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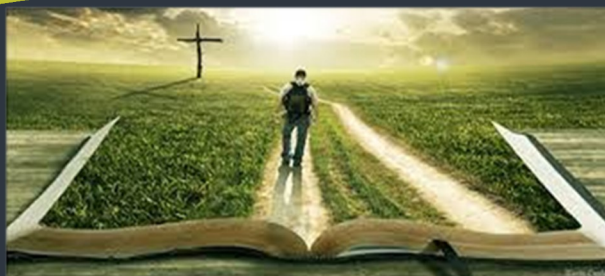
The Princeton PathFinder

The Body of Christ

January
2022

In This Issue

- **One Body Many Parts**
- **The Body of Christ (The Church)**
- **The Body of Christ (What Is It?)**
- **Our Responsibility in the Body of Christ**



God has put all things under the authority of Christ and has made him head over all things for the benefit of the church. And the church is his body; it is made full and complete by Christ, who fills all things everywhere with himself.

Ephesians 1:22-23

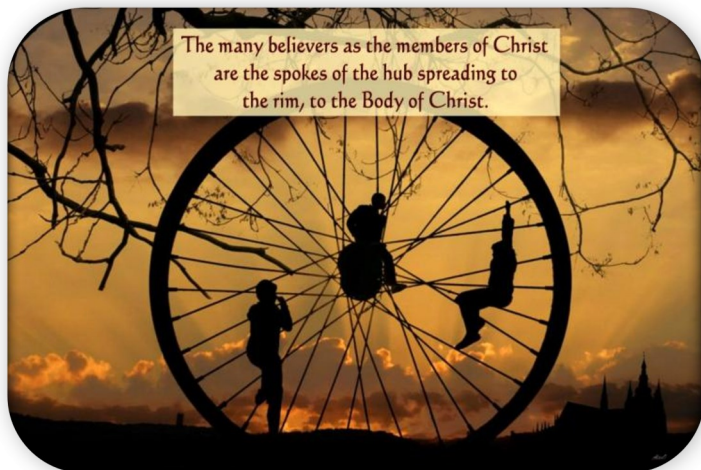
One Body Many Parts

1 Corinthians 12:12-27

Seven years ago I awoke from a dream so vivid that I grabbed my bible and a notepad to write it down. At the time I was staying with friends in Indianapolis, working in Martinsville and earnestly seeking God's direction for the next chapter of my life. In the dream I was visiting a large church in Evansville that was starting a biker's ministry. A prominent figure in the MC world was there to give his blessing to the churches outreach efforts and do a book signing. I had went hoping to get a book signed.

As I approached the book signing table the guest speaker looked up at me and said, "Walk with me." He led me to a table with all the parts to assemble a motorcycle wheel. Then he began lacing the wheel as he told me, "Life is like this wheel. By itself each individual spoke can do nothing, but when all the parts are assembled together they form a wheel that will carry the weight of a motorcycle." To this day I believe that is the best explanation of 1 Corinthians 12:12-27 that I have ever heard. It takes all of the parts of the Lord's church working in harmony to carry the gospel forward.

Think of it this way. The rim represents the congregation as a



The many believers as the members of Christ are the spokes of the hub spreading to the rim, to the Body of Christ.

whole and where it is going. The spokes are individual Christians supporting the work of the church. The hub is the preacher sending out God's word to the congregation. The bearings are the elders working to make sure everything runs smoothly in an orderly fashion. And the whole things rotates around Jesus which is the axis of everything.

We all play different roles in the Lord's church and every role is important. We are all born as babes in Christ but we do not (or should not) remain that way. As we grow and mature in Christ our part within the body will likely change. As babies we crave pure spiritual milk and need someone to feed us. As we grow and learn to feed ourselves and begin to feast on the meat of the Word it is our turn to feed others. We transition from being in the spiritual nursery to working in the nursery.

From the time that you are a newborn babe in Christ until he calls you home you may have many different roles in the body. You might work with the children helping their parents train them up in the fear and admission of the Lord. Spiritually mature women might lead a ladies bible study training up younger women to live godly lives of Christian service. Older men should train up younger men, instructing them to be leaders in the home and students of the bible. Because someday these younger men will be leading the Lord's church. The Lord might put it on your heart to work with youth. Yes teenagers can be a handful but it can be very rewarding both now and in the future when you see those teens raising teens of their own.

God may have blessed you with the gifts of administration or accounting or the ability to manage technology. These are all extremely vital roles in the church. Someone has to keep things organized, another needs to pay the light bill and as things become more media driven, programming the service is very important.

