

Brake 2

by George Verwer

George Verwer's sermon emphasizes the importance of addressing discouragement in ministry through understanding, balance, and a deeper relationship with God.

Duration: 1:02:50

Scripture: Psalm 119:11, Matthew 6:33, 2 Corinthians 1:20, Ephesians 4:26, Philippians 4:4, 1 Thessalonians 5:18, 2 Timothy 2:15

Topics: "Missions"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the importance of survival and relaxation in Christian work. He shares his personal experience of realizing the need to pull back and focus on small tasks instead of constantly striving for big victories. The speaker emphasizes the value of taking time to gather one's thoughts and talk to Jesus, rather than feeling compelled to evangelize every moment. He also mentions the positive impact of delegating responsibilities and finding ways to relax, such as playing golf. Additionally, the speaker vulnerably shares a struggle he faced with infatuation and how he overcame it through perseverance and distance.

Transcript

You know, many times Satan, his first goal is just to get us discouraged. Many Christian leaders would never get into, for example, moral sin. Normally they would not do that.

When they're motivated, they're in the work, they're rejoicing, it's not a big problem. But when they get discouraged, they do the most crazy things that you could ever imagine. And this is why it's so important not just to think of the big, fiery darts of Satan.

But to deal with the little things that are discouraging you and draining you of your motivation. Let's just finish this list. We talked about unanswered prayer.

We talked about the negative factors of the world situation. We talked about failure. We talked about sin.

The fifth thing that discourages many people is physical illness. With some people it's tiredness. My own wife got ill in India and got hepatitis.

And in some ways she's never quite been the same since then. And then she had some operations. We call them in English women's operations.

And some things went wrong there in the hospital. And that made her even more physically weak. And then of course bringing into the world three children.

We as men, our part is so easy. The women's part is often very difficult. And when the children were young, she's always listening at night if they were going to cry.

So she learned how to sleep very lightly so she could hear the babies. Now we don't have any more babies. But she can't sleep.

The slightest noise in the night, she's awake. And when you don't get proper sleep, you get more and more tired. I sleep anywhere, anytime.

And very deep. Noise. I just weave it into my dream.

Any noise I incorporate in the dream. So I wake up at 6.30. My method is to jump immediately out of bed. And to go out running.

My wife does not appreciate this method. She likes to stay in bed for one or two hours. She likes a cup of tea.

And then she reads her bible. And still she's feeling tired. And it can be very discouraging.

And yet it's very normal. That our physical bodies and our spiritual life, they are linked. Of course, it's amazing the physical illnesses that come upon God's people.

As you know, our brother Jonathan McCrosty there in his wheelchair. It's so strange the things that God allows. But I think we just have to face, this is what life consists of.

Paul Wilheimer has written a book, Don't Waste Your Sorrows. Wilheimer. I don't know if this is in German yet.

But it brings out some of the purpose of suffering. There are many books now on this subject. And I recommend them.

Because I think even in our evangelism, we need to be able to explain to the unconverted the reason why God allows suffering. We don't have a total, little, easy answer, but we have answers. And we have greater than answers.

We have salvation. And we know that this life is just a pilgrimage. And even pain and suffering can have some purpose in God's plan.

And the sixth reason many people are discouraged, is the situation in the church. Now, I'm going to be really honest. That's the biggest one for me.

Now, I don't know so much about the church in Germany. But in America, in England, in India. Few other countries I've lived a long time.

So often the church is just so sleepy. The simplest spiritual exercises. It's not there.

And often there's some disunity. And I've been in churches where people are actually openly hating other people. And speaking against it.

And of course we all long for revival. And maybe when you first start to minister in a church. Although many of you are pastors.

You're sure that within one or two years revival will come. And sometimes instead of the church increasing in vigor. You are being drained of your vigor.

What little you had when you started. I was greatly helped as I restudied the book of Acts and the epistles. To understand that serious problems are a basic part of church life.

And we are not anymore looking for revival in the absence of problems. We know God can bring revival in the midst of problems. And there will still be problems.

And if you've studied revival. You know sometimes the problems have increased. When the revival came to Wales in 1904 under Evan Roberts.

One pastor ferociously attacked him. And it was a terrible, terrible controversy. And I just think it's so important to understand.

That all of us in the church. We do fail. And yet God can work in the midst of that.

