# Friends For Life and Eternity

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[0:00] This is the First Mustang Pulpit Podcast, a podcast of the weekly preaching and teaching at First Mustang.! Thank you for joining us. Well, let me invite you to open your Bible to Philippians chapter 1 again.

! And this is where we will be for a while on Sunday mornings as we do our best to see all the Lord has for us from the book of Philippians. It is ironically a book all about joy. And I say ironically because as Paul pens this, he finds himself under house arrest. And it's a reminder from the very beginning that regardless of circumstance, joy is something that God's people enjoy. And don't you love to be around joyful people?
People who are not quick to complain, don't demand their own way. People that can find the blessings of God in any situation.
People like that are precious. They are gifts in our life. I hope you know some people in your life who no matter the circumstance, no matter what they are going through or whatever is going on around them, that they are people who find their joy in Christ.
And I hope that you're one of those people. One of the things I hope the Lord does for us as we study through this book the next number of months is I pray that collectively as a church and individually, that each of us would have a joy that grows and increases, not because life is going the way that you want it to be necessarily, but because you understand that God is good and God is faithful.
[1:51] And in that reality, we have every reason to be joyful. The problem is so many people associate joy simply with their circumstances.

And the problem with that is, of course, when circumstances aren't good, then they would think they must lose their joy. But this book is so helpful for us because it's going to remind us that our joy is in Christ and collectively what we share together as brothers and sisters in Christ.
The question is, can you retain your joy, even can you expand your joy no matter the circumstance? And the answer from the book of Philippians is yes.
Let me just walk you through a quick overview of how this brief letter tells us how we can live with joy.
Chapter 1, verse 12. I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel. That was Paul's aim.
[3:00] Doesn't matter what happens to him. Doesn't matter what is said of him. His only desire is to find joy in the fact that the gospel is going forth. Verse 18.

What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed. And in that I rejoice. Yes, and I will rejoice.
Verse 21. For to me to live is Christ and to die is gain. Chapter 2. Look at verse 14.
Do all things without grumbling or disputing, that you may be blameless and innocent children of God, without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world.
These are Paul's words, he writes, while under house arrest. There are those who would seek to have him in prison. Those who would seek to have him put to death.
[4:05] And his answer is, as long as I know that I am without blemish, I can shine as a light in a crooked and twisted generation.

And in that, he finds his joy. Chapter 3, verse 13. Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own, but one thing I do, forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

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He says, my aim is with my eyes straight ahead. Not being detoured by what happened in the past, not being distracted by what happens around him.
His vision, his focus, his eyes are straight ahead to follow the Lord Jesus Christ. Chapter 4, verse 4. Rejoice in the Lord always.
Again, I will say rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication.
[5:17] With thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

And then chapter 4, verse 19. My God will supply every need of yours according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.
This is the truth of the joy that Christians have. This is a reminder that together, as brothers and sisters in Christ, our hearts are united with Christ and united with each other.
And no matter our circumstances, we have joy because we have Christ. Just a little background to the book of Philippians that may help you to understand some of the details that have led to this book being penned.
It was in 50 A.D. that Paul and Silas and Luke travel. And in their travels, they plant this church in Philippi. About 62 A.D., so about 12 years later, Paul received a gift from the church brought to him by a man named Epaphroditus.
[6:33] And Paul writes this letter back to the church, thanking them for their generous gift and offering thanksgiving to them and helping to remind them to live in joy as God's people that all of us should have.