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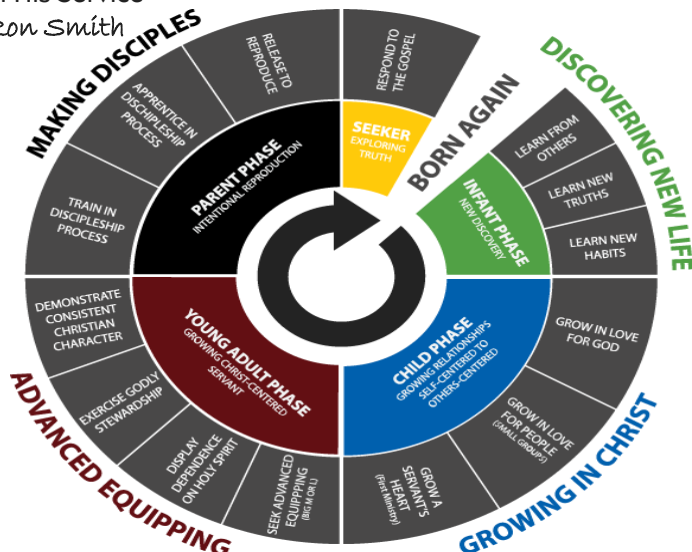
One Body Many Parts—Continued

God places a special calling on the hearts of some men to serve as shepherds watching over the flock protecting it from wolves in sheep's clothing. Paul told his young understudy Timothy, "Do your best to present yourself to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth." He went on to say "Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction. For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine." The Lord's church needs men that will humble themselves before God, diligently apply themselves to learning His word, gently lead the flock while aggressively defending them from Satan's attacks. Pray that strong courageous would step up to serve as elders in the Lord's church.

While it is the role of the elders to shepherd the flock, the sheep need to be fed. Preaching the gospel, feeding the flock, edifying the body, evangelizing the lost, when Jesus reinstated Peter this was his charge to him. It sounds cliché but it is very true, God doesn't call the equipped he equips the called. The first gospel sermon ever preached was not by a college graduate. It was preached by a fisherman that wanted to serve his Lord and Savior. He was just a beggar that found the Bread of Life and wanted to show others the way. Men if God puts a calling on your heart to do something, answer the call you won't regret it.

Brothers and sisters from the time we are reborn as babes in Christ until He calls us home we all have jobs to do, And from time to time our jobs will most likely change. If you haven't found your place in the body I suggest that you prayerfully read 1 Corinthians 12:12-27 and pray this simple prayer, "Dear heavenly Father, I know that Jesus saved me for service in the kingdom. Please show me what my part is in the body."

In His Service
Ron Smith



Unity and Diversity in the Body

Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.

Now if the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!" On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. (1 Corinthians 1:22-27)



*You are the body of Christ!
Each one of you is a part of it.*

THE BODY OF CHRIST (The Church)

Frequently

the subject of the origin, purpose, and structure of the Church becomes a topic of discussion. Far too often the discussion results in arguments and disagreements on what should be and was meant to be a unifying entity.

To multitudes of people when the Church is spoken of, visions of a building begin to form in their minds. To those multitudes the Church is simply a building on a city street or on a country road. It is a place. A place where churchy people go on Sunday to attend the services held there at that time. An important truth here that a "place" has no life. It is just a building – a place where people meet – once a week. And, while they are making their assumption, they might ask, why, on Sunday Morning – the time when people should be enjoying a later sleep after a hard week of work.

There is something missing there in the minds of those who see the Church as a one hour a week gathering place. What is missing is the understanding that the Church is not an "it." And why should we not refer to the Church as "it?" Because things which are "its" are lifeless. They have no drive, no goals, no purpose. "Its" just sit there. No movement. No action. No changes. They just sit there.



The Church, on the other hand, is a live being. The people of the Church are driven, they have goals, they have a purpose. They are interactive. They love being together. They work together to accomplish those goals and purposes. They work as One rather than each one doing their own thing, which most often will conflict with the other person's own thing and cause disagreements and alienation among the members.

This working together is possible because of what the Bible calls the Church. The Church exists as the BODY OF CHRIST.

This tells us that the Church does not belong to any one person or group of persons. Jesus Christ established the Church before He left this earth following His crucifixion, burial, and resurrection.

We see, recorded in Scripture in the Gospel of Matthew 16:18, these words from the mouth of Jesus as He speaks to Peter: "I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of Hades will not overpower it."

Some have taken Jesus' words to mean that He appointed Peter as the Head of His Church. They believe that Jesus gave Peter special authority over the other disciples and all believers. They consider that the rock Jesus referred to is Peter.

