# Potty Training and the end of all Things

John 19:16-30 Peter Hiett August 21, 2011

### **Prayer**

Lord Jesus, we pray that you would help us to preach. Lord God, preaching seems just insane to be because we have to talk about things that are so huge, so immense, so much bigger than our little brains. We have to talk about you. So, Lord God, even if we can't understand, would you help us to believe? In Jesus' name, Amen.

## Message

Sometime around 2nd grade, in school, I learned a lot about germs. They showed us pictures of these microscopic entities – invisible to the human eye – yet deadly in their effect. They feed on life & produce death. I learned that they lurked in uncleanness, decay and most of all the very pinnacle of depravity – human excretia. And so I began to wash my hands – a lot!

I developed an elaborate system for using and then leaving public restrooms: toilet paper on the seat, flushing with the foot, washing hands in the sink closest to the door, then turning off the faucet with the towel, opening the door with that towel and holding the door with the foot while disposing of the towel, so as not to touch anything that might have been touched by anyone that might have touched human excretia.

### No touching!

I washed often, and I washed very well but I never seemed to be finished for I am a producer of human excretia and so is every person I know. I washed my hands a lot. I was driven to cleanliness, and within a few weeks I was driven to the doctor for my hands were so chapped by all the soap and water that they had literally cracked open and become open wounds. They hurt but even worse they were now susceptible to infection. That means germs! I was worse off than when I had not the knowledge of germs. I remember the doctor looked at my raw and bleeding hands and he said, "Stop washing your hands." He must have thought I was neurotic.

Well the doctor worked with me, and my parents worked with me. I remember one day walking out of my parent's bathroom; my dad was standing at the sink and I was fighting the good fight with a note of victory in my voice. I looked at my dad and I said, "Dad, guess what? I went number two and I didn't even wash my hands." I remember he smiled and said something like, "Oh Peter – I'm so proud of you."

Well my hands healed; but I still lived in terror that my mom might ask me to CLEAN THE TOILET!

They say Howard Hughes was neurotic about germs and Michael Jackson slept in a hyperbaric chamber. Each controlled their world and yet never felt clean.

But is that neurotic? I mean is that neurosis unfounded? We really are surrounded by germs, infectious diseases, and deadly pathogens. The dark void of death is only a heartbeat away. Millions die everyday. [Peter violently coughs and sneezes]. GERMS ARE EVERYWHERE!

Germs are bad. BUT....FEAR of germs may be worse.

They say Howard Hughes starved to death for fear of bacteria in his food. That's Neurotic!

Is God neurotic?

You know, if you read Old Testament Levitical laws on cleanliness, you'd begin to think so. The Jews must've thought so.

In Deuteronomy 23 God gave Israel detailed instructions on how to poop "outside the camp" because God walks in the camp. Scripture contains all sorts of laws on how to get clean when you're unclean – and it usually involved more that washing with water – it involved blood.

Hebrews 9:22: "In fact, the Law requires that nearly everything be cleansed blood and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sin"

The Law was given on Mt. Sinai through Moses, but according to Scripture humans first learned about the Law in a garden, at a tree, on the sixth day of Creation. There they acquired the knowledge of good and evil and got neurotic. God instituted the sacrificial system, but even with all that blood (the blood of bulls, sheep, goats and birds) they just couldn't get clean.

Maybe human excretia is like a visible expression of a much deeper problem called sin. You know, the body of flesh eats life and excretes death. Eating life and excreting death is a great description of sin. It's like our own bodily refuse is a constant reminder that no matter how hard we try to clean ourselves, with ourselves, it's ourselves that are unclean. It's no wonder we're neurotic! And if you're not neurotic, maybe you're insane! See? Maybe I was really onto something in second grade; washing, and washing, and never feeling clean, never done – never finished.