He finds himself under house arrest, Philippians becoming one of the four, what we would call prison epistles, Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon, and Philippians.
And yet, while a prison epistle, this is an anthem of joy. In fact, more than 15 times in this book, you will find the word joy, and about 50 times you'll find Christ directly mentioned.
And I think that's instructive for us, that the more we think about Christ, the more that we rest in Christ, the more we retain and expand our joy, no matter the circumstance.
Listen to the words of 1 Peter 1, just to give you an idea of how the New Testament teaches this theme all over. 1 Peter 1, verse 6 says, In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith, more precious than gold that perishes, though it's tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.
[8:14] And though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not now see Him, you believe in Him, and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

1 Peter 6 says that when you go through various trials, when you are tested, that what would result from that test, from that examination, would be that your faith was genuine, that your love was in Christ, and that no matter your circumstance, it was proven that you belong to Him.
That's true in 1 Peter 1. That's true in James 1. That's true here in the book of Philippians. Let's back up and ask this question.
How did this church in Philippi get started? Paul is writing a letter to the church at Philippi. That's why they call it Philippians. How did that church get started? Paul and Silas begin what we know as Paul's second missionary journey.
Their plans change, and they go to Macedonia. Luke joins with them. Timothy joins with them. And so you have Paul and Silas and Luke and Timothy.
[9:37] And they come to Philippi. Now what Paul would normally do in a city is he would go to the synagogue. No mention of him going to a synagogue here, as was his custom, which tells us there wasn't a synagogue there.

And if there wasn't a synagogue there, that means there were less than 10 Jewish men that lived there. This was a Roman colony. And apparently what we find out as we read the book of Acts is that there were a few who would gather there by the river and they would pray.
In fact, let me just read to you. Just make note if you want Acts 16, starting in verse 11. Let me just kind of read to you the beginning of the church at Philippi.
Acts 16, verse 11. So, setting sail from Troas, we made a direct voyage to Samothrace and the following day to Neapolis and from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district of

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Macedonia in a Roman colony.
We remained in this city some days. Here's the beginning of the church of Philippi that will tell us why he's writing the letter of what we call the book of Philippians. Acts 16, verse 13.
[11:00] On the Sabbath day, we went outside the gate to the riverside where we supposed there was a place of prayer. And we sat down and spoke to the women who had come together.

And one who heard us was a woman named Lydia from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods who was a worshiper of God.
And the church of Philippi begins. And the church of Philippi begins. And the church of Philippi begins. And she prevailed upon them.
And the church of Philippi begins. Not with flash.
Not with pomp and circumstance. Humbly. Simply. And the Lord begins to do what the Lord does.
[12:10] Open hearts. Convert. And build His church. Back to Philippians 1.

This is the church he now writes to. We're about 12 years after the church has started. The church has ministered to Paul and sent him a gift to meet his needs.
He now, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, writes this letter to the church at Philippi. Philippi, Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, with the overseers and deacons, grace to you, and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
We're going to look in verses 1 to 6 over this week and next week. Today, we're going to look at just verses 1 and 2. But the first thing I want you to see today in verses 1 and 2 is a picture of the church.
In these opening verses, Paul gives us a picture of the church. And then in verses 3 to 6 that we'll look at next week, we're going to see a prayer of comfort and a promise of completion that He who began a good work in you will complete it.
[13:31] Let's notice first in verses 1 and 2 a picture of the church. And I want you to, I want to draw your attention to four different words he uses to describe what the church is.

First, make note of the word servants. Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus. This is the heart that we should have as God's people, that we want to be servants.
Now, it's interesting because Paul is writing this letter to encourage the church at Philippi, although he himself is under house arrest.
I think that's quite telling. That the heart of ministry should be that no matter what you're facing and what you're enduring, that you're looking to care for others.
You don't become self-absorbed. You don't make everybody focus on you. But instead, no matter your circumstances, you're trying to help others, serve others, lead others.
[14:34] And we see that because that's the very reason why Paul writes this letter is to encourage the church at Philippi. And he describes he and Timothy as servants of Christ Jesus.

Not a word that the world would make much of. Not a word that the world would say is noble. But what better could be said of a Christian to say they were servants of Christ?
In chapter 2, verse 22, he says, But you know Timothy's proven worth, how as a son with a father he has served with me in the gospel.
The church at Philippi knows Timothy. He was there with them. And he says, You know who he is. He's my son in the faith.
He says in chapter 2, verse 19, I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon. And so, Timothy is someone who is known by the church.
[15:44] And Paul says, Timothy and I are together. We are servants of Christ. And I look forward to sending him to you so that he can encourage you. Paul finds himself under house arrest physically, but spiritually describes himself as a servant.

