

PRACTICAL
FAITH SERIES

Winning in Life

SIX BIBLE STUDY LESSONS
FOR GROUP DISCIPLESHIP



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FOR GROUP DISCIPLESHIP



EVERY NATION
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How to Use this Material

In Victory, the primary venue for discipleship happens in a small group. It is called a Victory group. We strongly encourage everyone to be involved since these groups are specifically designed to help disciples grow spiritually.

A Victory group meeting has three sections: **Connect**, **Word**, and **Prayer**, and ideally lasts from forty to sixty minutes.

CONNECT (5-10 minutes)

Victory group meetings begin with a time to relate with one another. Depending on the people who comprise the group, this can be done through a variety of ways:

- Fun—such as an icebreaker activity
- Answered prayers—sharing of testimonies and updates
- Questions—such as those provided in the material, learning each other’s personal stories, and sharing feedback from the weekly message

Effective Questions During the Connect Portion:

- Are deliberately friendly to first-timers
- Ask for opinion or experiences
- Require no Bible knowledge
- Have no right or wrong answer
- Are not controversial
- Are preferably connected to the meeting’s topic

WINNING IN LIFE

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WORD (20-30 minutes)

Teach the truth and relevance of God's Word for life application. The Victory group meeting is not primarily a Bible study. Although teaching and explanation of Scripture is involved, the goal is to minister, not finish a material.

There is no need to teach all the points in a material.

Within this section, we look at what the Bible says, its relevance to us today, and its application in our lives.

What: *What does the Bible say?*

Communicate and impart biblical truth clearly and concisely.

¹⁶All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, ¹⁷so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. 2 TIMOTHY 3:16,17

Tips for Sharing the Word Effectively

- Let the Bible speak for itself.
- Use illustrations and tell stories to explain Bible verses.
- When entertaining clarifications, be watchful not to allow the discussion to go off-tangent.
- The primary goal is to minister to the needs of the people, not to finish a Bible lesson.
- Be led by the Spirit when using the material.

So What: *What is the relevance of the Word to my life?*

Give participants the opportunity to discuss how the Word impacts the way they live.

Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

ROMANS 12:2

Now What: *How do I apply the Word to my life?*

Our primary reason for sharing the Bible is so that people will know who God is and what He has done. In doing so, the participants will begin to discover who they are and what they should do.

If it is a promise, teach them to claim it. If it is a command or a principle, encourage them to put it to action by God's grace. If it is a truth, let them embrace it willingly and not under compulsion. Allow God's grace and love to win them by the way you teach God's Word.

Encourage specific, measurable action steps that are consistent with the life change that the Scripture is bringing about. We do not command people, but we spur them on toward love and good deeds.

Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves.

Do what it says. JAMES 1:22

Tips for Life-Changing Application

- You may choose one of the "So What" and "Now What" questions or you may add your own.
- An effective standby application question is: "What one action step are you going to take as a result of what you heard today?"
- Designate who will be the first to answer the question asked.
- Do not allow someone to argue or be critical of others.
- Remind everyone to apply the lesson to their own lives, not to someone else's.
- Ask God for wisdom to know when to balance or correct strange or unbiblical applications. Insensitive correction or criticism can kill the group, as can unchecked heresy.
- Remind everyone that transformation is God's work, not ours, and our obedience is a response to who He is and His love for us. It is God's grace that enables us to apply and obey His Word.

PRAY (15-20 minutes)

Prayer is the most important part of the Victory group meeting. Make sure you have plenty of time left so your prayer time is not rushed. This is not a “closing prayer,” but a time for everyone in the group to take specific requests to God. This is where the action is. The goal is to create a venue where people will see God move on their behalf.

“Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven.” MATTHEW 18:19

Tips for Powerful Prayer

- Listen to the Holy Spirit carefully during the Connect and Word sections for things that may need prayer.
- Spend your time praying for one another, not sharing and discussing prayer requests.
- Keep your prayers simple, sincere, and short. Most non-believers have never heard an ordinary Christian just talk to God and will be touched by the sincerity and simplicity of the prayer.
- Pray, don’t preach. Pray in simple and short sentences, not long “sermon prayers.”
- Use conversational prayer, not complicated or profound, intercessory prayer.
- Expect God to answer your prayers.