May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1507: A young German priest was officiating at his first communion while dreadfully aware that he was unclean. He got to the portion where he was to say, "We offer unto thee the living, the true eternal God," and he was terror stricken. His father glared in disapproval. The monk trembled spilling the blood and barely hanging onto the bread. Later he wrote: "As these words, I was utterly stupefied and terror-stricken. Who am I that I should lift up mine eyes or raise my hands to the divine Majesty? At His nod, the earth trembles. And shall I say, 'I want this, I ask for that?' For I am dust and ashes and full of sin, and I am speaking to the living eternal and the true God." For the experience he had a word: *Anfechtung*: It describes the sense of anxiety, despair, shame, which he felt before God. He desperately tried to rid himself of *Anfechtung*, but the harder he tried, the worse it got.

The official stance of the church, at that time, was that at baptism a person is forgiven of original sin, but after baptism, a person still needs to seek absolution through confession and penance for any sin they happen to commit—sins for which Christ must still suffer in the Mass.

And so this young Monk sought to cleanse himself each day in the confessional. One day he spent six hours confessing the sins of the previous day (and remember he didn't live in Las Vegas, but a monastery.) Finally, his confessor yelled at him, "Look here, if you expect Christ to forgive you, come in with something to forgive: murder, blasphemy, adultery, instead of all these little sins." But you see this young monk had been classically trained as a lawyer. And he knew, little or big the punishment was death. He reasoned that if the Great Commandment was to: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength," then the Great Sin is to NOT love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength. But the harder he worked at loving God, the less he did. So he could not get clean and the sacrifice was never finished and he could not give God what God required – LOVE. His name was Martin Luther.

Clip from Martin Luther

[While performing his first Mass, a young Luther holds the communion cup. As he speaks words in Latin, he begins to shake and spills the communion wine]

The scene changes.

[Luther runs out the door and chases after his father who is leaving.]

<u>Luther</u>: Father! Please stay for supper!

Hans: Your first Mass and you crap yourself! [Luther's father rides off on his horse.]

<u>Luther</u>: [Chasing after him] *Father!* 

[The scene changes to a monastery. Luther is in a corner visibly distraught and praying in tears.]

<u>Luther</u>: Shut up, shut up, shut up. (Whispers) Leave me alone. Satan, stifle your lying tongue. I never claimed to be good. Never. They know my faults here: my pride, my cursed lust. I confess them all. I confess them all. Just leave me. Just leave me. Please leave me.

Older monk: You're too hard on yourself, Brother Martin. Arguing with the devil never does any of us good. He has had years of practice. He knows all the weak spots.

<u>Luther</u>: I'm sorry about today. I'm too full of sin to be a priest.

Older monk: I'm not here to scold you, Martin.

Luther: I'm too full of sin to be a priest.

Older monk: You know, in two years I've never heard you confess anything even remotely interesting.

<u>Luther</u>: I live in terror of judgment.

Older monk: And you think self-hatred will save you?

<u>Luther</u>: Have you ever dared to think that God is not just? He has us born tainted by sin, then He's angry with us all our lives for our faults, this righteous Judge...who damns us...threatening us with the fires of hell! I know! I know I'm evil to think it! I wish there were no God!

"Love God?" wrote Martin Luther, "LOVE GOD – I hated Him" And so his neurosis over sin caused him to commit mortal sin. Trying to love God, he wanted to kill God – Crucify Him, if you will.

Many academics think Luther was mentally ill— neurotic and anal-retentive. In college, at Colorado University, I had to do a paper on the psycho-historian Erik Erikson and his thesis that Luther was "anal-retentive," and that his moment of revelation, which sparked the Protestant Reformation, had to do with a "successful release" on the toilet in the Wittenberg tower restroom – all related to potty training and pleasing his father.

And you know: Potty training is stressful. I remember peeking around a corner one day and seeing my son Jon talking to his stuffed animal Bambi. With tears in his eyes he said, "Bambi, I can't go pee-pee in the potty; can you go pee-pee in the potty?" We put a red fire truck on the back of the toilet and told Jon that it was his, when he did the big number two. And we used to sing a song: "I'm proud of you, I'm proud of you, because you pee-peed in the potty. I'm proud of you, I'm proud of you, you certainly are a big boy." All of this equals rewards, approval ratings, and stress.

Some time later, one evening at Wal-Mart, Jon got distracted and had an accident; he crapped himself and I got perturbed! And this I must not forget: He looked up at me with those big, beautiful eyes. And those eyes were filled with terror – *Anfechtung*. He said, "But Daddy, your still proud of me – right?"

