



~ Thought For The Day ~

~gathering from the 4 winds~

“come just as you are”

Refresh, Restore, Rebuild = Healing



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Worship Music

Prayer

Lord, I am asking You to please forgive me for being so selfish, self centered, and neglectful of my wife and her needs. I expect her to faithfully serve me, but I have given her so little in return. I am truly sorry that I've ignored her and, as a result, hurt her. I accept responsibility for the role I have played in wounding her and making her feel unimportant. Please help me become more sensitive to my wife. Teach me to speak words that build her up, not words that put her down. As I follow Your leading in this area, please heal my wife's heart and bring tenderness back into our relationship once more. I accept Your challenge to purposefully show the honor, attention, respect, and tenderness she deserves. Thank You for helping me change in this vital area of my life, in Jesus' name. Amen.

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If you have a prayer request...please e-mail it to us so we can pray for you...or a person.....

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1 NOW NAOMI had a kinsman of her husband's, a man of wealth, of the family of Elimelech, whose name was Boaz. 2 And Ruth the Moabitess said to Naomi, Let me go to the field and glean among the ears of grain after him in whose sight I shall find favor. Naomi said to her, Go, my daughter. 3 And [Ruth] went and gleaned in a field after the reapers; and she happened to stop at the part of the field belonging to Boaz, who was of the family of Elimelech. 4 And behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem and said to the reapers, The Lord be with you! And they answered him, The Lord bless you! 5 Then Boaz said to his servant who was set over the reapers, Whose maiden is this? 6 And the servant set over the reapers answered, She is the Moabitish girl who came back with Naomi from the country of Moab. 7 And she said, I pray you, let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves. So she came and has continued from early morning until now, except when she rested a little in the house. 8 Then Boaz said to Ruth, Listen, my daughter, do not go to glean in another field or leave this one, but stay here close by my maidens. 9 Watch which field they reap, and follow them. Have I not charged the young men not to molest you? And when you are thirsty, go to the vessels and drink what the young men have drawn. 10 Then she fell on her face, bowing to the ground, and said to him, Why have I found favor in your eyes that you should notice me, when I am a foreigner? 11 And Boaz said to her, I have been made fully aware of all you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband, and how you have left your father and mother and the land of your birth and have come to a people unknown to you before. 12 The Lord recompense you for what you have done, and a full reward be given you by the Lord, the God of Israel, under Whose wings you have come to take refuge! 13 Then she said, Let me find favor in your sight, my lord. For you have comforted me and have spoken to the heart of your maidservant, though I am not as one of your maidservants. 14 And at mealtime Boaz said to her, Come here and eat of the bread and dip your morsel in the sour wine [mixed with oil]. And she sat beside the reapers; and he passed her some parched grain, and she ate until she was satisfied and she had some left [for Naomi]. 15 And when she got up to glean, Boaz ordered his young men, Let her glean even among the sheaves, and do not reproach her. 16 And let fall some handfuls for her on purpose and let them lie there for her to glean, and do not rebuke her. 17 So she gleaned in the field until evening. Then she beat out what she had gleaned. It was about an ephah of barley. 18 And she took it up and went into the town; she showed her mother-in-law what she had gleaned, and she also brought forth and gave her the food she had reserved after she was satisfied. 19 And her mother-in-law said to her, Where have you gleaned today? Where did you work? Blessed be the man who noticed you. So [Ruth] told [her], The name of him with whom I worked today is Boaz. 20 And Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, Blessed be he of the Lord who has not ceased his kindness to the living and to the dead. And Naomi said to her, The man is a near relative of ours, one who has the right to redeem us. 21 And Ruth the Moabitess said, He said to me also, Stay close to my young men until they have harvested my entire crop. 22 And Naomi said to Ruth, It is good, my daughter, for you to go out with his maidens, lest in any other field you be molested. 23 So she kept close to the maidens of Boaz, gleaning until the end of the barley and wheat harvests. And she lived with her mother-in-law.

Chapter 2

Now Naomi had a kinsman of her husband's, a mighty man of wealth, of the family of Elimelech; his name was Boaz (Rth 2:1).

