can walk out of here free today. No more games. Next time you find yourself in sin, it might be before you get to the parking lot.

You can be honest. You can be honest because God already knows he was there. And that's what verse 7 begins to tell us.

Where can I go from thy spirit or where can I flee from thy presence? If I ascend to heaven, you are there. And if I make my bed in hell, behold, you are there. And if I take the wings of the morning and I dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there thy hand shall lead me and thy right hand will lay hold of me.

And if I say surely the darkness shall hide me from thee. If I say surely the darkness will overwhelm me and the light around me will be night. Even the darkness is not dark to thee and the night is as bright as the day.

And darkness and light, they are both a light to thee. What is he saying? He's saying you can get secure, Christian, because wherever you've been, I've been already. And wherever you're going, I'm going to go.

I do not only know everything about you, I have been wherever you've been and wherever you're going, I'm going. You see, we need to take this realm out, this passage out of the realm of oratory and out of the realm of theology of the omnipresence of God. And we need to bring it right down here where it means to me, Bill Wright.

Bill Wright, God says wherever you are, I am. So be secure. You're never going to walk in too deep a water that God isn't going to walk in it with you.

That's why Isaiah says when you walk through the flame or you walk through the water, I will be there. I will hold your right hand. I will never leave you.

I will never forsake you. That's why he can say that. He can say that in the reality of your living.

Some of you are walking through deep water today. But my heart just groaned this morning when I heard about that young man taking his life. I, as a pastor, have been with far too many parents in that situation.

I'm going to tell you one of the most blessed things in all the world to be able to say to those parents, God is absolute. And to forget about all the pat little answers and the cliches that we use religiously to try and comfort people. Listen, I'm going to tell you, that's a hollow drum.

Anybody that comes to those parents today and says to them some nice little platitude or some nice little religious thing, I'm going to tell you they're not going to meet their needs. But what will meet their need is somebody will just get up alongside them and love them and say to them, you know, I don't have any answers. But one thing I do know, God is right here.

And he's here with all of his sufficiency. And he's here with all of his grace. And he's here with all of his power.

And he's here with all of his availability to you. He is here. I don't know anything else, but I do know that.

I'll tell you, if you're going through some deep water today, the best thing you can hear today is God is absolute. God is here. And if you're living in sin, the best word I can give you today is to realize that God is available.

Jonah thought he could run away from God, remember? What a joke. You know, every time I read that passage now, I laugh. I'm not laughing at him.

I'm just laughing. It's really humorous when you think about it. I mean, this passage says, where in the world do you think you could run to get away from God? You're one of his children.

He dwells within you. From the bottom of your Nikes to the top of your dome, God dwells within you. Where do you think you can run? Jonah 1:3, it says, but Jonah rose up to flee from Tarshish from the presence of the Lord.

What a ridiculous statement. And he went down to Joppa, and he found a ship going to Tarshish. So he paid the fare thereof, and he went down into it to go with them from Tarshish, from the presence of the Lord.

He even put out good hard cash to run away from God. It was impossible. He couldn't.

What a joke. No bigger joke than you and me. Adam and Eve tried to hide from God in Genesis 3. God said, where are you? Wasn't looking for information either.

He's trying to get them to understand. They couldn't hide from him. Noah stood alone in his generation, but God was there.

Abraham came to a strange land, and God was there. Joseph was sold into Egypt, and he found God wasn't absent. He was there.

Moses went into the desert and set by a well in Median, and he found out God was there in that solitary, howling wilderness. God was there. The children of Israel wandered in the wilderness for 40 years, and even in disobedience, they found out God was there.

David sinned against God, anointed of God, chosen of God. God was there. They found out God was there.

Lazarus was in a grave, and God was there. Peter denied the Lord, and Judas betrayed him, but they all found out God was there. Jesus swept drops of blood in Gethsemane, and he found out God was there.

Jesus one day hung suspended upon a Roman cross between heaven and earth, and he found out God wasn't absent. God was there. Easter Sunday morning, some ladies came running to a grave.

They found out God was there. John was banished to the Isle of Patmos for preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. What did he find? The living Christ was there.