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1

The Power of Vision

CONNECT

- Are you a creative person? How do you express your creativity?
- If you had all the time and money in the world, what would you do? Where would you go? Why?
- What do you want to be remembered for one day? Why?

Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.

PROVERBS 29:18 (KJV)

WHAT

Vision determines our future—the direction we take and the decisions we make. Our vision is defined by God. He gives us a clear picture of what He wants us to be and how He wants us to get there. In this lesson, we will look at four principles of how, in Christ, the right vision helps us live victoriously.

1 Vision gives us purpose.

“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.” JEREMIAH 1:5

Vision cannot come from ourselves. As with Jeremiah, God has a vision, a purpose, and plans for our lives and our families. We can only know our purpose when we know our God and receive His vision for us.

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Share a vision God has given you about your own life, your family, your business, or your ministry.

2 Vision gives us passion.

I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. PHILIPPIANS 3:14

Vision fuels our passion, creates momentum, and keeps us focused on the goal. What energizes you?

What would you do even if no one asked you to do it?

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3 Vision sets our priorities.

Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint; but blessed is he who keeps the law. PROVERBS 29:18

Without a vision or a revelation, we will cast off restraint. If we have a vision, we will remain clear on our priorities and keep ourselves on the right track.

What does it mean to “cast off restraint”? What are your priorities? How do our priorities determine how we spend our time, money, and energy?

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4 Vision helps us overcome obstacles.

And Elisha prayed, "O LORD, open his eyes so he may see." Then the LORD opened the servant's eyes, and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha. 2 KINGS 6:17

God opened the eyes of Elisha's servant, enabling him to see victory over his circumstance. Vision will help us persevere and overcome every trial and challenge that comes our way. When we have a clear vision from God, we will also see that God has given us every resource we need to accomplish the task.

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Recall a time when God helped you overcome an obstacle in your life or in your family.

SO WHAT

- Why is having a vision so important and powerful? What happens when we don't have vision?
- How does vision fuel our passion and priorities? Name some visionaries in the Bible who were passionate about God's purpose for their lives. What lessons can we learn from them?
- How does our vision help us overcome obstacles? How do you think God wants us to respond to the obstacles and difficult circumstances in our lives?

NOW WHAT

- Do you know the vision God has for your life and for your family? If so, what is it? If not, ask God to begin revealing His plans to you.
- Is God's Word a passion and a priority in your life? How can you have a deeper hunger for and revelation from His Word every day?
- Are you facing certain obstacles as you seek to achieve God's vision for you? How can you respond in a way that honors God?

PRAYER

- Thank God for His purpose and destiny for your life, your family, and the people He has blessed you with, and for His hand upon you.
- Ask God that His plans would prevail for you and your family, that you would have a greater understanding of His vision for you, and that He will give you the grace and strength to see this vision become a reality.
- Pray that God would ignite a deep passion for Him in your life and that many would come to know Christ through you.

2

The Gift of Wisdom

CONNECT

- What was the most difficult part of your week? What happened?
- Do you like receiving gifts? Why or why not?
- How do you respond when you realize you've made a mistake? Recall an instance explaining this.

For the LORD gives wisdom, and from his mouth come knowledge and understanding. PROVERBS 2:6

(READ ALSO EPHESIANS 5:15-17.)

WHAT

Wisdom is the application of knowledge—it is knowing what to do with the things we know. If we are wise, it will be evident in our actions and words. Wisdom is a gift from God. Left to ourselves, we can't make wise decisions. But with the wisdom that comes from God, we can live in a way that honors God, protects our family, and is a blessing to many. In this lesson, we will look at how we can grow in wisdom as we follow Him.

1 Live in the fear of the Lord.

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; all who follow his precepts have good understanding. . . .

PSALM 111:10

Through love and faithfulness sin is atoned for; through the fear of the LORD a man avoids evil. PROVERBS 16:6

Having the fear of the Lord means having a genuine reverence for God, acknowledging who He is in our lives. When we live in the fear of the Lord, we value our relationship with Him, avoid evil, and grow in wisdom.