And because he lives as a servant of Christ, he experiences true freedom. I want you to think about that with me. No matter what the world does to him or says of him, he identifies as a servant in Christ.
And because he's a servant of Christ, he has true freedom. Friends, there is no more freeing place to be than to know you are a servant of Christ.
that you belong to him. That he is your Lord. He is your Savior. Paul and Timothy are bondservants of Christ.

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It means their ultimate loyalty belongs to Christ. Now, don't miss this. Paul and Timothy love the church.
[17:00] And they love the people of the church. That's why Paul is writing this letter is to care for the needs of the church. Yet, their greatest aim is to be pleasing to Christ.

And this is how it must be for all of us who are part of the body of Christ. We should love each other. We should care for each other. We should pray for each other.
We should support each other. We should protect each other. We should give our lives away to serve each other. But our ultimate aim must be to please Christ above all else.
That's the way Christians live. to live any other way would be to seek to put man's opinion above God's.
To say we love God but don't care about God's people would be completely opposite of how Christians are to live. So the balance is we love God above all else.
[18:14] We seek to honor Christ above all else. But the manifestation of that commitment is that we give our lives away to serve and protect and defend and minister to and care for and pray for each other.

We're not living our life as man pleasers. We're God pleasers. But the evidence that that is true is in the way we care for each other.
We're not seeking to build our own kingdom. We're not seeking to make much of ourselves. We just want to be known as Paul and Timothy were known as servants of Christ Jesus.
Church, let us be servants. Amen? Servants. In every way. If you're married, serve your wife. Serve your family.
Serve in the ministries of the church. Seek to make much of Christ by serving others everywhere in every way you can. Not seeking your own recognition.
[19:22] Not seeking your own self-promotion. But just striving to make much of Christ. What would a bond servant in that culture do? Have ultimate loyalty.

And that's how Paul describes himself in his relationship with Christ. He is a servant of Christ.
There's a second word I want you to notice and it's the word saints.
Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi. This speaks of all true believers.
Believers in the scripture are saints. It's a word that means to be set apart for the Lord. If you're a believer, this is you, Christian. You're a saint.
If you have this idea in your mind that you've got common Christians, ordinary Christians, normal Christians, and then you have really devoted Christians, really impressive Christians, and they're the saints.
[20:31] They're the varsity. That's not how the scripture describes the church. You are all saints in Christ Jesus if you are a believer in Christ.

You've been set apart for Christ. Set apart for His service. Set apart to be a part of the kingdom. And so let me just remind you, dear church family, to live as a saint in Christ.
To understand that when you read the Bible of how a Christian should live, this is true for all of us. and we want to live our life every day as one who is set apart for Christ.
If you're a fourth grader and you have given your life to Jesus Christ, live like this. If you're an eighth grader down here with our middle schoolers and you've trusted Christ as Savior, you've repented of your sin, you're a saint in Christ Jesus.
Live like that. Be set apart from the world, different from the world. And if you say as a teenager, I want to be a Christian but I also want to blend in with the world, that is at odds with each other.
[21:48] You can't have it both ways. To be a saint is to be set apart. You're in the world but not of the world. And adults, let us live the same way too.

Set apart for the purpose and the ministry of Christ Jesus. Living your life with joy for the glory of Christ no matter what. And I want you to think of yourself as a servant and I want you to think of yourself as a saint because this is the language of the New Testament.
Christians are servants of God and they are saints in Christ Jesus meaning we have been set apart by God for His use.
Every Christian in this room you are set apart by God for His use. Your life belongs to Him. Your future belongs to Him.