Now there's no need to go into more reasons why people get discouraged. But I hope this will help us understand people in our groups, in our congregations, in our towns. And maybe even understand ourselves better.

Many of the situations we are in. The failures we're having. The heartaches, the discouragements.

It's completely normal. I'm not saying we have to remain there. I'm not saying that sin is ever right.

But I am saying this is the way life is. I think of a young woman. She was on OM.

And then she joined a mission society. And she met, suddenly she met the man of her dreams. And within six months they were married.

And then she found out. He was a deeply mentally disturbed person. And in one month it was all over.

Can you imagine that experience? And she never went to the mission field. I praise God that she even survived such an experience. Now in English we have a strong word.

It's not used in the church much called survival. It's used on ships. We speak of survival at sea.

If the ship is going to sink, you have to survive. You get in the little boats. I decided that I was going to develop a survival ship strategy.

And I have decided that I will develop a survival ship, or a strategy for survival. In English we have youth and a survival ship. But in German we can't use these two words.

Please. Survival ship. But I want you to understand this.

Because when we go out in Christian work, we often are always thinking about the victorious life. And moving mountains for God. And seeing souls saved.

And churches being born. And the enemy Satan fleeing as we move forward in the battle. And we hear messages on the overcoming life.

And I discovered after a number of failures, that some days it's just a miracle if I survive. On that particular day, or for so many hours on that day, I must pull back. I must not attempt to move some big mountains.

I must dig in, and get in my small boat, and survive. Now I would love to share my 30 points on how to survive in the church. I've written them here in my Bible.

I like to use all the blank spaces in my Bible. And I ran out of blank spaces. Because sometimes in Pakistan or in some country, I only have this book.

So I keep a lot of things here. Then I found all these maps. I wasn't using these.

I traveled to Italy on one of these maps. So I put some more notes. And I have here my survival tactics.

And this has really helped me. I learned how to relax more. I don't feel I have to give out tracts every time.

I don't have to talk to every single person I'm sitting next to on the bus. Sometimes it's a miracle if I can just talk to Jesus on the bus. And just gather my thoughts for that day.

And my evangelism flows more from compassion and freedom than from compulsion and condemnation. And it's been a revolution in my life. I'm more relaxed.

All my leaders tell me I'm easier to live with. Most of the major responsibilities of OM, I've given them all away. I even now have associate international leaders.

He handles all the phone calls. I haven't been even on the phone the whole weekend. This is a miracle.

He is on the phone. I still have plenty to do. And I have done something very special that has shaken the whole OM world.

I have taken up the midlife sport. Golf. And I love it.

Now, here in Germany, golf is for rich people. But in England, golf is for poor people. It cost me two Deutschmarks to go play golf.

And just to walk around the golf course, praising the Lord, actually, I got in some trouble doing that. Because on the golf course, the players, they want complete silence. It's a very serious thing for them.

For me, it's just a little diversion. So I was on the golf course. The man is making very serious shots.

And I walked along. Oh, praise the Lord. Praise the Lord.

And all of us have to accept what I call the human factor. There's nothing wrong with being human. There's nothing wrong with enjoying the countryside.

Or enjoying your favorite food. Or doing some other little thing. As many of our young people are brought into bondage and legalism.

Because they're told Christians can't do this or Christians don't do that. And a lot of the things we say we can't do when we're dedicated Christians. There's no biblical basis for it.

It's our own interpretation. And in OM, we had many of our own interpretations. And God is very merciful.

And I wrote that little book, Revolution of Balance. Because we had to discern the difference between a biblical principle and an OM policy. That's why there's nothing wrong with a Bible school having some basic rules.

What? Who ever heard of a Bible school without rules? It's impossible. But as you leave. And as you have to find your own way in life.

You need a lot of wisdom. What is a Bible school rule? And what is a biblical principle that maybe I'm going to have to use in my home wherever I live. All of these things the Lord has been slowly teaching me.

Have kept me encouraged generally every day. Every day I've had some encouragement. It says don't let the sun go down on your anger.

That's also one of my problems. And I have said don't let the sun go down on your disgust. So when even everything is going wrong.

All six of those areas. You can say, verse 18, I will rejoice in the Lord. I've practiced this for about 25 more years.

And it works. Thanksgiving. Praise.

