

Hiding From Ourselves – AWKWARD

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MAIN VERSES

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Welcome Home

Do you ever find yourself searching for something bigger than you? For a community to be a part of? A place founded on truth and love. A place to worship the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, and the Son of God. Welcome to Founded in Truth, where we're more than just a fellowship. We're a family. So welcome home. Shabbat shalom, everybody. I'm just glad everybody's here today.

I'm going to ask something of everybody that I have not asked before. This is a live streamed message, so everybody watching in the chat, we're about to talk about some awkwardness. And nobody likes awkwardness, even if they pretend like they do, like me. I'd like for everybody to recall maybe an awkward moment in their life, maybe an awkward story that's appropriate. And I'd love for you to share it in the chat. I'll be able to look at it later. Usually after services, I get to talk to everybody. And I don't think I'm going to be able to talk to most of you guys. So I'd love for you to share just an awkward moment in your life, if it's appropriate, so that we can all participate.

The Resources

Before I start this message, there are two resources. I have resources on awkwardness. Two resources. They're in the description of the live stream below. You can purchase them on Amazon after tonight. The first one is by Sammy Rhodes. It's called This is Awkward, How Life's Uncomfortable Moments Open the Door to Intimacy and Connection. It is really a God-centered book. I really appreciated some of his thoughts. Sometimes we don't like to talk about the hard situations in our life, the real situations that are just above awkward, and he doesn't mind sharing, and I appreciate his bravery in sharing that. I found it extremely edifying.

And the other book is actually a secular book on the topic. It's by a psychology student named Melissa Dahl. It's called Cringeworthy, The Theory of Awkwardness. I found the book just very helpful in the history of awkwardness and how different countries, different nations reflect on the topic. So both those resources are in the description below.

The Weight of Awkward Silence

The thing about awkward moments is everybody feels them. So if you're in a group and something awkward happens, it's as if a weight falls on the room. Someone says something that's awkward or something happens, and everyone just goes silent. Have you ever been in that situation? Everyone just goes silent, and it's just this weight that builds up. Who's going to talk first? It's just awkward silence.

Back in the 90s and early 2000s, and maybe it existed before that, there would always be the person in the group that would jump in and defuse. They would call out the awkwardness, and they would do so not by saying, hey guys, this is awkward. They would do so with a certain hand gesture, where they would take one hand and put it on the other, and they would slap them together, and they would do this, and they would say, awkward turtle. And for some reason, this would defuse the entire awkward situation because what would it do? It would call it out for what it is. Wow, this is an awkward situation. And everyone would kind of laugh.

The Awkward Turtle

And the history of the awkward turtle, from my understanding, is it's supposed to look like a turtle that's flipped upside down that's awkwardly struggling to flip itself back over. What a perfect scenario. What a perfect imagery of attempting to define awkwardness. I feel like that fits so well.

So, awkward moments. It's those moments that in life you just trip over, you fall into, and don't know how to get out of. I'm sure we have some familiar ones as well. One of my favorite ones is walking down the street.

Running Into Strangers

So here's one of those awkward moments that maybe we can relate to. I like to jog. I like to run around my neighborhood. I've been jogging or running for about a year now. And I always like to say that I'm going to get up and run three to six miles every single day. But with all these

little kids running around, it was very difficult to do that every day. But that's my attempt. That's my goal. That's what I try to do.

And, of course, when you're running around your neighborhood, sometimes you run into other people who are running or jogging or walking down the road, right? And of course it is poor running etiquette to just pass another runner, another person walking, another person jogging, and not engage with them socially. You're just a jerk if you don't acknowledge their existence on the other side of the road. Like, if someone is close to me in proximity, I must acknowledge them. And at least that's how we do it in the South. I don't know about the North. In the South, we do that with everyone, even in your car. See, down here in the South, we have this thing called a hand, and we must use it to do something called waving to everybody. It's just part of life.

But there you are. You're running down the street or walking down the street, and you're going to pass another person. And when you see that other person coming towards you, you're already putting energy into the conversation and the engagement that is about to take place. So much so they could be up the hill. You're already preparing how the conversation is going to go. How are you going to connect momentarily with this other image bearer of God that is simply trying to burn calories just like you are?