Well psycho-historians say Martin Luther's real issues were with his father, Hans, and poop. But maybe his real issues were with his Father God and sin. And maybe Luther wasn't insane but the sanest in all of Germany. Maybe his fear was not unfounded but most founded. Maybe his *Anfechtung* wasn't losing touch with Reality, but just beginning to glimpse Reality—the reality that God is holy, and we're not holy, and we can't seem to make ourselves holy. In fact, the harder we try the stinkier we get. So Martin really did need some sort of "release" — if not on a toilet, then on or before some sort of throne.

And if you think that's not your issue, understand: Satan will hide sin from you (like germs are hidden from you) and thereby he'll further infect you. He is the deceiver. And then he'll expose the infection to you. He is the accuser. And so he'll try to crush you with your own judgment, drivenness and despair, until you thoroughly hate the God you're required to love.

So, how can we be saved?

Martin Luther had a revelation in the Wittenberg Tower. We don't know how much of it happened on the toilet, but we do know that it happened reading Scripture and reflecting on the cross. Let's do that now by looking at John 19:16.

The Jews had brought Jesus to Pilate. Remember they wouldn't go into his palace because they were worried about being unclean. Pilate sentences Jesus, and Matthew records that he washed his hands. There is an old legend that his ghost still does and can't stop. Well in John 19:16, Pilate delivers Jesus to Crucifixion:

John 19:16

So they took Jesus and he went out bearing his own cross to the place called the place of a skull, which in Aramaic is called Golgotha."

There was a legend that the skull of Adam was found in this place and still today many Orthodox Jews believe that Jerusalem sits on the site of old Eden. And John tells us later in the chapter that in this place was a garden, and in this garden they nailed Jesus (the *Eschatos* Adam) to a tree.

John 19:18

There they crucified him with two others, one on either side, and Jesus between them. Pilate also wrote an inscription and put it on the cross. It read, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." Many of the Jews read the inscription, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and it was written in Aramaic, in Latin, and in Greek. So the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, "Do not write, 'The King of the Jews' but rather 'This man said, I am King of the Jews'" Pilate answered, "What I have written I have written." When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his garments and divided them into four parts, one part for each soldier; also his tunic. But the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom." (Just like the robe of the High Priest and Jesus is our High Priest.) So they said to one another, "Let us not tear it but cast lots for it to see whose it shall be." This was to fulfill Scripture, which says, "They divided my garments among them and for my clothing they cast lots." (The Scriptures John quotes is Psalm 22 and it was Psalm 22 that started the reformation for Martin Luther.)

Psalm 22 starts with this line: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Luther read that and realized that Jesus spoke it on the cross. He realized that on the cross Jesus experienced Anfechtung and that it must not have been his own Anfechtung. Jesus must've been wearing Luther's Anfechtung.

"My God, my God why have you forsaken me?" Matthew, Mark and Luke all record Jesus saying that first line, but John records that Jesus fulfilled the Psalm and then spoke the last line: "He has done it." In the perfect tense that means, "It is finished."

John 19:24b-29

So the soldiers did these things but standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister Mary the wife of Clopas and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother 'Woman, behold your son!' Then he said to the disciple, 'Behold, your mother!' And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home. After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished said (to fulfill scripture) 'I thirst.' A jar full of sour wine stood there, so they put a sponge full of the sour wine on a hyssop branch and held it to his mouth. (Now "hyssop" is a strange thing to mention, except for the fact that God had told Israel to use "hyssop branches" to spread lamb's blood over their doors at Passover)

John has made it clear that Jesus is the "Passover lamb." John 1:29: "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the World." (If he takes away the Sin of the World it sounds like there aren't any sins left to take away.)

Next verse, John 19:30: "When Jesus had received the sour wine he said, 'It is finished' and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit." ("It is finished." "Maybe," thought Luther, "Anfechtung is finished")

"IT IS FINISHED." Well, what is "IT" that is finished? SACRIFICE

"It is finished" is one word: Tetelestai – from Telos the noun and Teleo the verb. To an accountant Telelestai meant "paid in full"

Hebrews 7:27 Jesus has no need, like the high priests to offer sacrifices daily first for his own sins and then for those of the people since he did this once for all when he offered up himself. When we come to the communion table we participate in Christ's death and resurrection. Yet Luther saw that Jesus was sacrificed once for all: "It is finished."