So Elimelech had, and in the fourth chapter Boaz calls him, "our brother Elimelech," so a relation, perhaps a full brother, perhaps a half-brother who became a very wealthy man, a mighty man of wealth.

And Ruth the Moabitess said to Naomi, Let me now go to the field, and glean the ears of corn [after that which I must] after him in whose sight I shall find grace. And she said unto her, Go, my daughter (Rth 2:2).

Now in the law, God made a provision for the poor people. There were welfare laws in those days. I think they are far superior to the welfare laws today. It wasn't just a "give me," or give-out dole to people. But the law declared that when you had fields, you could only harvest your fields once. You couldn't go back through to pick the second time. You had one shot at your harvest. You went through once, that was it. Nor did you pick up anything off the ground. So that the poor of the land could come into your field after your harvesters had gone through, and whatever wasn't ripe when they had gone through, whatever was there, was free for the poor people. Thus, they could always go into the fields and they could come in after your harvesters. They could pick up any vegetables, or any fruits or whatever that remained after your first once harvest through the thing then the rest was left for the poor, thus, were the poor of the land taken care of. It was a very excellent welfare law. The poor of the land were taken care of adequately by this law. If you wanted to eat there was always food. You could always go out into the field and gather it after the harvesters.

So Ruth said to Naomi, "I'm gonna go out and glean in the field after the harvesters." It says,

And it was her hap [or we would say today, "It so happened,"] that she was in the part of the field that belonged to Boaz, who was of the family of Elimelech (Rth 2:3).

"It so happened," no that's not so. Nothing just so happens. When we relate a thing we say, "You know it was the strangest coincidence." But really when you're God's child, and God's hand is on your life, there aren't really coincidences. God's hand is in all of these things.

Now when God guides our lives, somehow we've got a mental concept that in order for God to guide me, there's got to be some kind of a mystical, spooky kind of an aura, you know. Where you almost go into a semi-trance and a fog begins to sort of come around you. You hear a voice in the echo chamber that says, "Goooo left." You expect God to lead you in some kind of a mystical way, when in reality God leads you in such natural ways. You say, "Well, it just happened that I was there at that moment." For the last few weeks my wife has been asking me concerning a doctor that was with us in Israel last year who helped her when she broke her arm. She said, "I'm so concerned about him? I wonder if everything is all right. We haven't heard. We sent him a Christmas card, and we haven't heard. I wonder, oh I wonder how he's doing, if you've seen him."

"No I haven't seen him."

"Well I wonder how they're doing." She's been on to me for this for a few weeks. Well, at my son's church the ladies were having a retreat up at Idylewild last weekend, not this, but the previous, and so Kay went up to teach the ladies. Because the dust was getting to her, she decided not to eat lunch there in the camp, but to go into a little restaurant called, "The Breadbasket." So as she was in there eating lunch, who should come in but the doctor's wife, who was passing by and decided, "Oh, I want to get one of the specialties of the bakery shop there." So she just on impulse ran in to get something out of the bakery. It just so happened, you see? No, those things don't happen, God is leading, God is guiding, and God put these things together but it happens so naturally, that you don't recognize that it's God doing it.

God leads us in very natural ways. It comes as a thought, it comes as an impulse, it comes as an idea, or it comes as an inspiration. "Oh, I'm hungry for a tamale."

"Got to have a tamale."

"Well where shall we go?"

"Well, let's go there." God is actually putting together circumstances. You get there and there's the plan of God unfolding. He's been guiding and it just so happened-but no. It doesn't so happen. God's hand is there leading and guiding. "For the steps of a righteous man are ordered of the Lord, and he delights in His ways." If you will in all your ways just acknowledge Him, He will direct your paths.

Now looking at it from our side, we say, "Now it so happened that she came into the field of Boaz." But in reality God was holding her by the hand, and directing her to that field. She was going out wondering, "Where in the world am I going to glean? Oh my, this is all new. I don't know any place around here. Oh, there's some gals out there, I'll follow them." God was just leading all the way along.