It works even in the most difficult situations. Because verse 19 is true. And hundreds of other similar verses are true.

The Lord God is my strength. How can we resist some of this discouragement when it comes at us? By the way, some people who are never discouraged. At least during a certain period in their lives.

Certain types of people. Who are always bounding along. They never seem discouraged.

These people are often very gifted in discouraging other people. Especially if they're not honest. And together with the bouncing around and the happiness.

There are hurtful words or discouraging actions. And when I was a younger Christian. And I didn't have so much difficulty with discouraging.

I discouraged a lot of people. Oh, there were those that believed what I was preaching. Some of them joined OM.

And we went to Mexico, we went to Spain. But there were other people that I hurt. Because of a lack of sensitivity in my ministry and my words.

And I've been working on a message that I gave. About a year ago. About 200 Christian leaders.

It's called Developing Sensitivity in Your Preaching Ministry. And there was such conviction in that meeting. And God so moved.

That this message has now been put in major Christian magazines going all over the world. I don't know how many of you are ministering the word. And you're challenging people.

And you're preaching. And if you are. Be sure you're in God's school.

Always learning how to say things better. Always wanting to be more sensitive. To where people really are.

And where they are really hurting. So we don't just create more and more false guilt. But we also show the way of love and forgiveness.

Anyway, I've got another list here. On how to stand against discouragement. Very basic.

I'm sure you already know it. But Paul once said to Timothy. I bring these things to bring you in remembrance.

Number one, a deeper knowledge of God himself. I'm glad that some of these books by A.W. Tozer are now in German. Also J.I. Packer's book, Knowing God.

And I know there are books written by Germans that I am not able to read. That emphasize a deeper knowledge and walk with God himself. Don't get your main joy from what you do.

I, of course, product of a Dutch-Scottish family. Dutch background, very work conscious. I look back over each day.

What did I get accomplished? This is a very European way also of thinking. That as we move east and south. We often find people very different.

We think they're all lazy. All these Indians, they're all lazy. But I've learned something from Indian Christians.

Many of them know how to spend time with God. And some of them really walk with God. It's not being lazy to spend an hour alone with God.

Or a day alone with God. A deeper knowledge of God. Will stop a lot of discouragement.

He never changes. His love for us never changes. Even when we fall flat on our face in absolute failure.

God is there. I don't believe he abandons us. We just had a girl.

She was on OM some years ago. She applied to another Christian mission. They turned her down.

She went back home. She committed suicide. This summer.

Incredible. And in some of her thinking, from what I've heard. She believed God had left her.

There is a lot of extreme teaching about the will of God. And this idea, if you miss God's will for your life. You're gonna get in a lot of trouble.

This is what the cults teach. And a lot of people are in the churches. In a grip of fear.

And guilt. And some feel God has left them. Some people don't like to bring me in as a speaker.

Especially graduates. To make them all feel guilty. George Boer, the missionary speaker.

All these graduates. What are they doing in Germany? Why haven't they gone to the ends of the earth? That's where the need is greater. Now maybe you don't have this problem.

But I have people come up to me. Oh, if only I could live my life over again. A real old man came to me.

If I were young, I would join Operation Mobilization. That's okay. But we need to understand.

Even if we miss a main road in our Christian life. God doesn't die. Maybe you missed a missionary call when you were in Bracca.

At the missionary conference. You were doing the missions. You missed the call.

And every time you hear a message about missions. Maybe I missed God's road for my life. That's why I have the wrong husband.

That's why I'm stuck here in Germany. Don't waste your time thinking that way. What can you do about it now anyway? God is God.

He specializes in putting us back in the right place. Even when we're on the wrong road. If I didn't believe that, I think I'd have a nervous breakdown.

Some days I may have to make 30, 40 major decisions. What if I make a wrong decision? I'm affecting people's lives. I have to trust in God.

That when I make a mistake. He can overrule. Sometimes we counsel people.

Say, I married the wrong wife. And so my life is not working out. And I have this problem.

We have that problem. Why? I married the wrong wife. It was a weak moment.

I thought that she was very nice looking. I didn't pray enough. It was just all heart, heart, heart.

Now it's 20 years later. She's very big. She's not looking so nice any longer.

I'm sure this was the wrong wife. This is utter foolish thinking. Even if you married the wrong wife.

