



Day 1

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today’s study.


Q1. From verse 7 in the previous lesson (#1), to whom has Paul specifically addressed this letter?
Roman church-attenders/Believers? Or the Romans, in general?

Roman church-attenders/Believers? Yes or No or Others?

.....
Romans, in general? Yes or No or Others?
.....

 The commentator Charles Ellicott provides an overview of this passage Romans 1:18-32:

“In the passage taken as a whole, three . . . stages are indicated: (1) Romans 1:18-23: idolatry; (2) Romans 1:24-27: unnatural sins allowed by God as the punishment for this idolatry; (3) Romans 1:28-32: a still more complete and radical depravity. . . The first [stage] is taken by the free choice of man, but as the breach gradually widens, the wrath of God is more and more revealed [judgment]. [God] interferes less and less to save a sinful [human being] from [his or her] fate.” [©about 1880, *Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*, edited by Charles J. Ellicott. <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/romans/1-24.htm>]

 Additionally, you the student can discern the first two stages in the Moses/Pharoah passages that appear following the Romans 1:24 verse (↓), in which Pharoah hardened his own heart (self-righteous, unempathetic, insensitive, unmerciful, “I am my own god!”), followed by God hardening Pharoah’s heart (judgment), and then earning the consequences of that judgment.

We must be always be on-guard against sin, especially ‘private’ sins. We must squelch our desire to allow a little sin (similar to the ‘little white lie’). Sin is sin, and the desire to accept and allow a sin must be extinguished. Otherwise, our little, private sin starts us on a downward spiral, down the slippery slope in which we increasingly embrace the love of self, instead of the [agapé love](#) of God.

¹⁸The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, ¹⁹ since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them.

Q2. I thought ‘God is love’! Why does Paul write about the “wrath of God”?

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.....

Q3. Could a Christian be considered “wicked”? Why?

.....
.....

Lesson 2: Romans 1:18-32

Matthew 7:21-23 [The Message (MSG); a paraphrase] [Jesus taught:]

“Knowing the correct password — saying ‘Master, Master,’ for instance — isn’t going to get you anywhere with me. What is required is serious obedience — doing what my Father wills. I can see it now — at the Final Judgment thousands strutting up to me and saying, ‘Master, we preached the Message, we bashed the demons, our super-spiritual projects had everyone talking.’ And do you know what I am going to say? ‘You missed the boat. All you did was use me to make yourselves important. You don’t impress me one bit. You’re out of here.’

Q4. How does “godlessness and wickedness . . . suppress the truth”?

Matthew 28:18-20 [NIV-1984] [The Great Commission]

¹⁸ Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."


Q5. (Matthew 28:18-20 ↑) As a Believer we are ‘to be in the world, not of the world’. People are always watching. One of the most effective ways to teach unbelievers about Jesus is to demonstrate, through our daily activities and words, His characteristics of mercy, compassion, and empathy; not judgment, legalism, or condemnation. How does your daily example draw unbelievers toward the saving grace of Christ Jesus? Or does your example “suppress the Truth” (Romans 1:18 ↑)?

Examples?

Q6. Paul writes that “what might be known about God is plain” to mankind. What are some examples in this world in which God’s attributes “[are] known” or visible? (A sunset/sunrise? A birth? A person’s moral compass? Other examples?)

Lesson 2: Romans 1:18-32

Day 2

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²⁰ For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities — his eternal power and divine nature — have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

Q7. “What has been made, so that [people] are without excuse”?

Q8. How might this verse answer the question about the salvation of the Australian aborigine or the Eskimo who has never heard of Jesus?


Romans 2:15 [NIV-1984] [The Apostle Paul wrote:]

since they [the Gentiles] show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them.

Q9. Scripture states that our “consciences... bear... witness” (Romans 2:15 ↑) and guide us to God. In addition to our consciences, can you name other avenues (or methods or ways)?

Romans 1:18-20 [The Message (MSG); a paraphrase]

¹⁸⁻²⁰ But God's angry displeasure erupts as acts of human mistrust and wrongdoing and lying accumulate, as people try to put a shroud over truth. But the basic reality of God is plain enough. Open your eyes and there it is! By taking a long and thoughtful look at what God has created, people have always been able to see what their eyes as such can't see: eternal power, for instance, and the mystery of his divine being. So, nobody has a good excuse.