In the Greek, Peter's name is Petros, which means rock or stone – a substance or a material. However, the word Jesus uses are not Petros, but *petra*. He says to Peter, "You are Petros (Peter) and on this *petra* (rock) I will build My church."

The rock upon which Jesus will build His Church is not upon a rock, but upon the confession Peter had just made, saying the "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God." That confession is the foundation of the Church as established by Jesus Christ.

The New Testament clearly shows us that Peter was very much a part of the beginning of the Church of Jesus Christ. He did, in fact, preach the first recorded sermon following the resurrection of Jesus. Under the power of the Holy Spirit 3,000 people received the Word, and were baptized, and were added to the Church – to the Body of Christ as recorded in Acts chapter 2:37-42.

From that day, the Church of Jesus Christ continued to grow as those who obeyed the Gospel continually "devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer" – Acts 2:42 (NASB)

Our physical bodies are made up of many different parts, or members. We have hands, arms, fingers, feet, legs, toes, eyes, ears, nose, and others. Each of those members performs a specific task for us every day without our even thinking about what they are doing.

In the next segment of this article, we will view the "members" which make up the Body of Christ

~Gary Fair

THE BODY OF CHRIST (What Is It?)

All Christians are part of the body of Christ.

The Bible calls the church the body of Christ (**1 Corinthians 12:27**). Every Christian is part of this body (**1 Corinthians 12:20, 27**). Just like a human body, Christians work together with their different abilities to help one another and serve God (**Romans 12:4**).

Which part of the body are you? You can answer this question by looking at the gifts God has given you. If you are good at encouraging, then encourage others. If you are good at music, use your ability to help with worship in your church. If you are great at building things, use your gifts to help with service projects in your community.

No one is gifted in every area, but everyone has at least one gift. As **Romans 12:6** says, "We all have gifts." They differ according to the grace God has given to each of us..."

"For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, ⁵ so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others." (**Romans 12:4-5**).

One of the most common descriptions of the Church in the Bible is the **"Body of Christ."** What Jesus Christ did when he was here in his physical body, he wants us to continue to do today. We are the Body of Christ on Earth.

Everybody is needed in the Body of Christ. We are all parts of it, and it takes every one of us to make it complete.

It's like a jigsaw puzzle. When you build a jigsaw puzzle and you've got one part missing, what are you going to notice? The one piece that's missing.

That's the way it is in the Body of Christ. Everybody's needed. You may say, "I'm just a toenail in the Body of Christ." Have you ever lost a toenail? You will definitely notice it.

Never confuse prominence and significance. Something can be prominent but not significant. My nose is prominent. It just sticks out there. But it's not significant. I could lose my nose and keep on living the rest of my life happily ever after. It's prominent, but it's not significant. But there's more stuff inside of me, like a liver, a heart, and lungs. They're not prominent, but if I lost them, I'd die.

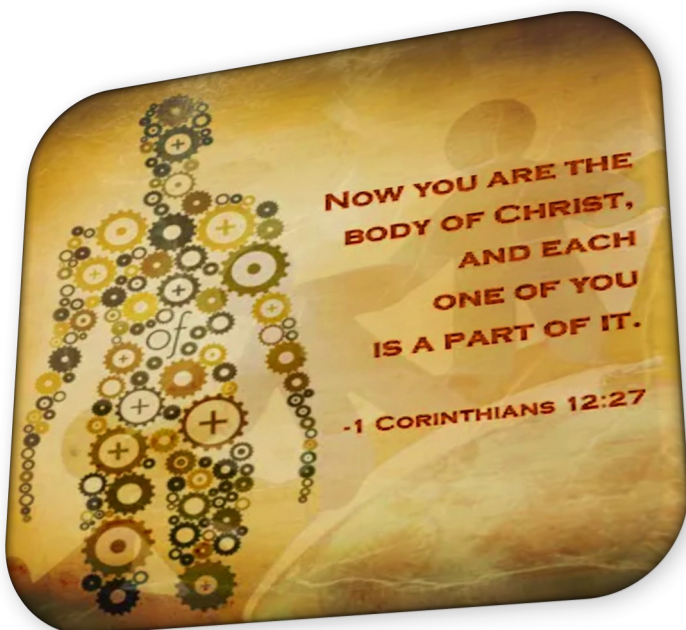
You may not feel prominent in the Body of Christ, but you are significant. There are many parts, but everybody's needed. We all have work to do!

Think of a time when you were disconnected from the Body of Christ. How did it impact your life?