God could make it a great marriage. In fact, I would say this. I don't know if it will go with your theology.

It's better to marry the wrong wife. And get God's blessing through repentance. And the word and revival.

And see him make that marriage go. Or marry the right wife. And both of you get away from God.

And that marriage could be destroyed. What am I trying to say? God is great. God is all powerful.

God is merciful. And God specializes in overruling our blunders and weaknesses and mistakes. And then number two.

Deeper knowledge of his word. Don't think now that you've been a Christian for 20 years. You can just neglect the word of God.

You know all this. It's more interesting to read the newspaper. Watch the sports on the television.

Beware of the midlife neglect of the word of God. You and I know that Bible college is just the beginning of a real pilgrimage of a lifetime in God's word. And I just still believe in memorizing scriptures.

Some people think, oh that's just for young Christians. It's just for new converts. We get them to memorize Bible verses.

You would do well to keep meditating and keep memorizing the scriptures. It's a great bulwark against discourse. I have found that all my life.

And then number three. To continue learning what it is to live by faith and not feeling. Now I'd love to talk for an hour about feelings.

Sometimes as disciplined Christians we sort of try to pretend feelings are not important. So we go to church. Put our smile on.

Shaking hands. Inside we're screaming. We're crying.

And we're afraid to even tell anybody what's going on inside. We're living our life in a little emotional lock up safe. And we've thrown away the key.

And some people try to say, well certain nationalities they're very non-emotional. It's nonsense. We're all emotional.

Some more than others. And there must be a right understanding of the place of emotion in the life of a Christian. As a young Christian I had to learn to cry.

I was taught as a little boy. Crying is for little girls. I was so ashamed when I was crying as a little boy.

And yet I found that I cried. So I would hide. Nobody would see me crying.

And after I was converted. I saw Jesus wept. Paul wept.

The psalmist wept. I learned how to weep. I learned how to express my emotions.

I also had to learn how to control. It's the old story. Balance.

But if you're having some deep emotional struggle. And you try to get the victory. But you're not getting the victory.

And you're more and more guilty. More and more wrestling with these things. Maybe you ought to talk to somebody about it.

Maybe you ought to get somebody that you can fellowship honestly with. And I have been practicing this. And I would not be here if it wasn't for that.

I had times I'm a little bit probably more emotional than the average person. One day I can go up and down over 20 times. One day.

I wake up feeling terrible. Stay in bed all day. The world is a nut house.

I'm staying here. But somehow I get through that. I get outside.

See the sunset. Then I get back home. Go in the dark house.

Maybe something's gone wrong. Soaring down. Not feeling so good now.

Better get my Bible. The 100th time. Praise the Lord.

Coming up again Lord. And at the end of the day. Up and down.

And I've had to learn a little more. About just walking a little more by faith. So I don't go quite so far up.

And I don't quite go so far down. Little more stability. And if you know George Verwer that's a miracle.

And of course it's a long road. But it's very important. I still love 1 Corinthians chapter 9. Paul said I buffet my body.

I bring it into subjection. Lest after preaching to others. I become a cast away.

And that book on spiritual depression. Very strong on this point. There are times.

We're being tempted. Our feelings are pulling in like a magnet. Towards some sinner.

And we just have to deal ruthlessly with our emotions. Let me give an example. Forgive me for being too honest.

But I was a married man. And I was up in Sweden. Preaching the word.

Soul winning for God. And suddenly into the room came a girl. I had never seen anything like that in my life.

Wow. And suddenly I was forgetting everything I was doing. And of all things I want that girl.

I thought how can this be? I'm a servant of the Lord. I'm a married man with 2 children. I love my wife.

I'm happy. Good sex life. No problem.

That was this side. Then they argued. Wow.

That is not a funny experience. For 4 months I was infatuated with that woman. I dreamt about it.

I couldn't get it out of my mind. Fortunately she was in Sweden. I had to go to India.

But it was a great struggle. And of all things she joined Operation Mobilization. I was sitting in Saventum.

And she came in. I said Lord I'm finished. Have mercy on me.

I remember once it was a prayer meeting. You know how we handle prayer meetings sometimes. We men.

We pray with great intensity with our hands over our face. Seeking the Lord. But once in a while we look and see who's come in the room.