 An unbiased scientist can examine a human eye and wonder how such an intricate structure was designed.

The human eye is a spherical structure, which is filled with a pressurized fluid that maintains its ball shape. On the front side of the eye is a flexible transparent lens that crisply focuses a near (or far) image upon the target (retina) at the rear of the structure; the retina discerns intricate detail, and color in minute shades. The lens assembly has an iris that opens or closes depending upon the intensity of light coming through the lens. The eye structure itself is controlled by muscles that move the eye up/down or right/left to follow action, and eyelids that keep it moist and clean. The entire eye structure is protected by the bones of the cheek, temple, and brow. The human eye is a miracle!

It takes more faith to believe that chance enabled a complex structure like the intricate human eye to evolve and develop from primordial soup than to believe in a Creator who designed it.

Lesson 2: Romans 1:18-32

Unbelievers will always ask “what-if” questions as a barrier to dodge responsibility for their own decisions. What about the eternal fate of the Australian Aborigine, or the Eskimo, or the indigenous natives of the Amazon River basin; what if they never hear of Christ Jesus in their lifetimes. What happens to them?!?!? Are they damned by a ‘loving’ God?!?!?

As if to answer those very questions, the Apostle Paul, through the inspiration the Holy Spirit, wrote the following in this letter to the Romans, chapter 2:14-16:

Romans 2:14-16 [The Message (MSG)]

14-16 When outsiders who have never heard of God’s law follow it more or less by instinct, they confirm its truth by their obedience. They show that God’s law is not something alien, imposed on us from without, but woven into the very fabric of our creation. There is something deep within them that echoes God’s yes and no, right and wrong. Their response to God’s yes and no will become public knowledge on the day God makes his final decision about every man and woman. The Message from God that I proclaim through Jesus Christ takes into account all these differences.

 In verse 21 (↓), Paul continues to speak of the people referenced in Romans 1:18 &19 (found on page 1, ↑).

²¹ For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.

Q10. [Personal reflection] Do you glorify and give thanks to God? Why? Or why not?


Q11. Is worship of God important to you? How does God know?

Worship? Yes? No? Why?

How does God know?

Lesson 2: Romans 1:18-32

Day 3

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today's study.

²² Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools ²³ and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.

Q12. What is it called when a person 'worships' images "like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles"?

— — — — — Worship.

Examples: can you provide a short list? (Could television or smartphone screens be examples? How so?)

Exodus 20:3-6 [NIV-1984] [Excerpt from the Ten Commandments]

³ "You shall have no other gods before me.

⁴ "You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. ⁵ You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, ⁶ but showing love to a thousand [generations] of those who love me and keep my commandments.

Q13. [Personal reflection] What is the difference between knowledge and wisdom? Are you 'wise'? How might others see your wisdom?

Knowledge defined?

Wisdom defined?

Am I wise in my own eyes?

How do others see my wisdom?

Proverbs 3:7 [NIV-1984]

Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and shun evil.

1 Corinthians 1:25 [NIV-1984]

For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength.

Lesson 2: Romans 1:18-32

1 Corinthians 3:18 [J.B. Phillips New Testament (PHILLIPS)] [A paraphrase]

¹⁸⁻¹⁹ Let no one be under any illusion over this. If any man [or woman] among you thinks himself [herself] one of the world's clever ones, let him [her] discard his [her] cleverness that he [she] may learn to be truly wise. For this world's cleverness is stupidity to God. It is written: 'He catches the wise in their own craftiness'.

Q14. Name some idols that exist in our world; here are some possibilities: money, Buddha, sports, "theory of evolution", cows (India), others. Thoughts?

Q15. When I (the writer of these questions) asked the preceding question #14, with the list of possibilities, I felt a bit judgmental. Did I sin?


Yes? } Why?
No? }

Q16. Does God want a relationship with us? Does He want us to know Him? If yes, how do we start that relationship and build on it, grow it?

Relationship? Yes? No? Why?


Know Him? Yes? No? If yes, how?

How do we start relationship-building with God?

 Some of the following questions may be uncomfortable due to the subject matter. Sorry.

²⁴ Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another.

Q17. How do you explain Paul's statement, "God gave them over" or 'hardened their heart'?