That means that Jesus has already paid for any sin we may commit tomorrow

- ...and that means you can't earn grace with a good confession.
- ...and that means grace already happened
- ...and that means you can't make yourself anymore clean than you already are

...and that means you can't make God love you anymore than He already does

...and that means God can't be disappointed in you.

He's already made up his mind about you.

He's already PROUD of you.....IT IS FINISHED

So now we have only to believe – that's faith.

We have only to reckon, consider, re-calculate. Romans 6:11 "Reckon yourself dead to sin" Nothing to pay, nothing to hide – "dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus" In Philippians 3, Paul writes that He considers "The work of his flesh" to be crap and "the work of our flesh" really is crap. Count sin as crap.

Actually, Paul lists all his good religious deeds done in *Anfechtung* and writes, "I count them as Scubala." The Greek word clearly means "SHIT". Sin is shit, argues Paul in the Bible. So, reckon yourself dead to sin and your sin to be "Shit."

Why did I want to potty train my kids? Because I'm neurotic? NO (I don't think so) I just didn't want my kids to go through life with *Scubala* in their pants.

Sin is crap and when you see it you'll stop crapping yourself.

Sin is death and hell and when you see it, you'll want to let it go.

Sin is crucifying The Way, The Truth and The Life, The Light and Love himself. And when you see him hanging on the tree, you will not want to do it ever again.

But make no mistake, it's already done - "It is finished"

"It" is Sacrifice for Sin – all sin. And, "It" is the Judgment: John 12:31 "Now is the Judgment of this World...And when I be lifted up..." "It is Sacrifice and "It" is Judgment and "It" is Wrath. If He takes away the sin of the world, what happens to wrath?

In Revelation 15, John sees seven angels with seven bowls. The bowls contain blood, and it must be the blood of the Lamb. John writes, "With them the wrath of God is finished" (Teleo) As the 7th bowl is poured out, John hears a loud voice from the throne. (Remember the slaughtered Lamb is on the throne and Jesus is enthroned on his Cross) The Loud Voice cries, "It is done" – "It is finished" – "It is ended" You see? God's wrath has an end, a *Teleo*, a perfection – a goal. So God is not at all interested in endless wrath or endless torment.

In the bowls is blood and that blood is wine and that wine is Grace and that Grace is Fire – Endless Fire. When we resist it, it burns, but the burning is not endless. The wrath has a purpose – a *Telos*–a goal. When we resist it burns, and when we surrender we're home. Our God is an Eternal Fire and Our God is our Home.

Revelation 20:14 (KJV) says, "Death and Hell were thrown into the Lake of Fire" and in 21:4 it says, "Death shall be no more." IT IS FINISHED. IT is Sacrifice, Wrath, Death, Hell and time—this time—chronological time.

In Revelation 10:6 at the 7th seal and the 7th thunder and the 7th trumpet, "The mystery of God" will be fulfilled and "*Chronos* (time) will be no more"

1 Corinthians 10:11: Paul writes, "On us, the end (Telos) of the ages (the times) has come."

Hebrews 9:26: "He has appeared once for all at the end of the ages, the times to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself"

Ephesians 1:10: "This is the plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in Christ"

Colossians 1:20: "...to reconcile to himself all things, making peace by the blood of his Cross" –where He cried, "IT IS FINISHED"

Time is Finished – Creation is Finished

John just said so in verse 28: "knowing that all was now finished." "All" is a simple concept. All means all, in any language, unless the context tells you differently. Jesus is quoting Psalm 22. That's the context and this is how it ends:

#### Psalm 22:27

All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord and all the families of the nations shall worship before you. For kingship belongs to the Lord and he rules over the nations. All the prosperous of the earth eat and worship; before him shall bow all who go down to the dust, even the one who could not keep himself alive. Posterity shall serve him; it shall be told of the Lord to the coming generation; they shall come and proclaim his righteousness to a people yet unborn, that he has done it." And Jesus, Word of God, cries, "It is Finished," from the tree, in the garden, at the end of the 6th day.