Have you found that to be true? There is such security in knowing he is there. You don't have to be afraid. When you realize God is there, you realize you have everything you need.

Everything you need for what Jesus promised in John chapter 10. When he said, I have come that you might have a life and have it more abundantly, he wasn't talking about pie in the sky, by and by. He was talking about right now.

And the reason you can have the abundance, the abundant life that Jesus promised is because Jesus is the abundant life. It isn't something apart from Jesus. It's Jesus.

He is the abundant life. And if you're attempting to have the abundant life some other way apart from him, turning over a leaf, doing more work, sweating it out for Jesus until he comes, being busier, more active in the church, doing more humanitarian things, reading your Bible more, praying more, being in prayer meeting every Wednesday night, never missing Sunday morning, always giving your tithe and more, and you believe that will bring abundance, my friend, you're kidding yourself. You say, don't you believe in those things? Sure, I believe in those things.

If they're the extension and the expression of the life of the Lord Jesus who dwells within me, being released through me, then they're wonderful. Because then as it is simply an outward expression that Jesus is there and Jesus is being allowed to be in charge of my life. Wherever I am, God is.

If I ascend, he's there. If I make my bed in hell, he's there. If I take up the wings in the morning, he's there.

If I stand in the darkness and the darkness will hide me from God, forget it. The Bible says even the darkness and the light, they're both alike to God. They're both alike to him.

God is always available. Where his children are, he is. You see, that's what Paul meant when he said in 1 Corinthians chapter 6, know ye not that your body is a temple of God? Quit using that passage so negatively.

Mom and dad, don't use it so negatively on your kids. Don't use it so negatively on yourself. Realize it is a glorious, positive truth.

God dwells within you. Know ye not that your body is a dwelling place of God? You're not your own. You're bought with a price.

Therefore glorify God. Therefore allow God to be released through your life because he dwells within you. The application of his presence is security.

The application of his knowledge is honesty. You can get honest. You can be secure.

A lot more I'd like to share in that, but I'll move on. One last thing. God is available, but in his availability, he cares.

And I've already shared this passage, but I want to share it one more time. And that is, that even though God knows it all about you and me, and even though he has been everywhere you and I have been, it has not changed his attitude about you. Precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God.

If I were to number them, the psalmist said, they are more than the number of the sands of the sea. Please notice the last phrase. When I awake, I am still with thee.

Please notice who's speaking here, who's speaking up. The passage is not saying of God, awakes, I'm still with him. No.

It's saying when I wake up, every day when I wake up, I have the absolute assurance that God is still there. So I can be honest, and I can be secure, and I can be encouraged. And I believe when we come to church, we ought to always be encouraged.

You say, my, you must never deal with sin in your church. No, that's not true. But you know, I honestly believe, and God has been showing me as an individual, not as a pastor, just as a guy who puts his

britches on in the morning, just like you.

God has been showing me a wonderful truth in the last few years, and that is that wherever sin abounds, grace does much more abound. And every time we deal with sin, we need to point people to Jesus, who is a God of grace, a God you can trust, a God who isn't going to cast you off, a God who isn't going to give up on you. You say, Pastor, you don't know how far I've gone, how deep I've gone, how bad I've been.

I don't, but it doesn't matter. He who knows you, he who's been where you've been, no matter how deep you've been into sin, that one still says, precious also are my thoughts unto you. They are more precious thoughts than all the number of the sands of the sea.

It's just God's way of wonderfully saying, no matter what you've done, no matter where you've been, I love you. Isn't that great? Oh, to be loved like that. In the last three months, I have learned a lesson in my own life, that the greatest need in my life as a man is to be loved like that, unconditionally loved.

That is wonderful, and that's how God loves. It's the only way he can. Anything other than unconditional love for his children would be contrary to his nature, and God cannot operate outside the confines of his own nature, his own character.

His character says, Christian, no matter where you are, where you've been, what you've done, God loves you unconditionally, so you can trust him with your sin. You can get on it. Some of you have been in the prayer room this weekend.

You've got on it. Did God cast you off? Alan, when you went to the prayer room last night, God cast you off. When I went into a prayer room several years ago in Canada, and God opened my life like a can of worms and began to show me that I was rotting inside.