So you get close, you get closer, you get closer. Now they are close enough to engage. They are within earshot. You could say hello now, but you don't want to do it too soon or else you'd really get yourself in an awkward situation. Ask me how? Hey, how you doing? And they're like, oh, I'm doing great. But you still have five seconds to run past each other in silence. You don't want to do that. You got to wait for the perfect moment. And here they are. They're coming closer and closer and closer. And here they are. Oh, no. They spoke first. You did not anticipate this scenario in your mind over and over and over again. They look up and they say, hey. And under the weight of the overwhelming pressure to engage, you blurt out, fine, thank you. Keep running past them. We've all been there. Don't even try to deny it. It's one of those moments, right?

The Exit Dance

My favorite is saying goodbyes, and I'm very intentional about goodbyes. When it is time to say goodbye, it is usually time to say goodbye. When it's time for someone to leave your house, it's time, right? Same thing with you. When it's time for you to leave, it's time. And you see the scenario. Everybody's done eating. Everybody stands up from the table. They're literally holding

their bags to leave. They have their children. And so what do you do? Okay, well, hey, it was great to see you. Give them a little hug, shake their hand. And then you realize the front door is at the other side of the house. You have preemptively implemented exit protocols. So now you must escort them to the door awkwardly.

So you walk to the door, you have touched the door handle. You may not touch the door handle without implementing exit protocols ever. You can't just open it up and shoo them out. You must now pretend as if exit protocols, the exit dance, the social dance, has not taken place just 10 seconds earlier. You must redo the dance. Open the door. Well, it was great to see you guys! Give them a hug, shake their hand. If you're not sure if they're a hugger, what do you do? You fist bump! Sorry, I got that mixed up, Audra. And there we go.

Exposed and Vulnerable

And so, these awkward moments that we all experience and we take for granted, I petition our gifts, their gifts, to just know how vulnerable we are when we come face to face with each other. And I also think that it gives us an opportunity to show other people not only that we are real people, but that we're willing to show that to other people. Empathy. We're just like each other. We're like everybody in the world. Everybody has a sense of awkwardness in certain situations. It's something we can all relate to. And so, nobody enjoys being in awkward situations, but that's part of who we are as human beings.

If you don't believe me, look in the mirror at the person that God made because he chuckled. Big lanky. Anyway, yeah, there are many aspects of awkwardness that we fear if we can be honest. But I think it really comes down to being exposed. It really comes down to being exposed. It comes down to being vulnerable around other people, or being examined, or seeing yourself the way that others see you and it not lining up with the person that you thought you were portraying, if that makes sense.

When People See Themselves

You've heard stories about maybe tribes, remote tribes, not wanting to have their pictures taken because it takes a piece of their soul away. It's a fun story. The actual real story is something that we can all relate to. So in 1969, explorer Edmund Carpenter went to a very remote tribe in New Guinea. And the tribe's name was the Biame tribe, I believe. And Edmund came with his photographer. He brought a photography camera, a video camera, and a voice recorder. And

they recorded the voices of everyone in the tribe, and they took portraits of everyone in the tribe as well.

And when they developed the photos and showed them, they freaked out. They seemed unaware that this was actually the way people saw them. The same thing when they started hearing their voices played back. They stood in awe, in fear, tense, grabbing their stomachs. And that's the thing, like, well, haven't they ever seen themselves before? Maybe in the reflection from glasses, and they have these little mirrors. No one had ever seen themselves in a full body mirror.

No one had ever seen a full head portrait of themselves. They had no idea. When they saw the picture of their faces for the first time, they ducked their heads—the universal symbol of "oh my goodness"—and put their hands over their mouths. When they heard their voice recordings, they leaped back in shock. They understood it was playing back what they said, but the moment they recognized it was their voice, that was the moment of horror. That's how their voices actually sound.

Have you ever heard your own voice played back for the first time? It can be traumatizing if you've never done that before. Cringeworthy, even. And what's even more fascinating is what happened after a few days of exposure to all these new gizmos and gadgets.

The Irreconcilable Gap

The tribe began to get used to their actual image. They got used to the way others saw them, and they began to realize that they were actually loved by their tribe members despite not sounding or looking like they thought they did to the world. They began to embrace being filmed. They started smiling for the camera—just instinct, right? Playing with the voice recorders more. A neat end to the experiment.