I wish we had time to review all our sermons from Genesis, so you could see how true that is. But according to Scripture, and maybe even according to Einstein's Physics, we exist in God's 6th day of creation.

Until we come to the Cross

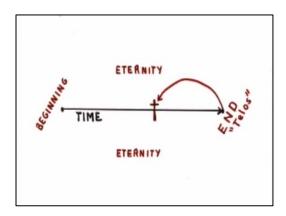
And believe the Word of God as He cries, "It is finished"

And enter God's rest – the 7th day.

Genesis 2:1: On the 7th day "All is finished," "It is Finished," says the Word of God.

In Revelation, at the 7th seal, 7th thunder, 7th bowl and 7th trumpet John hears the one on the throne (whose blood forms a river – a river that covers the earth) He hears: "Behold I make all things new and write this down for these words are trustworthy and true" and he said to me (writes John), "It is done" "It is finished" – I am the Alpha & Omega, the beginning and the Telos – the End.

John 19:30 "*Tetelestai*" – "*It is finished*". Now you may be thinking, "Excuse me Peter but that was 2000 years ago and I don't know what planet you're from, but on my planet things aren't finished." Well, I hear what you mean – but this is what Scripture says: At the Cross, Eternity—The Kingdom of God–Eternal Life invaded time.



Time has a beginning and end and at the cross we come to the end and the End is LOVE: Burning Hot, Eternal, Unquenchable LOVE. Love that cannot fail for we already saw it win. For as long as we run from the Cross of Christ (the Lamb on the Throne) we trap ourselves in darkness, lies, death & Hell (this Age, this time). But when we surrender at the cross, we're born from above and an eternal seed is implanted in our hearts.

And so what is our Problem? There is only one Problem, and it's always been the problem. Always! You know the Tree of Knowledge did not make Eve sin; it revealed sin in Eve. Sin is a void. Sin is the absence of Faith. Faith had not yet been created in Eve. So Eve didn't trust that God "finished it" or "finished her". So Eve tried to finish herself and create herself in God's image.

Faith is trust in God and God is Love. Faith in Love is a good free will. An absence of Faith in Love is a Bad Will to Sin. Sin is a trap (what Luther called "The Bondage of the Will"). It's a trap because you can't create good will with a bad will. You can't create Faith in Love with fear of love. So Good Free Will is a gift – Faith is a gift.

Jesus cried, "IT IS FINISHED" and what is "IT" that is finished? Sacrifice, Judgment, Wrath, Death, Hell, Time, Creation and most of all YOU – You are finished. At the cross you are finished with Faith.

The cross doesn't judge your faith – at the cross God *creates* your Faith. The cross judges your faith*less*ness and creates your faith*ful*ness – your Life. Jesus is your Life, hanging on the tree –

the Tree of Life. All creation, all space and time is a stage to bring you to the cross where you surrender your *Anfechtung*, and you see that Jesus bears it and wears it – that covered in filth he cries out in Faith – "It is finished", bows His head and delivers up His Spirit. That Spirit is sent into our hearts (like eternal seed) crying, "Abba Father, Daddy, Father, Abba Father."

That's Faith and in the Wittenberg Tower, studying Scripture, Luther understood justification by Faith. Not that God judges the quality of our faith, but that He makes us just, makes us right with Faith. So Faith is reckoned as Righteousness because it is.

"Then I grasped that the justice of God is that righteousness by which through grace and sheer mercy God justifies us through faith," writes Luther:

Thereupon I felt myself to be reborn and to have gone through open doors into paradise. The whole of Scripture took on a new meaning and whereas before the 'justice of God' had filled me with hate, now it became to me inexpressibly sweet in greater love...for faith leads you in and opens up God's heart and will, that you should see pure grace and overflowing love. This it is to behold God in faith that you should look upon his fatherly, friendly heart in which there is no anger nor ungraciousness. He who sees God as angry does not see him rightly but looks only on a curtain, as if a dark cloud has been drawn across his face.