When the outside looked great, but the inside was rotting like dead meat, I found out God loved me. I mean more than just some nice little saying. I found out that he could expose the deadness of my own existence and the rottenness of my sin and still say, Bill Wright, you are precious to me.

And I'm going to tell you that is worth everything in the world. When you know that kind of God, friend, there's nothing you can't trust. In 1860, Elizabeth Codner, during the great revival in Wales, sensed a personal need in her own life for God to touch her life.

She saw people meeting God in some powerful ways. Some of you have sat in these meetings, and you've seen God meeting people quietly, personally, intimately, transformingly. Some of you have sat back and said, man, what's wrong with me? Well, you can probably identify with this dear lady, for that's exactly how she felt.

She wrote an old hymn. I've never heard anybody sing this one, Alan, but it's entitled, Even Me. Lord, I hear showers of blessings.

Thou art scattering, full and free. Showers of thirsty soul refreshing. Let some drops now fall on me, even me.

Pass me not, O gracious Father, lost and sinful though I be. Thou mightst curse me, but rather let thy mercy light on me, even me. Pass me not, O tender Savior.

Let me love and cling to thee. Fain, I'm longing for thy favor. When thou callest, call, O God, call, even for me.

Pass me not, O mighty Spirit. Thou canst make the blind to see. Testify of Jesus' merit.

Speak the word of peace to me, even me. Have I long in sin been sleeping, long been sliding, grieving thee? Has the world my heart been keeping? O forgive and rescue me, even me. Love of God, so pure and changeless.

Love of Christ, so rich, so free. Grace of God, so strong and boundless. Please, Lord Jesus, magnify it all in me, even me.

That may be where you're at today, where you would come to the place where you could get honest, honest with the Lord Jesus. And you could say, O lovely Lord Jesus, I'm ready for you, who knows everything about me, has been everywhere I've been. Lovely Lord Jesus, I believe I can trust you.

Would you magnify your love in me? Christian, will you trust Jesus today? Would you trust him who has been walking in you, through you, living his life in you, from the very moment you invited Christ to come into your life? Would you trust him today? Aren't you tired? Some of you are. You're just about wore out. Oh, I've lived there, I know what that is.

You're tired of the game, you're tired of the show, you're tired of the rhetoric, you're tired of keeping up the front. Man, you just like to strip it all off and just say, this is me. Take it or leave it.

And Jesus is going to say, I take it, I take it. In my prayer this week, God would set people free, free from themselves, free from the bondage we bring our lives into, free to let Jesus be who he really is, God, in us, the hope of glory. You want the world to sit up and take notice of Jesus and get honest enough to let him deal with you in an intimate way, you can trust him.

We're going to close in prayer. We're going to sing a hymn. The hymn that says, have thine own way, Lord, have thine own way.

Thou art the potter, I am the clay. Mold me and make me after thy will while I am waiting, yielded, there's the word, yielded and still. Is there an attitude you need to bring to God today? Is there a sin in your life that you need to bring to God, a behavior, an activity, a relationship, whatever it may be? Listen, you can trust him.

He won't cast you off. He won't write you off. He'll come in absolute grace and in unconditional love, and he'll say, come, come.

I will cleanse, I will empower, and then I will fill you with my spirit so you can begin to walk in the abundance of my life. Now let's pray, and let's get honest, honest with him. Precious Father, thank you that though you know everything about us, thank you that though you have been everywhere we have been, thank you, Father, that your thoughts towards us are precious.

Holy Spirit of God, I pray right now that you would do a work that only could be attributed to you. In the quietness of this moment, Father, I pray that your Holy Spirit would just not only convict us but convince us that we can trust you, that we can come and lay it all on the altar. You won't despise us, and you won't cast us off.

You'll give us a new beginning. Thank you, Father, for that. Lord, that friend that may have slipped into this hour, they do not know you.

They've never invited your son who died for them to be their Savior. Oh, God, convince them right now by your Spirit. Draw them unto yourself.

Help them to know that your love is unconditional towards them, that you would love to enter their lives, give them a new beginning called salvation. So we want to praise you. We commit these next moments just to you, to your glory, to your honor, and to our good.

We would praise you in Jesus' name. Amen.

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