 Regarding the following passages (↓) about the Egyptian Pharaoh in Moses' time, please note the progression. (1) the Pharaoh hardened his own heart. (2) Eventually, God judged and hardened his heart, because there was no ability for the Pharaoh to recover from his sin. (3) Later in the Exodus story – not included in the verses below – Pharaoh faced the judgment/consequence for his sin. Yes, there is a lesson in this for us, too. We must be careful to avoid intentional sin!

Exodus 7:13

Yet Pharaoh's heart became hard and he would not listen to them, just as the Lord had said.

Lesson 2: Romans 1:18-32

Exodus 7:22

But the Egyptian magicians did the same things by their secret arts, and Pharaoh's heart became hard; he would not listen to Moses and Aaron, just as the Lord had said.

Exodus 8:15

But when Pharaoh saw that there was relief, he hardened his heart and would not listen to Moses and Aaron, just as the Lord had said.

Exodus 8:19

The magicians said to Pharaoh, "This is the finger of God." But Pharaoh's heart was hard and he would not listen, just as the Lord had said.

Exodus 9:12

But the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart and he would not listen to Moses and Aaron, just as the Lord had said to Moses.

Exodus 10:1

Then the Lord said to Moses, "Go to Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart and the hearts of his officials so that I may perform these miraculous signs of mine among them

Exodus 11:10

Moses and Aaron performed all these wonders before Pharaoh, but the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he would not let the Israelites go out of his country.

2 Chronicles 36:13

He [King Zedekiah] also rebelled against King Nebuchadnezzar, who had made him take an oath in God's name. He became stiff-necked and hardened his heart and would not turn to the Lord, the God of Israel.

Daniel 5:20

But when his [King Belshazzar] heart became arrogant and hardened with pride, he was deposed from his royal throne and stripped of his glory.

John 12:37-41

³⁷ Even after Jesus had done all these miraculous signs in their [Jewish religious leaders] presence, they still would not believe in him. ³⁸ This was to fulfill the word of Isaiah the prophet: "Lord, who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?" ³⁹ For this reason they could not believe, because, as Isaiah says elsewhere: ⁴⁰ "He has blinded their eyes and deadened their hearts, so they can neither see with their eyes, nor understand with their hearts, nor turn — and I would heal them." ⁴¹ Isaiah said this because he saw Jesus' glory and spoke about him.


Q18. What is a general example of “sinful desires of their hearts” in this context?

Romans 1:24 [King James Version (KJV). Public Domain.] Romans 1:24 is restated due to the plain language of the KJV :

Wherefore, God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves:

Lesson 2: Romans 1:18-32

Day 4

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²⁵ They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator — who is forever praised. Amen.

Q19. What is “the Truth of God”?

²⁶ Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones.

²⁷ In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion.

Q20. What is one general word that defines the relationships described by Paul in verses 26 & 27?


Q21. Are we to believe the Bible? All of it? Or just parts of it?

Yes? } Why?
No? }

Q22. If you believe that certain passages of the Holy Bible do not apply to us today, then list the criteria you use to make that determination? Is your criteria God-centered or self-centered?

List of criteria:

Is my list God-centered? Yes? No? Why?

 Comments to Question 22 (↑): Someone will ask the obvious question, “How about the direct events of Jesus’ birth, ministry, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension that occurred during His lifetime?” Agreed, the listed events apply to Jesus’ time on this earth. However, the principles Jesus taught throughout His ministry applied then, as well as today. While the Apostle Paul wrote in the mid-first century, his writings as prompted by the Holy Spirit, are timeless teachings – they applied then, as well as today.

If we begin to ‘cherry-pick’ Scripture – this principle/characteristic/attitude applies then, but does not apply today – then we begin to go down the slippery slope of disbelief and denigrate the attributes and characteristics of

Lesson 2: Romans 1:18-32

His divine Being as revealed within the pages of our Holy Bible. We must keep in mind Acts 17:11 in which we read, “Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true”. The written Word – the Old Testament Scriptures – were the Bereans’ source of Truth to verify Paul’s teachings and to ensure that his teachings were in harmony with Scripture. The point is that Jesus Himself, The Word, stated “Scripture cannot be broken” (John 10:35^b).