That was the start of the Reformation. I think we're due for another Reformation – Faith by Grace and Faith in Grace. Satan doesn't want you to see Grace, so he doesn't want you to see your sin, and if you see your sin he'll try to keep you from the throne where you will see it on Jesus and see Grace. Your Father wants you to see your sin, SO THAT you can see His Grace and trusting you're forgiven much, you'll Love much.

We're not only "saved by grace through Faith" once. We live by "grace through Faith" every moment. Galatians 2:20: "The Life I now live in the flesh, I live by the Faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself up for me." Hebrews 4:16 "Let us therefore come boldly before the throne of grace, that we may obtain Mercy and find grace to help in time of need." Holiness is not Neurosis and fear is not Faith. Holiness is trusting our Father. He is our "Abba, Daddy" and that changes everything, for most of all Daddy's delight in Faith.

Twenty-three years ago, next week, I became a Daddy and it pretty much cured me of all "poophobia." I was soon wearing the stuff like perfume – like a fragrant offering. I didn't commit the sin but I wore it for the love of my kids. Jonathan was our oldest, and that whole neurotic system of rewards and punishment (fire truck & songs sung in approval/disapproval)—the Law just wasn't working all that well.

Somewhere Susan attained this book called *Potty Training in a Day*, and she informed me, because I shared similar plumbing with my son Jon, I should be the instructor. She took Elizabeth and left me alone for the day with Jonathan and any lingering poo-phobia I may have had at that time. We spent the morning together having fun but before long Jon had an accident

(a sizable one) and it was my job to take him in to the bathroom, put the poo in the potty and put Jon on the potty anyway (to see that hiding the dirty deed was futile).

He was wearing a white shirt and underwear. I remember that I stood before him there, before the "throne"—the toilet, and pulled his shorts down and then turned to get some toilet paper. I glanced back just in time to see this: Little Jonathan looked right, looked left, then bent down and grabbed his accident with his hand. He grabbed the physical expression of his sin nature and just hurled it at the toilet. It hit the lid (lifted up against the tank) like a backboard, hit the lid and plopped into the bowl – 2 points! Jon turned and looked at me, and his eyes lit up thrilled over the gift he'd just given to me. Then he took his filthy hand and wiped it across his white shirt several times, smiling as if to say, "Daddy look, I did it for you. Now aren't you proud of me?"

Martin Luther once said to his anal-retentive friend, Philip Melancthon, "Sin boldly!" I think he meant: "Live like little Jonathan Hiett. Come boldly before the throne of Grace. Live boldly in the knowledge of your Father's Love."

So Jon stood there, before the throne, smiling as if to say, "Aren't you proud of me?" And I was and always will be proud. Not because he got the poo-poo in the potty. Not because of His deed. His deed was literally soiled undergarments (Isaiah 64:6). I wasn't proud of His deed. I was proud of him – his Faith – our Faith. His eyes so filled with Faith in me...and his Faith: "I reckoned as righteousness" – It was finished – That was my judgment.

I got what I wanted: my son, covered in filth but full of faith. I would gladly handle all the filth to see that mustard seed of Faith.

God has quite literally done everything in order that you might see: He handles your filth. He has done everything in order that you might have Faith in Him-Grace. Your Father is Grace. In Jesus' name, believe the Gospel

### Communion

On the night that He was delivered up, He took bread and He said, "This is my body broken for you; take and eat, and do this in remembrance of me." And in the same way, after supper and having given thanks, He took the cup and He said, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, poured out for the forgiveness of sins. Drink of it all of you and do it in remembrance of me." So now, in the name of Jesus, come boldly before the throne of Grace. Come boldly and surrender your filth, and be filled with Faith. In Jesus' name, Amen.

[Several worship songs are sung.]

#### Benediction

Lord Jesus, we thank you for creating Faith in us, for you create that Faith with your very own blood, your very own body.

Lord sometimes I get confused about my faith: "Is it my faith? Is it your Faith? Is it you living inside of me? Is it me believing?" And I wonder: "Whose faith is that?" Last I night I was thinking: "I don't know. Does it matter?"

Everything is Grace. *Everything* is Grace, and you are Good. And we are yours.

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