Why do we need the fear of the Lord?

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3 Love the Word of God.

¹My son, if you accept my words and store up my commands within you, ²turning your ear to wisdom and applying your heart to understanding . . . ⁵then you will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God. PROVERBS 2:1,2,5

The Word of God is full of wisdom. As we read, meditate on, and prioritize His Word, we will grow in wisdom.

Do you delight in God's Word? How does God's Word give you insight and understanding?

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3 Ask God for wisdom.

If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. JAMES 1:5

God is the source of wisdom. When we need wisdom, we should go to Him.

Recall a time when you asked God for wisdom for a specific situation. What happened?

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Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom. PSALM 90:12 (TNIV)

WHAT

We only have one life to live. A clear grasp of our limited time on this earth makes us more deliberate with our decisions. We become wise, choosing to make every moment count and investing every opportunity in what really matters. Following are four ways we can choose to live.

1 Live with purpose.

"For when David had served God's purpose in his own generation, he fell asleep; he was buried with his fathers and his body decayed." ACTS 13:36 (SEE ALSO ROMANS 8:28.)

Israel's King David understood that God created him for a reason, and he chose to live out God's purpose in his lifetime. We experience the fullness of life when we pursue God's unique purpose for us on the earth.

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2 Live with passion.

²⁹*"The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. ³⁰Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.'* ³¹The

What does "purpose" mean?

How is loving God connected to loving others?

second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these." MARK 12:29-31

(SEE ALSO ROMANS 12:11.)

When Jesus was asked which commandment was the most important, He responded with a two-fold command: love God, love others. As we learn to love God and love others with all our hearts and souls, we will be charged with passion and wisdom every day.

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3 Live with wisdom.

¹⁵*Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, ¹⁶making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. ¹⁷Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is.* EPHESIANS 5:15-17

(SEE ALSO JAMES 3:13.)

Understanding that our days are limited, the Apostle Paul exhorts us to use each one wisely. This perspective will enable us to avoid wasting time on foolish pursuits that do not have lasting value. The more we understand how precious our time is, the more we will invest every moment on what truly matters. Recall the previous topic on wisdom.

Where does wisdom come from (Proverbs 2:6)?

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4 Live by faith.

Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty." JOHN 6:35

²⁵Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; ²⁶and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" JOHN 11:25,26

Even with purpose, passion, and wisdom, life is incomplete without God. He is the true source of life. Trusting in God results in experiencing a satisfying and fulfilling life, as well as the assurance of life after death.

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How has trusting in God enabled you to truly live?

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SO WHAT

- What are some of the benefits of living purposefully?
- What do you think it means to live life with passion? What are you passionate about?
- Why is the fear of the Lord the key to wisdom? How does a wise person live?

NOW WHAT

- How can you "number your days" this week? How should the reminder of our limited time affect your decisions and plans every day and how you relate with your family and friends?
- What do you think your purpose is? How can you know the purpose of God for your life?
- How can you be more careful and wise with the way you live? How can you grow in your relationship with God this week?

PRAYER

- Thank God for the life and hope we have through Jesus Christ. Thank Him for His purpose for your life and for the days He has blessed you and your family with.
- Pray for a heart of wisdom to number your days aright and spend each moment well. Speak a blessing over your family today.
- Pray that your faith in God would grow as the years pass. Ask God to use your life to glorify Him and to draw others to Him.

4

A Lifestyle of Learning

CONNECT

- Which subject did you enjoy most in school? Which one did you like least? Why?
- How do you respond to change? Recall a specific instance explaining this.
- What do you and/or your family members do to relax and unwind?

"Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls." MATTHEW 11:29

WHAT

Jesus invites us to learn from Him so we can experience life in all its fullness. Learning and growing are part of life. In life, we grow physically, intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually, and we should continue to learn. Following are three tools God uses to teach and mature us.

1 We learn from trials.

²Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, ³because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. ⁴Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. JAMES 1:2-4

(SEE ALSO ROMANS 5:3-5.)