But there's something called the irreconcilable gap in psychology. That's exactly what took place with the tribe—the gap between how you see yourself and how others see you. Once you realize it's there, depending on how big it is, it could be traumatizing. This can be something as small as hearing your voice for the first time or seeing yourself on camera, or maybe thinking of yourself as a great leader at your job until you go to your boss's office with such confidence and demand a raise. He informs you that no, you're just a junior staffer. What are you doing? You're not a leader here. Breaks you.

FaceTime Facelifts

Did you know that in the early 2010s, there was a trend known as FaceTime facelifts? People were FaceTiming more than ever, teleconferencing more than ever, and plastic surgery jumped up. Why? Because people could not handle the raw reality being portrayed of them through the lens of a camera. They wanted to look better for Skype. It's a real thing.

And the technology of FaceTime, of course, wasn't new. In 1964 at the World's Fair, the very first teleconferencing phone came out. It transmitted your video and let you talk on the phone at the same time. The inventor thought he had struck gold. He was tickled—I'm going to be rich. Unfortunately, the entire idea flopped. And it flopped for a very simple reason. Not because it cost \$27 a minute to make a phone call, but because people just weren't used to that level of awkwardness—actually staring while you talk on the phone. Then they started becoming self-conscious. If that's how I'm staring at other people, then is that how people are staring at me? Awkward. No, it didn't fly.

What Do We Look Like?

Still today, one in six Americans who use FaceTime, Zoom, or Skype say that they are uncomfortable using those video conferencing apps—except for all you Marco Polo users. You guys are just desensitized. But it's true. What do we look like? What do we do?

Jenny and I are foster parents in South Carolina, and several of our foster children still have visitation—if you know what that is. But because of COVID—which is lovely—visitation isn't in-person. It's via Zoom on our phone. Let me paint the picture for you. If we have an infant foster child, we hold the infant and pull up the phone. We're not engaged in the visitation. We're just facilitating it for an hour while the visit takes place. You get used to some awkward moments, I guess, after a while.

Another awkward situation: some of the counties in South Carolina are not having in-person court. So, genius, we'll use the technology available. We'll have court via Zoom. See, if you're sitting in a courtroom or a court hearing, you can sit in the back and relax a little bit. The judge is only focused on you if you're making a scene or if he calls on you. Not so anymore. The judge is seeing you on a screen. If you know how Zoom works, he's seeing everybody on the screen. Not only that, every lawyer, every other person in the courtroom can zoom over and look at you. You can't relax, can't do anything. Yeah, awkward.

Growing in Grace and Empathy

And I say all these examples to say this: it's totally something we all experience. But instead of ignoring it, how can we use this to empower us? How can we actually use this to our benefit? How can we use the seemingly vulnerable weakness as a powerhouse for growing in grace and growing in empathy for others?

[Psalm 17](#) is a great verse. It's one I would dare say we all pray, or our spouse does. It says, "Keep me as the apple of your eye, hide me in the shadow of your wings." That's a verse we all want to aspire to. We all want to be hidden in the shadow of God's wings. This is one of the verses that describes God metaphorically as a mother—as a female mother bird—sheltering her young.

But here's the thing: we can't ask God to hide us in the shadow of his wings and expect to remain hidden from him. We can't hide in the shadow of his wings and not expect him to see our deepest vulnerabilities.

A Pretty Awkward Moment

There's actually a pretty awkward moment in the opening pages of the Bible, and for most of us, we've read it so many times, we don't realize the severity of awkwardness that exists. Of course, it's in the garden—when mankind went ahead and corrupted all of creation. We know the story. The serpent deceived Eve, and of course, Adam ate as well. But I want to picture the rest of the story here, and we're going to read it starting in [Genesis 3.8](#). This is what took place right after that moment—when they suddenly realized they weren't wearing clothes.

[Genesis 3](#), verse 8. And he said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?" Then the man said, "The woman you put here with me, she gave me some fruit from the tree and then I ate it."

Escalating Like My Four-Year-Old

Way to go, Adam. Just escalating—just like my four-year-old. Adam, did you break this window in the house? What happened? Did you throw the football and break the window? Well, you gave me the football.