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Your gifts the Spirit have given you are there to make much of Him. And if you have confessed Christ as Savior and repented of your sin and you are following the Lord Jesus Christ be a servant and see yourself as a saint set apart for the purposes of God.
[23:10] This past weekend we had a birthday party for our granddaughter Miss Rosie May turned one year old this past week had a beautiful party yesterday and we were trying to put together part of the decorations for the party and me and Benjamin were trying to hook this arch together and I couldn't get my part to connect which isn't surprising because this was the limits of my skill of organization was like connecting two bars but it was nonetheless a challenge and we have set apart on our coffee table some coasters and I couldn't get the two parts to connect together and I saw this coaster right beside it and I thought well that might make a pretty good hammer I don't need something super hard I just need to connect the pieces together so this coaster was set apart and they're on the table and I picked it up and I used it as a hammer to connect the two pieces together and you know what happened the two pieces did not connect together but the coaster split in half because the coaster was set apart for a different purpose it had a different use there's a reason it's not in the toolbox it's set apart for something different and Christian you're set apart for something different you have a unique use in the body of Christ for the purposes of God to make a difference in the neighborhoods and the nations you've been set apart for his use according to his plan write down a third word that's the word shepherds

Paul and Timothy servants that's our first word of Christ Jesus to all the saints there's our second word in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi with the overseers and deacons those are the shepherds of the flock the overseers and the deacons the New Testament speaks of these two functions in the church you have overseers and you've got pastors shepherds elders all those terms used interchangeably in the New Testament and you have deacons and these are to be the shepherds that are part of the body of Christ let's look at both of these functions for a moment first we'll look at overseers and then second the deacons in the New Testament the overseers are the ones who are responsible as the word would suggest for overseeing the church teaching the church protecting the church giving direction on spiritual matters then in the New Testament you will see a reference to the overseers and sometimes they're called overseers and sometimes these men are called shepherds and sometimes these men are called elders all the same function let me just give you a quick example of how this term is used referring to this one office of overseer so you can understand what the New Testament teaches about the church in Acts 14 23 it uses the word in English that would be elder in Acts 20 it uses the word overseer in Ephesians 4 it uses the word shepherd all of these terms refer to the office of a pastor of an elder sometimes elder sometimes overseer sometimes shepherd 1st Timothy 3 which has the qualifications for an elder uses the term overseer 1st Timothy 5 uses the term elder
Titus 1 uses overseer and elder together 1st Peter 2 uses shepherd and overseer together and 1st Peter 5 uses shepherd and elder together so when you read the New Testament when you're talking about those who are the overseers of the church those who are to lead the church those who are to instruct the church those who are to protect and defend the church they are the overseers or the shepherds or the elders exact same idea depending on which term is used all carrying the same idea as those who are the overseers of the body of Christ deacons as you see at the end of verse 1 the overseers and deacons in the New Testament are servants who minister to God's people in the New Testament their task is to assist the elders in meeting the needs of people one example of that would be for the deacons to help minister and care for widows doesn't mean that only deacons can care for widows of course but it's one example of how the deacons in the church are supposed to care for the needs of the church so you've got the overseers who are instructed in the New Testament to teach and protect
God's word the overseers shepherds elders same office and then you've got deacons who assist the elders by meeting the needs of the congregation and Paul says as servants to the saints and to the overseers and deacons and to the shepherds of God's people it's interesting to me that the word used for Paul and Timothy here is servants it's not a lofty term in the world's eyes to be a deacon was a picture of waiting tables and these are the words of the New Testament that those who shepherd God's people are to do so in a way that is humble and sincere with a heart and a motive to just love
God's people I want you to know tonight we'll take the Lord's Supper at the end of our evening service and you'll see our deacon body here at the front leading out in the Lord's Supper some of