What significant role are you playing in the Body of Christ that is not prominent? What is your attitude toward your service?

How can you encourage others in the Body of Christ to use their gifts to serve each other?

~Robin Fortner



Our Responsibility to the Body of Christ

When we accept Christ as our Lord and Savior and are washed with the blood of Christ through baptism, we enter into an *obligatory* type of covenant relationship with God and are grafted into the body of Christ.

The thing about this type of a covenant is this: Obligatory Covenants require two parties, and this covenant assumes that both parties will assume and carry out the responsibilities that make that covenant valid.

If one party ceases to carry out their part of the covenant, it makes the covenant unstable.

AT BAPTISM I COVENANTED

1. TO BECOME A MEMBER OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST

2. TO TAKE THE NAME OF CHRIST UPON ME

3. TO HELP OTHERS

(BEARING OTHERS BURDENS, COMFORTING OTHERS, AND MOURNING WITH THOSE THAT MOURN)

4. TO TESTIFY OF CHRIST AND SET A GOOD EXAMPLE

5. TO SERVE GOD AND KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS

When things go wrong in our life, we are often tempted to remind God of His promises; but we fail to remember that each promise of Scripture comes with an accompanying responsibility for which we are responsible in conjunction with that promise.

Salvation is free, but the Christian journey comes with responsibilities if we want to continue living in a covenant relationship with God. These responsibilities are what scripture calls "Fruits of Repentance" (Mt 3:8)

In Ephesians 3, Paul reveals to us that we are not just Individual Christians, but part of a global body of Christ, and now in Ephesians 4 he tells us what our responsibilities are to that body so that the body of Christ can function healthily.

In the first 3 verses, he encourages us to check our personal behavior, so that our behavior aligns with our position in Christ.

Then he gives us a panoramic view of the Church, over which Jesus Christ is Lord.

There is one body. There is one body of Christ. We are not all individual bodies, and even our local congregations are not Independent in and of themselves to the whole body. Each person and each local congregation make up the one body of Christ.

It is vital that we remember this because this truth helps to keep us accountable to the rest of the body.

There is one Holy Spirit, one "hope of your calling" –or salvation. There is only one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God and Father of all of this. He is

Above all

Through all

In us all

We are all part of this global Church, the body of Christ, the building that God has built with us as living stones. Christ is the head and Lord over this body.

This one body is made up of many local autonomous congregations; individual members and each has its critical role.

I do not believe that scripture teaches that any individual believer can claim to be a member of "the global body of Christ" unless they are connected through the local congregation. Scripture clearly teaches the importance of the local church and that we are to gather in local churches and allow God to use our giftings collectively in that local church.

As a matter of fact, in Ephesians 4:7, we see Paul begin to move down this chain of command (*Christ is the head of the body, the global body is made up of all believers and local bodies around the world, local bodies are made up of believers who are in covenant with Christ, and as individuals, we are the temple of the Lord in whom God has chosen to reside*).

1 Corinthians 3:16

Each local body has its own individual function, and each church will function differently according to the purpose God created it for as a member of the global body.

~Continued on Page 6

Our Responsibility to the Body of Christ (Continued)

Therefore, each member in that body has a responsibility to that body; and we see that responsibility outlined in verse 2: we are to walk in lowliness, gentleness, with longsuffering, and bearing each other in love.

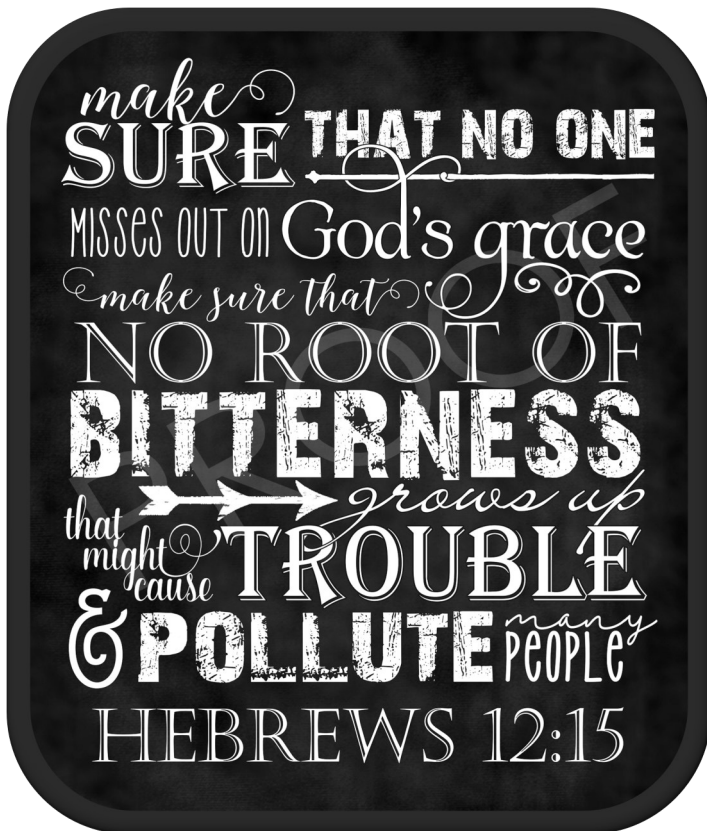
Then in verse 7, Paul says, *"But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift."*