Neat the way the Lord does lead our lives. It's glorious the way God directs our paths as we just yield ourselves to Him. Before I get out of bed in the morning, I say, "Lord today is Yours. My life is Yours. Now You just lead me Lord in whatever You have for me. Direct my life today Lord. I don't have any hard, fast plans that can't be broken, Lord. You just bring into my path whatever You want. I want to be open to You today." It's always exciting because you never know just what God has in mind for you each day as He puts the circumstances together. We look at it and, "Man, that is the most amazing coincidence I've ever seen." Not really. God was bringing the ends together all the way along.

And, behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem, and he said to the reapers, The Lord be with you. And they answered him, The Lord bless thee (Rth 2:4).

Now Boaz does show many characteristics of a fine, outstanding, godly man. Just remember it's a time of spiritual declension and apostasy, the period of the Judges. But here's a man who's walking with God, who comes out and greets his servants by saying, "The Lord be with you!" Evidently there's a good management relationship here with servants, and they say, "And the Lord bless thee!" What's the other indications of this man's spiritual nature?

Then said Boaz unto his servant that was over the reapers, Where did this chick come from? [that's a modern translation] And the servant that was over the reapers answered and said, It is the Moabitish damsel that came back with Naomi out of the country of Moab: And she said, I [beg you, or] pray you, let me glean and gather after the reapers after the sheaves: and she came, and hath continued even from morning until now, she only tarried for a little time in the house. Then said Boaz unto Ruth, Listen my daughter? Don't glean in any other field, neither go from here, but abide here fast by my maidens: And let your eyes be on the field that they reap, and follow after them: for I have charged the young men that they shall not touch thee? and when you're thirsty, you can go to the vessels, and drink of the water that the young men have drawn. And she fell on her face, and bowed herself to the ground, and said unto him, Why have I found grace in thine eyes, that you should take knowledge of me, seeing I'm a stranger? And Boaz answered and said unto her, It has been fully shown unto me, all that thou hast done unto your mother in law since the death of your husband: and how you have left your father and mother, and the land of your nativity, and are come unto a people which you did not know before this. The Lord recompense thy work, and a full reward be given to thee of the Lord God of Israel, unto whose wings thou art come to trust (Rth 2:5-12).

So it's a beautiful scene. They are meeting and he speaks to Ruth and says, "You know just stay in the fields of my maidens, follow them. Don't go to any other fields. When you get thirsty you can drink from the containers that the young men have drawn." She's amazed by the kindness.

She's a stranger here, and she said, "How come you're treating me so kindly? I'm a stranger."

He said, "I've heard all about you. I've heard about your kindness to Naomi. I've heard about your decision really to come into a new land, and under the shelter of Jehovah." So his beautiful words, "May Jehovah recompense thy work. May the Lord just reward your decisions. And a full reward be given to you from the God of Israel under whose wings you have come to trust." The people there were very close to nature. They were very earthy people. Thus, they pictured God in earthy pictures. One of the pictures that they had of God was that loving, protecting concern over His children, as a mother hen has that loving, protective concern over her little chicks. So that when danger threatens, the little chicks run under the mother who ruffles out her feathers and covers them, and stands there to protect them against danger. This is one of the pictures of God in the Old Testament. "Under His wings shalt thou trust."

This picture of a mother hen brooding, and covering, and protecting with her wings, with her feathers, her little coop. It's a very earthly kind of thing, and if you haven't been around a farm or chickens, you don't understand it fully. Fortunately when I was a kid, even growing up here in California we were country enough where we still had chickens around in the backyard. "But may the Lord reward you under whose wings, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to trust." Trusting in God now. Looking to Him.

Then she said, Let me find favour in thy sight, my lord; for you have comforted me, and you have spoken friendly unto your handmaid, though I am not like one of your own handmaidens. And Boaz said to her, At mealtime you can come here, and eat of the bread, and dip your morsel in the vinegar. And she sat beside the reapers: and he reached her parched corn, and she did eat, and was sufficed, and left (Rth 2:13-14).

So Boaz is showing a definite interest in her, reaching over and getting some parched corn for her. Inviting her to eat and showing the protection.