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you may know all those men some of you may know some of those men some of you may be new to our church and you know none of those men I want you to know that I could give you a long list of ways that the Lord has blessed our church high high high on that list would be that God has in this church a group of deacons who are humble servants who love to make much of Christ by meeting the needs of the people and this is how the New Testament instructs us to be that when people see themselves as servants and when people see themselves as saints set apart for the purpose of [30:44] God and when you have overseer shepherd elders who teach and protect and defend and deacons who serve and assist what you have is not a perfect church because none of us are perfect but what you have is a biblical church that is filled with joy and it's a beautiful thing you know there's not a single person in our church that's a member here not one that I would think of as a troublemaker not one single member there's not a single deacon in our church who I would ever associate with stirring up division or trying to do self-promotion there's not a single pastor or shepherd or elder on our church staff who is trying to do things for their own good or their own gain not a one now our church is imperfect if you're new to our church you're looking for a church home with school back in session you've not found a perfect church

I'll promise you but I will tell you this our church has hundreds of servants who for nothing more than the glory of Christ and the joy of serving God's people week after week after week conduct their lives and lead their ministries in a way that makes much of Jesus and our church has pastors here who love each other and care for each other and hold each other accountable and teach each other and support each other for the goal of serving and loving you and our church has deacons here who help and assist our pastoral team in every way they're ever asked to do and when somebody says why do you have so much joy as a part of this church my answer is always something like because our church lives biblically not perfectly
I wish we did I wish I did but I'm not perfect and neither are you but I believe we are faithful and I believe we are biblical and it's not surprising that where you have a church filled with servants who are set apart for the purpose of Christ with pastors who love you and care for you and deacons who serve you and in a humble way seek to shepherd you it's not surprising that a church like that would enjoy great joy and I want you as a part of this congregation to understand that the way that we're structured and the way that we strive to minister is not simply because it's our idea it's trying to follow the New Testament's example and picture of what a church should be this is why this first point is a picture of the church every true church should strive to function in a way that is biblical so you have servants that's all of us using our gifts seeing ourselves as belonging to Christ we're saints set apart for his service not for our own use but for his you have shepherds you have overseers and deacons and then a fourth term
I want you to write down is that we have together salvation in Christ salvation in Christ verse 2 grace to you and peace from God our father and the Lord Jesus Christ servants saints shepherds salvation in Christ this is the picture of the church verse 2 grace to you that's what God gives us and peace from God our father that's what we experience he gives grace we live in peace all of this through the work of the Lord Jesus Christ any of you are welcome to be here on a Sunday morning or Sunday evening or Wednesday evening but to belong to the church to be a member of the church is not just a matter of of paperwork or semantics to be a true member of a church is to be a believer to be a baptized believer in the
Lord Jesus Christ one could attend services every Sunday of their life but if they don't know Jesus as their savior heaven is not their home because heaven is not reserved for the church goers heaven is the home for those who have been saved by grace through the work of Jesus Christ what unites our church is not simply that we get along though praise God we do what unites our church is not simply that we share some common things which we do what unites us ultimately is that we all as believers have salvation in Christ I'm not closer to God than you because I'm a pastor you're not closer to God than somebody else because you're older it is about this all of us were sinners all of us as Christians saved by grace through faith and like Lydia in Acts 16 praise God he has opened our heart to hear and believe the truth what unites us together is that we have salvation in [37:08] Christ that's where our unity comes from that's where all true unity! comes from is remembering the source of our salvation and the source of our salvation is the person and the work of Jesus Christ this is why for some of you even today in the sanctuary this may be the first time you've ever been to our church church and it may feel a little bit odd because you don't know anybody and you don't know where things are and you may have known the songs you may not

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have known the songs you may have known when we stand or not known when we stand and those things can make it a little bit uncomfortably new I understand that but if you are a true believer in Christ when you sing with us and you have an open bible and the word is taught and explained there is a bond there is a connection not because you know about what football team