The trials we face are great opportunities for growth and maturity. This growth comes not only by experiencing trials, but by persevering through them in faith, learning from them, and knowing that God is using them to mold our character. When we experience trials, we can trust that God will take us through them.

How have you seen God use the trials you've faced as opportunities for personal and spiritual growth?

2 We learn from transitions.

⁸By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. ⁹By faith he

made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. ¹⁰For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God. HEBREWS 11:8-10

(SEE ALSO ECCLESIASTES 3:1.)

It's been said that the only thing permanent in life is change. Most people, however, find transitions of any kind frightening and threatening. Abraham chose to embrace change, trusting God for the end result.

How is Abraham's response to change evident in his actions? Why could Abraham respond to change so positively?

3 We learn from the truth.

Buy the truth and do not sell it; get wisdom, discipline and understanding. PROVERBS 23:23

Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. . . ." JOHN 14:6

People who choose to learn truth reap its many benefits, including wisdom, freedom, peace, and integrity. And contrary to popular belief, truth is not relative. The Bible teaches that Truth is a person—Jesus Christ—and His Spirit will guide us into all truth.

How do you learn God's truth practically? How have you benefited from His truth?

SO WHAT

- What’s one of the hardest things you think your family has been through? What did you learn from it?
- How do you think we can learn from transitions? Why do you think God works in seasons? What are some of the key transitions you’ve been through in your own life and in your family, and what did you learn from them?
- Why do many people think truth is relative? What does the Bible say about this?

NOW WHAT

- What trial or transition are you facing right now? How are you responding to it? What do you think God is doing in your life?
- Are there areas in your life that are not in alignment with God’s Truth? What do you think you should do about that?
- How can you develop a lifestyle of learning and growing this week? How can you keep growing in faith and learning more about God?

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- Thank God that He is the Truth and that your life is built on Him. Thank God for the grace He gives through each trial and transition.
 - Be honest with God about the trials or transitions you are going through in your own life, in your family, in school, and at work. Ask Him to be with you and pray that you would learn the lessons He wants to teach you.
 - Pray that you would keep learning and growing, and that you would always be a blessing to those around you. Ask God to make your life a channel of blessing to draw many people to Him.

5

The Blessing of Prosperity

CONNECT

- When you have several things to do at the same time, how do you decide which to do first? Recall an instance explaining this.
- What’s one of the best things about being around children? Why?
- Who is the most generous person you know? Recall an instance explaining this.

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

JEREMIAH 29:11

The LORD will grant you abundant prosperity—in the fruit of your womb, the young of your livestock and the crops of your ground—in the land he swore to your forefathers to give you.

DEUTERONOMY 28:11 (READ ALSO DEUTERONOMY 28:12,13.)

WHAT

We often limit prosperity to financial and material abundance. This is partly true, but prosperity is more than that. God desires to prosper us in every area of our lives so we may be victorious and successful. In this lesson, we will look at four principles of prosperity.

1 God grants prosperity.

The LORD will grant you abundant prosperity . . .

DEUTERONOMY 28:11

Prosperity is not something we can acquire or achieve on our own—it is something God grants. We may be wealthy, but that does not mean we are prosperous.

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What does "grant" mean?

2 Prosperity is receiving from God's abundant resources.

And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus. PHILIPPIANS 4:19

God has limitless and endless resources, and He desires to bless His people. God owns everything; He is always in control; and His promise of prosperity stands. (See also Psalm 50:10,11.)

Share of a time when God abundantly blessed you.

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3 Prosperity is about knowing our priorities.

But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. MATTHEW 6:33

Prosperity is not about how much money we have or how many houses we own. The greatest measure of prosperity is our relationships with God and our families, cultivating what God has given us and making it grow. As we delight in Him, seek Him, and trust Him, He will prosper and provide for us. (See also Psalm 1:1-3.)

What are priorities?
What are your priorities?

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4 Prosperity is about blessing the generations after us.

"I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you." GENESIS 17:7

God's covenant and promises stand for generations. As we follow Him, He will bless us and our descendants as well.

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Who does God keep His covenant with (Deuteronomy 7:9)?