And when she was risen up to glean, Boaz commanded his young men, saying, Now you let her glean even among the sheaves, don't approach her: ["If she happens to wander over into the area where you haven't been yet, don't yell at her, let her go."] Then every once in awhile just let a handful drop on purpose for her,... So Ruth gleaned that day and she came up with about a bushel of barley. [So that when she got back to Naomi,] Naomi said, Where in the world were you gleaning today? The Lord be gracious unto that man. Ruth said, Well I happened to be in the field of a man whose name is Boaz. And Naomi said unto her, Blessed is he of the Lord, who has not left off his kindness to the living and to the dead. And Naomi said to her, The man is near of kin to us, he is one of our next goels, kinsman redeemers. ["This man is a family member, he's a goel, he's a kinsman redeemer to us, one of the next of kinsman redeemers."] And Ruth the Moabitess said, He said unto me also, You shall stay fast by my young men until they have ended all my harvest. And Naomi said to Ruth her daughter in law, It is good, my daughter, that you do not go out with his maidens, and that they do not meet you in any other field. So she kept fast by the maidens of Boaz to glean unto the end of the barley harvest and of the wheat harvest; and she stayed there with her mother in law (Rth 2:15-23). (Through The Bible C-2000 Series; Chuck Smith; Bible Commentaries; 1979-1986)

V. PRAYERLESS CHRISTIANS

"If there was ever a time when Peter, James and John needed to remain awake it was in Gethsemane. If James had persisted in keeping awake it might have saved his decapitation a few years later. If Peter had stirred himself to really intercede for himself and others he would not have denied his Christ that night in the palace of Caiaphas."—H. W. Hodge.

There is great need in this day for Christian business men to inform their mundane affairs with the spirit of prayer. There is a great army of successful merchants of almost every kind who are members of Christ's Church and it is high time these men attended to this matter. This is but another version of the phrase, "putting God into business," the realization and restraint of His presence and of His fear in all the secularities of life. We need the atmosphere of the prayer-closet to pervade our public sales-rooms and counting-houses. The sanctity of prayer is needed to impregnate business. We need the spirit of Sunday carried over to Monday and continued until Saturday. But this cannot be done by prayerless men, but by men of prayer. We need business men to go about their concerns with the same reverence and responsibility with which they enter the closet. Men are badly needed who are devoid of greed, but who, with all their hearts carry God with them into the secular affairs of life.

Men of the world imagine prayer to be too impotent a thing to come into rivalry with business methods and worldly practices. Against such a misleading doctrine Paul sets the whole commands of God, the loyalty to Jesus Christ, the claims of pious character, and the demands of the salvation of the world. Men must pray, and put strength and heart into their praying. This is part of the primary business of life, and to it God has called men, first of all.

Praying men are God's agents on earth, the representative of government of heaven, set to a specific task on the earth. While it is true that the Holy Spirit, the angels of God, are agents of God in carrying forward the redemption of the human race, yet among them there must be praying men. For such men God has great use. He can make much of them, and in the past has done wonderful things through them. These are His instruments in carrying out God's great purposes on the earth. They are God's messengers, His watchmen, shepherds, workmen, who need not be ashamed. Fully equipped for the great work to which they are appointed, they honour God and bless the world.

Above all things beside, Christian men and women must, primarily, be leaders in prayer. No matter how conspicuous they may be in other activities, they fail if they are not conspicuous in prayer. They must give their brain and heart to prayer. Men who make and shape the program of Christ's Church, who map out its line of activity, should, themselves, be shaped and made by prayer. Men controlling the Church finances, her thought, her action—should all be men of prayer.

The progress to consummation of God's work in this world has two basic principles—God's ability to give and man's ability to ask. Failure in either one is fatal to the success of God's work on earth. God's inability to do or to give would put an end to redemption. Man's failure to pray would, just as surely, set a limit to the plan. But God's ability to do and to give has never failed and cannot fail; but man's ability to ask can fail, and often does. Therefore the slow progress which is being made toward the realization of a world won for Christ lies entirely with man's limited asking. There is need for the entire Church of God, on the earth, to betake itself to prayer. The Church upon its knees would bring heaven upon the earth.

The wonderful ability of God to do for us is thus expressed by Paul in one of his most comprehensive statements, "And God is able to make all grace abound toward you," he says, "that ye, always, having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work."