It's easy to blame Adam. It's easy to look down on him here. He's being a complete jerk and not being accountable for what he's done. But hold up. I would submit that you would have done the exact same thing. How do I know? Because this is how we handle all embarrassing situations in our life. We're embarrassed about our nakedness, so we want everyone to look at someone else's nakedness instead. Look at them not wearing clothes. They're wearing less than

me. They're more naked than me. They're more vulnerable. Look at their flaws and embarrassing moments in their life. It's your fault, God, and it's the woman's.

A Setup for Grace

And I believe this story was such a setup for grace. It's almost as if God is attempting to set up a conversation about what happened—like he didn't know. He wants to meet with mankind. God wants to be there with them. And that's the whole purpose of [Genesis 1](#). [Genesis 1](#) is a story. It's a poem, actually. It's not simply about creation and everything that happened. It's about why creation—so that God could create a place for man to dwell, so that he could dwell with man. That's the purpose behind the poem of [Genesis 1](#).

And here, God is walking and he's calling out, "Where are you? Where are you?" And what is man doing? They're hiding from God because they have shame. They have guilt. They have confusion. Now they have vulnerabilities.

And what's God's response? "Who told you that you should be embarrassed? Who told you that you were naked?" See, they've been naked around God before. But now it's a bad thing. Now they don't want God to see all of them. So they try to cover it. What a familiar story. What a familiar story.

And then what happens? Mankind has a great opportunity before a loving, sincere Creator. "Who told you that you had something to hide from me? Did you eat of the fruit?" And how does Adam respond? "That woman that you gave me did it. Then she gave it to me. I did it. You gave her to me, and then I did it."

And I believe that was a defining moment in the story. What would have happened, and we don't know, because the biblical authors knew that this story—you could place yourself in this story every single time, and it would turn out the same way. Biblical authors weren't stupid.

Transgression and Sin

But what would have happened if Adam had repented in the sight of God's gracefulness? But instead, he layers his guilt, and he wants to justify his embarrassing actions. His transgression, his sin. And how does he try to cover it? How does he try to layer it on? By showing ingratitude to God and blaming someone else.

You ever blame someone else for a wrongdoing that you did? Oh man, Matt, this message isn't fun anymore. Let's not talk about how humans do whatever they can to hide their

vulnerabilities and their nakedness, cover our downfalls, cover our sin.

If I'm in trouble, it has to be because of someone else. Yeah, different kind of message today, guys. No Hebrew word patterns, a Torah commentary, no geeky stuff. We're going to talk about real issues. Have you ever blamed someone else for your actions? Of course. If they hadn't done what they had done, then I wouldn't have responded the way that I did. Maybe it was a conflict in your church fellowship or your family. Or maybe it was with someone who had a different view of politics than you did. And that's not okay. Do you know why it's not okay? Because you have the right view. So you get into an argument and you choose to break a relationship because you don't agree on politics, which nobody does. Yeah, well, they started it. Yeah, but you chose to participate in breaking a relationship due to politics, not understanding each other, likely not communicating truly to each other. Or maybe you chose to just talk about them behind their back because that's also our default.

Maybe someone offended you. Maybe you chose to retaliate by gossiping about them. Do you realize that your sin or your submission to anger, your yielding to your flesh—do you realize that that is on you, not them? That's on you. This is like Sermon on the Mount 101. It's on you.

Hey, carry my bag. Carry all my stuff for a mile. Dirty slave, carry it. How did Yeshua say to respond? To someone else's audacity by absorbing the offense and turning it into peace and reconciliation. I want to sue you for your cloak. All right, I could counter-sue. I could be mad, use foul language, which I know no one does. All right, you need some undies too. That's what Yeshua said. Give them everything. Nowhere does Yeshua ever show us that we have the right to retaliate towards someone else's offenses. In fact, it's our job to do whatever is most edifying for our enemy. Yeah. Because what are we called to do? We're called to engage with people not as the world, but as the kingdom of God, as ambassadors of the Christ, to be God's images on earth. What is an image? An image is something that images something else. When people see us, they should see the attributes of God's kingdom. They should be his love, justice, mercy, grace, forgiveness. They should see the same love that Yeshua gave. You know what that's called? That's called the way of the cross. That's what makes Christianity so hard. Carrying your cross is supposed to be hard, especially when it comes to relationships and forgiveness and finding a way to absorb offenses and to stop them from spreading anymore. Put out the fire and instead produce peace. You do what is most edifying for your enemy to show them the love of God.