If you, the student, answered that Believers today can discard some Biblical teachings as ‘not applicable today,’ then you must carefully examine your motives. God is GOD! And we are not God. You can use Scripture to verify your opinion. Scripture is not contradictory. If other Scripture contradicts your understanding of a specific passage, then you should consider that your current understanding is wrong. Please reread the bulleted comment labelled “Wrong Teachings,” which is located near the middle of [Page 1, Lesson 1](#) of this study of Paul’s Letter to the Romans.

Matthew 7:1-2 [NIV-1984] Jesus is teaching as part of His ‘Sermon on the Mount’

¹ "Do not judge, or you too will be judged. ² For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

Q23. In Matthew 7:1-2 (↑), is Jesus’ audience primarily comprised of unbelievers? Or those who believe in His saving grace?

Unbelievers? Or true Believers?


1 Corinthians 5:12 [NIV-1984] In his 1st letter to the Corinthian church, Paul admonishes the church for allowing a flagrant sin to fester within:

What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside?

Q24. What is the dictionary definition of ‘judgment’? What is the dictionary definition of ‘discernment’?

Judgment?

Discernment?

 Judgment and discernment are quite similar. However, judgment usually results in a consequence. An example would be ‘the Judge’s ruling (judgment) results in imprisonment’.

The first half of judgment is arguably discernment: do I think the person is guilty or innocent?


Note: we the Believer must not place ourselves or loved ones in physical jeopardy due to the perceived softness (lack of action) of ‘discernment’.

Discernment does not mean that we are to follow a sinner into their sin. Discernment does mean that we can walk-away from a person who is telling a ribald ‘joke’. Discernment does mean that we can walk away from a salacious situation. ‘While it may be legal, it does not mean it is moral’ – what does the Bible say about it?

The act of walking-away could be considered by some a form of judgment. However, the Believer is not condemning; the Believer is simply choosing to walk-away, instead of engaging in potentially sinful behavior. If an explanation is necessary, a simple comment will suffice: “For me, I cannot participate. Sorry.” At the time, the Believer can be extremely uncomfortable. However, God may provide a future opportunity for you – the Believer – to witness to the sinner (or even someone who witnessed your walking-away). You may have an opportunity to answer the sinner’s question: “Why did you – the Believer – choose to walk-away?” What answer might you provide?

Lesson 2: Romans 1:18-32

Day 5

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Q25. If Jesus came today, how might He judge our present-day culture? Our present-day Christian church?

Today's culture?

Today's Christian church?

When Russell Moore, the editor-in-chief of *Christianity Today*, was interviewed on NPR, he told a chilling story about preaching. A number of pastors, he said, had reported to him essentially the same experience. They would be preaching on a passage like the Sermon on the Mount, including sayings such as “turn the other cheek,” “blessed are the merciful,” or “love your enemies,” only to find themselves sharply attacked at the church door.

“Where’d you get that nonsense?!?!” some aggrieved parishioner inevitably would ask.

“From Christ Jesus,” the startled pastor would respond. “I was literally quoting Christ Jesus.”

Far from mumbling an embarrassed apology, the critic would instead walk away, scoffing, “Yeah, but that doesn’t work anymore. That’s weak.”

A cautionary tale

Text is from the ‘Clergy Coaching Network’, Facebook, January, 2024

And is based on an NPR Interview dated August 5, 2023:

<https://www.npr.org/2023/08/05/1192374014/russell-moore-on-altar-call-for-evangelical-america>

Q26. Is it okay in God’s eyes if a man is in a relationship with a man, or a woman is in a relationship with a woman?

Yes? } Why?
No? }

Lesson 2: Romans 1:18-32

Q27. According to Scripture, is there a distinction in how Believers are to judge other Believers compared to non-believers? (See 1 Corinthians 5:12 on page 9 ↑)

Yes? } Why?
No? }

Q28. What might be a “due penalty for their perversion”? Who provides the consequence as a result of the judgment?

Due Penalty?

Who is the Judge?

 Repeating the Great Commission:

Matthew 28:18-20 [NIV-1984] [The Great Commission]

¹⁸ Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Q29. If a Christian is judgmental to those who participate in a homosexual lifestyle, then how do we, who believe, ever hope to introduce them to the love of Christ Jesus?

Q30. If a Christian considers a person, who participates in a homosexual lifestyle, as irredeemable, then are we, who believe, becoming our own god: judging and passing a judgmental consequence?