Study, I pray you, that remarkable statement—"God is able to make all grace abound." That is, He is able to give such sufficiency, that we may abound—overflow—to every good work. Why are we not more fully fashioned after this overflowing order? The answer is—lack of prayer-ability. "We have not because we ask not." We are feeble, weak and impoverished because of our failure to pray. God is restrained in doing because we are restrained by reason of our non-praying. All failures in securing heaven are traceable to lack of prayer or misdirected petition.

Prayer must be broad in its scope—it must plead for others. Intercession for others is the hall-mark of all true prayer. When prayer is confined to self and to the sphere of one's personal needs, it dies by reason of its littleness, narrowness and selfishness. Prayer must be broad and unselfish or it will perish. Prayer is the soul of a man stirred to plead with God for men. In addition to being interested in the eternal interests of one's own soul it must, in its very nature, be concerned for the spiritual and eternal welfare of others. One's ability to pray for self, finds its climax in the compassion its concern expresses for others.

In 1 Tim. 1, the Apostle Paul urges with singular and specific emphasis, that those who occupy positions of influence and places of authority, are to give themselves to prayer. "I will, therefore, that the men pray everywhere." This is the high calling of the men of the Church, and no calling is so engaging, so engrossing and so valuable that we can afford to relieve Christian men from the all-important vocation of secret prayer. Nothing whatever can take the place of prayer. Nothing whatever can atone for the neglect of praying. This is uppermost, first in point of importance and first in point of time. No man is so high in position, or in grace, to be exempt from an obligation to pray. No man is too big to pray, no matter who he is, nor what office he fills. The king on his throne is as much obligated to pray as the peasant in his cottage. None is so high and exalted in this world or so lowly and obscure as to be excused from praying. The help of every one is needed in prosecuting the work of God, and the prayer of each praying man helps to swell the aggregate. The leaders in place, in gifts and in authority are to be chiefs in prayer.

Civil and Church rulers shape the affairs of this world. And so civil and Church rulers themselves need to be shaped personally in spirit, heart and conduct, in truth and righteousness, by the prayers of God's people. This is in direct line with Paul's words:

"I exhort therefore," he says, "that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for rulers and all that are in authority."

It is a sad day for righteousness when church politics instead of holy praying, shapes the administration of the Kingdom and elevates men to place and power. Why pray for all men? Because God wills the salvation of all men. God's children on earth must link their prayers to God's will. Prayer is to carry out the will of God. God wills the salvation of all men. His heart is set on this one thing. Our prayers must be the creation and exponent of God's will. We are to grasp humanity in our praying as God grasps humanity in His love, His interest and His plans to redeem humanity. Our sympathies, prayers, wrestling and ardent desires must run parallel with the will of God, broad, generous, world-wide and Godlike. The Christian man must in all things, first of all, be conformed to the will of God, but nowhere shall this royal devotion be more evident than in the salvation of the race of men. This high partnership with God, as His vicegerents on earth, is to have its fullest, richest, and most efficient exercise in prayer for all men.

Men are to pray for all men, are to pray especially for rulers in Church and state, "that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty." Peace on the outside and peace on the inside. Praying calms disturbing forces, allays tormenting fears, brings conflict to an end. Prayer tends to do away with turmoil. But even if there be external conflicts, it is well to have deep peace within the citadel of the soul. "That we may lead a quiet and peaceable life." Prayer brings the inner calm and furnishes the outward tranquillity. Praying Men must pray for all men that we may lead lives "in all godliness and honesty." That is with godliness and gravity. Godliness is to be like God. It is to be godly, to have God-likeness, having the image of God stamped upon the inner nature, and showing the same likeness in conduct and in temper. Almighty God is the very highest model, and to be like Him is to possess the highest character. Prayer moulds us into the image of God, and at the same time tends to mould others into the same image just in proportion as we pray for others. Prayer means to be God-like, and to be God-like is to love Christ and love God, to be one with the Father and the Son in spirit, character and conduct. Prayer means to stay with God till you are like Him. Prayer makes a godly man, and puts within him "the mind of Christ," the mind of humility, of self-surrender, of service, of pity, and of prayer. If we really pray, we will become more like God, or else we will quit praying.