We love studying the Bible; living it out is something totally different. See, we sometimes love to justify our sin because of other people. I wouldn't be like this if it wasn't for them. I wouldn't act like this if it wasn't for you. I wouldn't act the way I am. That's how abusers talk, by the way.

What if Adam owned it? Yeah, right. Eve did give him the fruit. So you took it, Adam. Not only that, isn't it your job to defend and guard the garden? Wasn't that on you? In marriage, how many times do we fight unnecessarily because neither one of us refuses to acknowledge our part in the argument? How many relationships deteriorate because someone is unwilling to humble themselves before God and others and apologize? To own it. Just own it. Yes, it will be awkward. But you know what? You showing that you're stronger than the awkwardness, that's what's powerful.

Reconciled Before the Offering

Matthew chapter 5, verses 23 and 24. Weighty verse. When Yeshua is speaking, he says, So if you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First, be reconciled to your brother and then come and offer your gift. Offer your gift to who? Offer my gift to God. First, be reconciled with your brother before you even dare bring the gift to God. Yeshua here sets up a priority of the hierarchy in approaching your relationship with God. You see that? It's a hierarchy. You can't simply knock everybody out of your life and go straight to God. You can't simply ignore the mission to the world around you and just say, forget all that. I'm going to get God, just me and God. It doesn't work that way. The entire mission of God has to do with the community of this world growing together in the love of God. That's what Yeshua's invitation was all about in John chapter 17. It's his prayer for all believers, for everybody. Father, that they would be one with you, just like I am one with you, that we would together be a community of love. Everybody wants to justify breaking relationships in the name of being holy unto God as well. We have this attitude that, okay, we're set apart, so that means I need to cut all these people out of my life because they're not as set apart as I am. And this verse right here shows that this is the farthest thing that a believer would actually do according to Yeshua.

So Yeshua is painting this awkward moment when you're making an offering before God. God, this is yours. It's part of me to you. Please, God, accept it. But then you realize you were a jerk to your neighbor. Are you really going to proceed here in [Matthew 23](#) with the offering? God's looking at you going, are you really going to pray for blessings and mercy and justice and peace in your life right now as if you haven't caused the disruption of all of those things in your neighbor? You're really going to come here and offer that. Go first. Be reconciled. Absorb the awkwardness. Defeat it. Own it. Be reconciled. But it'll be awkward for me to clear the air. Be reconciled is what he says.

The biggest issue we have as humans is we don't want the world to see the real us. That's it. We don't want the world to see our struggles. We don't want the world to see our weakness. We don't want the world to see our failures in life. We don't want the world to see a version of us that we don't want to acknowledge. It's the same reason why we hate hearing our own voices played on a tape recorder back to us. It's the same reason why it's uncomfortable to see ourselves on camera. Because the person that we hear, the person that we see isn't the person that we've created in our head. And it makes our skin crawl to think someone else sees the real me that I don't even see. And the only way that is going to change is when you're willing to accept who you are and who the people around you are. But it starts with acknowledging the real you, awkward or not. So life can be awkward. Life is awkward. But the moment you choose to have strength to endure with the awkwardness, it's the moment that you rise above it.

Join me in Psalm chapter 139. We're going to read two verses here that King David poured out of his heart. And it's verse 23 and 24, and it goes like this. How many of us would dare say this prayer today? Dare. Asking God to search our inner thoughts, the inner places of our hearts. Oh God, if there is anything offensive in me, lead me out of it. Call me out of it. That's exactly what happened in the garden. It's exactly what... Adam, Eve, where are you? Come out. Come out. Why are you hiding? Why do you think you're naked? Who told you these things? Did you eat of the fruit?