SO WHAT

- How does the world define success and prosperity? How does God's Word challenge that definition and perspective?
- How do you determine your priorities? How do your priorities determine how you spend your time and energy?
- How does the truth that God owns everything affect how you live? How does it affect your hope for the future generations?

NOW WHAT

- Do you believe God desires to prosper you and your family? How can you grow in your understanding of God's character and nature this week?
- Do you value your relationship with God? What are your priorities? How can you align your priorities according to God's plan and purpose for you starting today?
- Is there an area of your life where you have not experienced God's prosperity? Ask God to grant you abundant prosperity as you seek and follow Him.

PRAYER

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- Thank God for His faithfulness and blessings for you and your family. Thank Him for His mercy, grace, and goodness.
 - Pray that you would experience and walk in prosperity as you seek God first. Pray for His abundant provision and mighty hand to be upon you, your family, and everything you do.
 - Ask God that you would be a channel of His blessings every day.

6

The Principles of Stewardship

CONNECT

- Did you ever borrow something from a friend and forget to return it? What happened?
- What is one of your most prized possessions? Why?
- Who is the most trustworthy person you know? Share an instance explaining this.

"His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'" MATTHEW 25:21 (READ ALSO MATTHEW 25:14-29.)

WHAT

Jesus taught His disciples about stewardship by using many parables and stories: the shrewd and dishonest manager, the lost coin, the lost sheep, and this one in Matthew 25, the parable of the talents. A steward takes responsibility for, manages, and is in charge of the land, finances, and other important matters entrusted to his/her care. As God's people, we have also been entrusted with many blessings and are expected to be good stewards. In this lesson, we will look at four principles of stewardship so we can become the stewards God intended us to be.

1 We are stewards, not owners.

The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it . . . PSALM 24:1 (SEE ALSO MATTHEW 25:14,15.)

God is the source of everything, and He remains the sole owner. Everything comes from God and still belongs to Him. We, on the other hand, are managers and stewards.

What are we stewards of?

2 Stewards are accountable.

"So he called him in and asked him, 'What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your management, because you cannot be manager any longer.'" LUKE 16:2

As stewards, we will give an account to God, our master. We are not entitled to the blessings God has given us, things that we have only because of His grace.

How did the master reply to the man who put his talents to good use (Matthew 25:21)?

3 Stewardship is all about trust.

"Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much." LUKE 16:10

(SEE ALSO MATTHEW 25:29.)

God looks at how we handle the little things before He entrusts us with bigger things. How we take responsibility for our studies, careers, time, family, relationships, talents, and finances matters to God.

What does "trust" mean? How can someone be worthy of your trust?

4 Stewardship is about the little things.

"Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much . . ." LUKE 16:10

Good stewards take care of every detail, and trust begins with the small things.

If we can be trusted with little, what does Jesus promise?

SO WHAT

- Why is it important to remind ourselves that we are stewards, not owners? How does this understanding change your perspective on what you've been given?
- What does it mean to be accountable? For what do you think God will call you to account?
- Why do you think stewardship includes the "little things"? What are some of the "little things" in our lives that can make a big difference?

NOW WHAT

- Do you believe God owns everything and you are accountable to Him? How do you want to give an account for what you have been entrusted with?
- Are you a good steward of what God has entrusted to you? How can you take better responsibility for your family, career, studies, talents, and time beginning this week?
- Are you reliable and consistent? Does your character reflect good stewardship? What is one "little thing" that you need to do differently starting today in your own life, in your family, or at work/in school?

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- Thank God that He owns everything and that as stewards, we have been entrusted with much.
 - Pray that God will commend you for your faithfulness and obedience, and that He would trust you more as you do His will in your life.
 - Ask God to develop your character so that you would be found faithful in every area of your life. Pray that your character and example would draw many to Christ.

I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

PHILIPPIANS 3:14

Winning in Life is a series of six materials for group discipleship designed to help believers live victoriously in every area of life.

TOPICS INCLUDE:

- The Power of Vision
- The Gift of Wisdom
- Number Your Days
- A Lifestyle of Learning
- The Blessing of Prosperity
- The Principles of Stewardship



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