"Men are to pray everywhere," in the closet, in the prayer-meeting, about the family altar, and to do it, "lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting." Here is not only the obligation laid upon the men to pray, but instructions as to how they should pray. "Men must pray without wrath." That is, without bitterness against their neighbours or brethren; without the obstinacy and pertinacity of a strong will, and hard feelings, without an evil desire or emotion kindled by nature's fires in the carnal nature. Praying is not to be done by these questionable things, nor in company with such evil feelings, but "without" them, aloof and entirely separate from them. This is the sort of praying the men are called upon to do, the sort which God hears and the kind which prevails with God and accomplishes things. Such praying in the hands of Christian men become divine agencies in God's hands for carrying on God's gracious purposes and executing His designs in redemption. rulers and praying subjects were they world-wide would allay turbulent forces, make wars to cease, and peace to reign.

Prayer has a higher origin than man's nature. This is true whether man's nature as separate from the angelic nature, or man's carnal nature unrenewed and unchanged be meant. Prayer does not originate in the realms of the carnal mind. Such a nature is entirely foreign to prayer simply because "the carnal mind is enmity against God." It is by the new Spirit that we pray, the new spirit sweetened by the sugar of heaven perfumed with the fragrance of the upper world, and invigorated by a breath from the crystal sea. The "new spirit" is native to the skies, panting after the heavenly things, inspired by the breath of God. It is the praying temper from which all the old juices of the carnal, unregenerate nature have been expelled, and the fire of God has created the flame which has consumed worldly lusts, and the juices of the Spirit have been injected into the soul, and the praying is entirely divorced from wrath.

Men are also to pray "without doubting." The Revised Version puts it, "without disputings." Faith in God, belief in God's Word, they must have "without question." No doubting or disputing must be in the mind. There must be no opinions, nor hesitancy, no questioning, no reasoning, no intellectual quibbling, no rebellion, but a strict, stead-fast loyalty of spirit to God, a life of loyalty in heart and intellect to God's Word.

God has much to do with believing men, who have a living, transforming faith in Jesus Christ. These are God's children. A father loves his children, supplies their needs, hears their cries and answers their requests. A child believes his father, loves him, trusts in him, and asks him for what he needs, believing without doubting that his father will hear his requests. God has everything to do with answering the prayer of His children. Their troubles concern Him, and their prayers awaken Him. Their voice is sweet to Him. He loves to hear them pray, and He is never happier than to answer their prayers.

Prayer is intended for God's ear. It is not man, but God who hears and answers prayer. Prayer covers the whole range of man's need. Hence, "in everything, by prayer and supplication," are "requests to be made known unto God." Prayer includes the entire range of God's ability. "Is anything too hard for God?" Prayer belongs to no favoured segment of man's need, but reaches to and embraces the entire circle of his wants, simply because God is the God of the whole man. God has pledged Himself to supply the needs of the whole man, physical, intellectual and spiritual. "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." Prayer is the child of grace, and grace is for the whole man, and for every one of the children of men.

Pr 6:6-8 — Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider her ways and be wise!— 7 Which, having no chief, overseer, or ruler, 8 Provides her food in the summer and gathers her supplies in the harvest.

Pr 13:1 — A WISE son heeds [and is the fruit of] his father's instruction and correction, but a scoffer listens not to rebuke.

Pr 13:20 — He who walks [as a companion] with wise men is wise, but he who associates with [self-confident] fools is [a fool himself and] shall smart for it.

1Co 15:33 — Do not be so deceived and misled! Evil companionships (communion, associations) corrupt and deprave good manners and morals and character.

Eph 6:1-3 — CHILDREN, OBEY your parents in the Lord [as His representatives], for this is just and right. 2 Honor (esteem and value as precious) your father and your mother—this is the first commandment with a promise— 3 That all may be well with you and that you may live long on the earth.

("The Weapon Of Prayer" ; EM Bounds; Chapter 3 ; Edward McKendree Bounds (August 15, 1835 – August 24, 1913) was a clergyman of the Methodist Episcopal Church South and author of eleven books, nine of which focused on the subject of prayer.)

(Amplified Bible; Joyce Meyers; 2006; Faith Words; Scripture; Commentaries; pages 398-399)

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