Yes? } Why?
No? }

Lesson 2: Romans 1:18-32

Q31. (1) Should it be the goal for a Christian through their example, words, and prayer, to shine the light of Christ Jesus to those whom the Holy Spirit brings to us, including those who participate in a homosexual lifestyle? (2) Who are we to judge and consider them irredeemable? (3) Is that not the choice of those who receive the invitation from God through we, who believe, acting as God's Hands, Feet, and voice?

(1) Christian's goal?

(2) Are we to judge the behavior of non-believers?

(3) Who makes the choice to accept Christ Jesus as Lord?


Q32. (Personal) Do we, who believe, trust God? Trust prayer? Trust the work of the Holy Spirit? (It is the work and power of the Holy Spirit to change lives – how has your life changed?)

Do I trust God? Yes? No? Why?

Do I trust prayer? Yes? No? Why?


Do I trust the Holy Spirit? Yes? No? Why?

Since I became a Believer, how has my life changed?

 We must not judge. We must demonstrate love, mercy, and compassion. Note: Paul's teachings in his [1st letter to Timothy](#) (specifically, the lesson for [1 Timothy 3](#)) define the qualifications for those who are to provide leadership within the church body.)

Lesson 2: Romans 1:18-32

Day 6

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²⁸ Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done.

Q33. What might be a “depraved mind”?

²⁹ They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, and malice. They are gossips, ³⁰ slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; ³¹ they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless.

Q34. It is difficult to reach some people. Should we shun them?

³² Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.

Q35. Verse 32: What does “deserve death” mean? Do *good* people “deserve death”?

Deserve death?

Do ‘good’ people deserve death?

Lesson 2: Romans 1:18-32

Q36. Jesus personified love. When Jesus reached out in love to the sinner, did Jesus also embrace the sinner's sin?

Yes? } Why?
No? }

Job 34:31-33 [NIV-1984]

³¹ "Suppose a man says to God, 'I am guilty but will offend no more. ³² Teach me what I cannot see; if I have done wrong, I will not do so again [repentance].' ³³ Should God then reward you on your terms, when you refuse to repent? You must decide, not I; so, tell me what you know.

Jeremiah 31:34 [NIV-1984]

No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord ,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest," declares the Lord. "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."

John 5:14 [NIV-1984]

Later Jesus found him at the temple and said to him, "See, you are well again. Stop sinning [repent] or something worse may happen to you."

John 8:11 [NIV-1984]

"No one, sir," she said. "Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin."

Luke 15:7 [NIV-1984]


I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.

Q37. Many churches teach that we are to love the sinner. Does that mean churches are to approve of sinful behavior, too?

Yes? } Why?
No? }

Matthew 18:15-17 [NIV-1984] [Jesus taught:]

¹⁵ "If your brother [or sister] sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. ¹⁶ But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.' ¹⁷ If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector."

 It has been argued that if every church confronted sin as Jesus taught, then no one would be left. We sinners, who believe in the saving grace of Christ Jesus, can change. As we dress for the day, we must remember to put-on the [full armor of God](#). Additional tools we can use are prayer, studying Scripture, obeying Scripture, following the promptings of the Holy Spirit, and employing 'accountability partners' (a trusted friend and Believer in whom we confide our sins and who will hold us accountable through encouraging words, prayer, and the occasional reproof).

Lesson 2: Romans 1:18-32

Q38. How should churches practice Jesus' love to the sinner – to the person?

Believer?

Non-believer?

Q39. How should churches deal with the sin of a non-believing sinner?

Judge/condemn? Or demonstrate [agapé love](#)? Or embrace the sinner and his/her 'baggage'? Or refuse to associate? Or nothing? Or others?

Q40. This is a 'thorny' scenario and there will be diverse opinions based on legalism, societal pressures, and/or emotion. (As you think about your response, please keep in mind Christ Jesus' Great Commission, [the Biblical qualifications of elders and deacons](#), and the work of the indwelling Holy Spirit.) Scenario: your church's ministry to the world is successful. A person, who is suspected of prostitution or homosexuality or adultery or abortion, has petitioned for membership into your church. What should your church do? What should you as a Believer do?

Responsibility of the church?

Responsibility of the Believer?

Q41. Has your answer to Question 21 changed? Do you believe the sixty-six books of the Holy Bible? All of it? Or just parts of it?

Do you believe? Yes? No? Why?

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