So here I am in a prayer meeting. And I'm getting caught up with this emotion. You know in 25 years of counseling people.

In studying the lives of over 500 Christian leaders. I can tell you that experience is not unusual. It's only a little unusual to talk about it.

And many many Christian leaders. Have been destroyed in their ministry. Because they didn't know how to deal with that completely foolish wrong emotion.

And there's some in Germany right now. This afternoon are fighting this. One not far from here.

I wish I could go visit him. We've got to learn how to deal with feelings. Many feelings are alright.

Even a little infatuation toward another woman is actually quite normal. In terms of the initial thoughts. There's a difference between temptation and sin.

And we must understand that. But to entertain that. And then to do something.

Is the most foolish thing a Christian leader. A man in God's ministry. Almost the most foolish thing he ever did.

And I kept praying about this. And God in his mercy. As quick as it came it left.

And it never came back. And I saw this woman some time ago. Stuck with my wife.

Because now 15 years later she doesn't look so good anymore either. These are outward things. And I saw how many Christian leaders.

For one hour of pleasure they have sold their soul. They have sold their ministries. They have destroyed their churches for one hour.

Where they didn't control their emotion by God's word. Think of our friend Hal Lindsey. I don't like to talk about people.

But sometimes it's good. Everybody knows the story anyway. The most popular writer in America.

Became the spiritual hero of many young people overnight. Married man. And he meets this lovely nice looking girl when he's making a Christian movie.

Be careful if you get into Christian movies. And he got into discouragement. And he committed immorality.

And he divorced his wife. Then he was removed from his church. And what more can you say? It's happening all the time.

And it can happen to you. So why don't we learn from God's word? Joseph had this temptation. He's all alone.

He's away from home. This beautiful woman says, hey Joseph. My husband's gone.

Let's have some fun. Joseph did as you and I must do. He said no.

Immediately. This could never be from God. It is indeed wickedness in the sight of God.

He got rewarded. Got put in prison. Sometimes we think when we do the right thing.

God's going to give us a biscuit. He's going to reward us. And so we do the right thing.

God doesn't reward us. Well, next time I'm going to go the other way. So much foolishness gets in our thinking.

That's why I like to spend so much time in the word and good, powerful Christian books. Keep bringing my thoughts back to Christ. Back to the word of God.

I've had the weirdest, wildest temptations for 29 years of my Christian life. He has kept me from impurity. And for me, the likes of me, that is a miracle.

But he specializes in the miraculous. So learn to deal heavy blows to the feelings. Remember the importance of the disciplined life.

Maybe some of the rules you had when you were in Bible school might be good for you to keep. Let me just give one example. A lot of men do unwise things in counseling women.

And they get in isolated situations alone counseling women. And example after example shows that love affairs, infatuations are born in these counseling situations. Better to let sometimes your wife do some of that counseling.

Or do it together. And sometimes young women are very naive. They think, oh a man of God, a counselor, he would never do anything wrong.

Such utter foolishness. And I believe that it's better to just be a little more careful in some of these areas. Not legalistic.

Not judging someone when you see them counseling the opposite sex, especially in a public room. Realize how subtle the enemy is. Well just very quickly.

The fourth thing. To resist discouragement. Keep trying to understand yourself.

And don't give up. Really loving and accepting yourself. I know some places, like in America, they've gone extreme on this.

So many books on self-acceptance. How to love yourself. How to accept yourself.

And that's wrong. But other people, many people I have met, never read a single book on this subject. And they don't really accept themselves.

They specialize in putting themselves down. It's often linked with their background. I had only a little struggle in this area.

I had so many other problems. You don't want them all. But my wife.

Her father was killed in the war. Difficulties in the home. Never really developed the deep sense of love.

And to this very day. She so quickly puts herself down. Feels so inferior to everybody.

She wanted to go to Bible school. I met her before she got in. She was working as a secretary.

I was finishing. I met her. Took her from the Bible school.

And we soon were in Spain. You know, I've noticed. Anybody that's been through Bible school.

My wife emotionally feels inferior to this person. It's amazing. How our childhood affects our adult behavior.

And I'm praying that Dr. Siemens' book. Healing for Damaged Emotions. Will be put in German by the end of the year.

That's my prayer. And a second book has come out. It is a bombshell.