What is Christ's gift? Salvation.

The measure can also be defined as quantity. What is the quantity of salvation you received? Is there an end to your salvation? No!

So, God has given us an endless supply of grace because the measure of Christ's gift is endless!

Grace, however, was never intended to be hoarded and used on ourselves. Grace is only useful when it is shared with others. Since we have an endless supply, we will never run out.



Because this verse is written in the context of our role in the church, we can only assume that Paul is reminding us that we have been given an endless supply of grace to be shared and used in our local bodies to bless and encourage those with whom we meet week after week.

One would almost assume that as we move on to verses 8-10 that Paul somehow drifted away for a second. But actually, he is reminding us of the position Christ won for us through His victory so that we understand the context of the following verses as he lays out for us the function of the local church.

Our position is total victory

Therefore He says: "When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, And gave gifts to men." (Now this, "He ascended"—what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.)

"He led captivity captive" means that Jesus took captive the one who was holding you captive!

Jesus first descended into hell as a victorious warrior, wrenched the keys of death, hell, and the grave from the slimy fingers of Satan then in a roar of victory ascended into heaven.

We live our lives from a position of total victory!

I love how Colossians describes this:

Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it. (Col 2:15)

Jesus Christ completely disarmed the demonic forces, but He didn't just stop there. Then He took them captive and drug them all around and made a public spectacle of them, reveling in His own triumph!

This is the same Jesus Christ that lives in you!

How, then, could you **not** live in a position of total victory?!

Our responsibility is grace

Our responsibility to the body is love and grace. Our behavior, our responses, our reactions, our speech, and everything we do in relation to our brothers and sisters in Christ should be permeated with love and grace.

We see this in both verses 2 and 7.

When each member of the body allows love and grace to color everything they say and do, unity is allowed to grow and thrive as God intended.

~ Continued on Page 7

Our Responsibility to the Body of Christ (Continued)

Our function is the edification of the body

Paul then moves on to talk about the 5 ministry gifts of the church: Apostle, Prophet, Evangelist, Pastor, Teacher.

These 5 roles were not meant to do all of the work of the church, in fact, we immediately see that these five roles have one function:

for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ,

The apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher have this function: to teach you to do the work of ministry so that you can edify the body of Christ!

Each member of the body should be a minister and each member of the body should be working to edify the body.

Our goal is spiritual maturity

The purpose of ministering and edifying the body is to help us to grow in greater and greater spiritual maturity.

till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

(Eph 4:13-16)

As we minister and edify the body, we will grow these areas:

- Unity of the faith
- The knowledge of the Son of God
- Perfection through the sanctifying blood of Jesus
- The fullness of Christ
- Speaking truth in love, instead of being tossed around by fringe-doctrine
- All things in Christ, who is the head of the body



This is why it is so important that each believer in Christ understand that they are now also in a covenant relationship with the local body, they have a role and responsibility to the body, but that exact role is something that they will grow into with time.

It is also extremely important that members of each local body understand that they are there to give, not just receive. They are there to minister, not just be ministered to. They are there to be equipped and enabled to minister – not watch the hired help or the more mature members do all the work.

God designed the leaders of the church to enable and edify the members of the body to go be ministers!

This is your role in the body, it is your responsibility as His temple so that the body of Christ can function healthily and be a proper physical representation of Jesus Christ here on earth!

~Aaron Jones



The Princeton PathFinder

The Body of Christ

**Our Desire For Your Life
Is Too...**



Get In

Being in fellowship and being regular in attendance for your encouragement and edification of others.



Grow Up

Being in discipleship and having a growing relationship with Jesus and His word.
Having daily devotions and connecting through small group study times.



Give Back

Being a good steward, giving of your time, talents and resources.



GO Out

Being the Hands and Feet of Christ. This is where we share the gospel of Christ with our neighbors and the



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