I cheer for not because you know what school I went to not because you know what my hobbies are but because as I explain the bible you're saying the same spirit that inspired the text is the same spirit that lives within me and lives within you and that seal is what has brought us together as brothers and sisters in Christ that's what gives us a church family filled with unity all of us as Christians have salvation in Christ not because of our works but all because of Jesus all because of Jesus and so on Sunday mornings when we gather here our parking lot can get crowded our hallways can get crowded we have to have hundreds of people serving on a
Sunday to make it work members are asked to generously serve and use their gifts members are asked to generously give financially to support the work that the Lord is doing you've got to get up on Sunday instead of sleeping in you come and you sit by people that some of them you know some of them you don't know some of them are personalities that you would enjoy going on vacation with some of them are people that are so different than you and yet with all of that our church sings with joy and teaches with joy and serves with joy and moves forward with joy because of what we have in common namely salvation in Christ grace to you that's what's been given to you peace from God our father that's what you experience and the Lord
Jesus Christ this is what it means to belong to the church is to have salvation in Christ so what's the picture of the church servants not celebrities not superstars servants servants whose loyalty is to Jesus servants who aren't looking for self-promotion or affirmation or recognition just to make much of Jesus saints those who have been set apart for the purpose of God those who have been separated from the world to show that you belong to him and shepherds overseers pastors elders it's one group and deacons together the overseers the deacons serving the church teaching guiding protecting loving not for earthly gain but for the glory of Christ and where you have servants who see themselves as saints with godly shepherds overseers and deacons who never forget that we are all saved by grace you have a true picture of a church and should you be here this morning and you're trying to find purpose in your life and meaning in your life and you're wondering is going to church going to bring meaning to my life is teaching this Sunday school class going to finally bring meaning to my life
I want you to understand this the entry to the church is not where you serve it's not what you give the entry to the church is to belong to Jesus Christ to confess Christ as your savior to repent of your sin to call upon the Lord Jesus asking him to forgive you and trusting in him him alone to be your Lord and savior the new testament says those who have believed in him are to be baptized that's our first step of obedience is believers baptism and then because you truly belong to Christ because you've been saved you identify with the church through believers baptism now you use your gifts and your resources and your time to live out your love for
[43:49] Christ but let me be clear joy in your life won't come because you simply agreed to teach or to greet or to sing joy in your life will only come when you truly know Christ as your savior and if you've never done that I would encourage you this moment this morning in this place to confess your sin and to call upon the name of the Lord Jesus asking him to save you trusting in he alone for your salvation and to be joined together with a group of people striving to find our joy in making much of our glorious savior this is the picture of the church and to God be the glory for the good things he has done and we trust he will do in the days to come

Lord your word for us is an encouragement because you tell us in your word how we're to live and how we're to serve where our unity comes from we are so thankful and grateful Lord I pray today for all who are true believers that may not be walking in obedience with your word that this day they would turn from their sin and repent and walk in obedience with you I pray Lord for those who are here and not true Christians that this day they would recognize their sin that you would open their hearts to believe what they have heard today I pray Lord that as a church we would continue to strive to be servants set apart for your use that our pastors of our church would continue to teach and serve and defend and protect and love and lead and that our deacons would continue to serve and to minister and that together we would always find joy in the truth that we have been saved by grace through faith through the work of your son the

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Lord Jesus it's in his name we pray! Amen! Church I love you dearly so thankful for you pray that you've been encouraged today as we have sung and read and studied God's word please come back five o'clock tonight we'll be in Nahum chapter one Lord's Supper youth choir leading us it's going to be a phenomenal night of worship see you at five o'clock God bless you you!
You're dismissed on behalf of First Baptist Church of Mustang we want to thank you for joining us this morning for our live stream broadcast we are so thankful for the gift of technology and that we are able to reach so many people not only across the state and in our nation but around the world and what a truly indescribable gift that is I do want to encourage you if at all possible if you are able to be here in person there is no substitute for gathering with the people of God in person so we encourage you to be here in person at any one of our services but once again if we can help you in any way please feel free to contact us and we would love to serve you in any way possible have a great day to you have to to to you!
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