This is the type of thing that David is praying here. And when God reveals something in you, you have two choices. You have two ways that you can handle it, just like Adam did. He had two choices. You can, one, get angry, get defensive, justify, show ingratitude towards God, shift blame, and notice Adam chose to sacrifice not only his relationship status with God by blaming God, he chose to sacrifice his marriage relationship on the altar for the sake of his awkward situation. I'm going to shove all the blame on my wife. Yes. Adam's choice to handle that situation, to handle that awkward, embarrassing moment, that shameful moment, was to disrupt both directions of relationship in his life, to God and to his neighbor and to his wife. Totally acceptable cost in his eyes just to get out of that awkward moment. Are your faults, your sins, you hiding things worth paying for with your relationships or even your marriage or even your relationship to God? Or there's another way you can show humility by owning your life, by owning who you are, by owning your actions, owning the things that make you feel vulnerable.

The Moment We Say

That's your choice. Own it. That's the only way you could be stronger. Own them to actually be able to find comfort in the shadow of his wings. You have to own it so you can bring the

offering before God. Own yourself despite how awkward it may be. Because the moment that you show the strength of God through your willingness to be vulnerable, to be awkward, that's the moment that God can use you to show others, to be his image to others, to embrace them where they're at in their lives so that they can find strength to walk out of those places in their lives and towards God.

How do you know that you holding back right now, owning the things in your life, continuing to hide, continuing to cover them bit by bit, continuing to shift blame as a distraction of how messed up or corrupt or just broken you are, how do you know that that's not stopping you to be the fullest image of God that he wants you to be for someone else's sake? Moment. We pledge allegiance to the kingdom of God. We pledge allegiance to Yeshua as the moment when we say it's not about me anymore. It's about others. It's about expanding the kingdom of God so that it overtakes the earth.

It's about the new Jerusalem in [Zechariah 2](#) having no walls because it just spreads over the earth. It's about the temple of God no longer being bound by walls, but spreading through the hearts of man. How do you know that's not what you're called to do right now, but you're hung up? You're hung up on something that you put leaves on top of and hope no one saw. We got to learn to own it. We've got to learn to repent, no matter how awkward or embarrassing.

Joining in Prayer

So if you're willing today, I would ask that you join me in not just reading David's prayer here in these two verses, but praying it with me. If you're not willing, that's fine—you can bow your head and not move your mouth at all.

Alvina Malcano, our father and our king. Father, we come before you to speak the ancient words, to speak the words of your people, that speak the words of David. And we ask you, Father, that you would not only hear them, but we invite you to respond with your Holy Spirit in our hearts.

So if you're watching and you're willing right now, I would ask you to pray with me and repeat these words.

Almighty God, search me in this moment. God, I want you to know my heart fully. God, I want you to test me. Know my anxious thoughts. Search and see if there is anything offensive in my way. God, I ask in the name of Yeshua, that your Holy Spirit right now, in this moment, would expose those things. They would call to mind these things that I would want to forget, that they

would be brought to my mind in this moment, that you would give me the strength to own them, and that you would lead me out of them. In Yeshua's name we pray, amen.

Acknowledge and Repent

Guys, this is a daunting prayer because many of you likely have some vulnerable areas in your life right now that you don't want to acknowledge. The Holy Spirit's done his job and has called them to memory. The ball's in your court. Will you acknowledge them? Will you own them? I don't know what that scope looks like with your relationships with your family or God. Will you repent? Take that step. You have a spirit within you that has the power of Yeshua to overcome all things, even the most awkward things in your life that you don't want anyone to know about.

Guys, I hope this message was edifying and I'm looking forward to the rest of this series. Shabbat Shalom. Shalom.

I'm Matthew Vanderells and I hope you enjoyed this message. Founded in Truth exists to build a community that bears the image of God and lives the redeemed life only Yeshua gives. If this message impacted you or if this ministry has been a blessing to you, we invite you to take part in making sure the message of Yeshua and the truth of God's word continues to reach others. To make sure this happens, you can donate through our online giving portal at [foundedintruth.com slash give](https://foundedintruth.com/give) or by texting any amount to 704-275-0752. Don't forget to like and subscribe for new content every single week. And we thank you for your continued support. And we look forward to seeing you next time. Shalom. For more on this and other teachings, please visit us at [Foundedintruth.com](https://foundedintruth.com) EMAIL: Info@foundedintruth.com FACEBOOK: facebook.com/foundedintruth WEBSITE: <https://www.foundedintruth.com> Google: <https://g.co/kgs/az3iPeM>

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