Giving up your childish ways. Don't all of us sometimes act just like little children. And if you don't think we have any problems with this on the mission field.

Obviously you have not visited any mission field. Let's try to understand ourselves. Let's try to understand others.

And let's pray for more wisdom. A.W. Tozer said the greatest gift needed in the church. Is discernment.

Wisdom, discernment. In the early days of OM. We were big on zeal and dedication.

And we were small on wisdom and discernment. We need both. That's why we need to read widely.

We need to listen well. To other people. And we need to spend much time before God.

Number five is balance. There's not time to speak of it. But when I've been able to keep things in balance.

It's encouragement. For instance, I now I think have a little more balanced understanding of the church. So a church that twenty years ago would have discouraged me.

Today when I'm in that church. It encourages me to see what God is doing. It's as it says in Philippians 4. Emphasizing the positive rather than the negative.

I've always found it so easy to see the negative. See what's going wrong. It's almost part of my temperament.

And God has just been hitting me, hitting me on the head. To get me to be more positive. And I think positive praying, positive thinking.

On the basis of Philippians 4.8. Is one of the most revolutionary practices you can ever engage in. And I have a message on how to be positive toward Christian leaders. So help me understand other people.

People I don't necessarily agree with. People are not of the same theology. But I've come to understand them.

Respect them. I don't agree. And sometimes I will hopefully, compassionately disagree.

But I love them. And I believe I'm going to spend eternity with a lot of these people. That may not agree with me.

There's no area in the New Testament. Where you can't find more balance. By studying other areas of the New Testament.

There's no set of truth or truth that you can read. That doesn't need to be brought into balance by other truths. Well, my last two points are simply this.

Have realistic goals. I was in a prayer meeting in our early days. Oh, and the great excitement claimed one thousand souls to be saved.

And I said, I stopped the meeting. And I said, look, are you sure the Holy Spirit put that prayer on your heart for a thousand souls this week? Oh well, she didn't know what to say. But sometimes, maybe we have too much coffee.

We get excited. We read a good book. And we say, this is what I'm going to do, some fantastic idea.

For every man that sees some fantastic idea become reality. I believe there are ninety-nine men who don't see it. And they fail.

And they become discouraged. And when they see other men who are successful, they get more discouraged. Isn't it wonderful that God is also for the failures? In America, we always bring up a successful businessman to give his testimony.

He says, I gave my life to Christ. I have my business. And the Lord has blessed me.

And now my business is worth, well, a few million dollars. All the other people are sitting there. Why don't we bring up the man who has a testimony for failure? Maybe he would like to speak.

He got saved. He heard the message. He gave God his business.

He's now bankrupt. And it happens. And I want you to get a hold of a little book called, God Wants You Rich and Other Enticing Doctrines.

It's the hottest book in America this year. Because there's a lot of foolishness in this area being taught. So we have to pray.

We have to seek the Lord. Luke 14, we have to count the costs. And yes, we have to take steps of faith.

But if you haven't led one soul to Christ, don't pray for a thousand. If you haven't trusted God for five marks, don't pray for 5,000. And if you can't even relate with your own wife, or some of your close friends, maybe you better not pray about becoming the world's greatest Christian leader.

And then number seven, prayer, praise, a crucified life, the fullness of the Spirit, and death to yourself. Well, we've already had messages on that. Say, does this really work? I believe it does.

And I've seen thousands of people putting these things in practice. Not in the exactly same way. And I've watched quite a few lives now over 25, 30 years.

And I believe it's proof. This book is truth. These biblical principles do work.

Another man may express them in different ways. Another person may disagree with me on certain points. No problem.

We're never going to all agree. You don't have to agree with everything I've written in my books. You don't have to agree with the way Operation Mobilization works.

We're all different. Unity comes in the midst of diversity. And we need to see that.

And we'll be more encouraged if we work together. Let's just pray. Lord, there's so much in your word.

Lord, I know that if you can keep a weak emotional character like me going these 30 years, by your grace and mercy and forgiveness, then you can keep anybody. Everybody in this room can still be in the race 25 years from now with their eyes upon you. Lord, we know that your word says there's no turning back.

Father, you know our needs right now. And we want to take our problems, our burdens, the discouraging factors, and we want to put them all upon you. And we receive your peace and your forgiveness and your cleansing and your reality through Jesus Christ.

Amen.

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