

# The Snare of the Deliver - Slovakia Conference 2003 (Slovakian/english)

by Gary Wilkerson

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*The snare of the deliverer is a compromise or a small thing in our lives that can lead to big consequences and affect our relationships and families, but with God's love and restoration, we can break free and prioritize our families and relationships.*

**Duration:** 1:10:17

**Scripture:** Judges 8:22, Psalm 127:3-5, Matthew 6:33, Romans 12:15, 2 Corinthians 1:3-4, Ephesians 6:4, 1 Timothy 3:4-5

**Topics:** "Conference"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher shares a personal story about coming home from a long day of work and feeling weary. He seeks relaxation by reading the sports section of the newspaper, but is interrupted by his five-year-old daughter who wants his attention. He dismisses her and continues reading, realizing later that he had been neglecting his own family while focusing on ministering to others. The preacher uses this story to highlight the importance of prioritizing our relationships with our loved ones and not getting caught in the snare of busyness and neglecting those closest to us.

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## Transcript

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

Let's pray together. We thank you, Jesus, for ministering mightily to us here this afternoon, and I thank you for the honor and the privilege of sharing your word with such hungry people. Come and fill this hunger and this thirsting of our soul.

Bless your word here today. Let it come in life and power that our hearts would be changed, not just during this conference, but a life change. And we give you thanks, in Jesus' name, Amen.

Turn with me in your Bibles, if you would, the book of Judges and the eighth chapter. And the message the Lord has put on my heart here this afternoon is going to speak about our life and our family. I want to talk about the snare of the deliverer.

We understand in this eighth chapter of the book of Judges, it speaks of the mighty works of Gideon. Most of you have read the story of the life of Gideon, and you know he was a mighty man of God. He'd be the kind of man you'd want to be around.

Because once he got started, nothing could stop him. He was radically obedient to God, and as he learned to trust in God, God did great things through his life, and he was called a mighty deliverer, a great leader. He was a leader of leaders.

He was a man who could change nations. He was a man so filled with God's Spirit that the whole nation was delivered. The enemy was overcoming Israel.

The people of Israel were in bondage. They were suffering and in poverty, and through one man, a man who sought God, a man who put his trust in God, this whole nation was delivered. There are men and women in this place whose God has called to be a mighty deliverer in your family and in your church, in your city and in your nation, and even around the world, to raise you up to be a mighty man of God.

I enjoy being around mighty men of God. I travel full time all around the world with a mighty deliverer. I see it in my own father's ministry.

Everywhere we go, we meet dozens and dozens of men and women who are on drugs and addicted to alcohol, and they became free because of the ministry of Teen Challenge, a mighty deliverance. In New York City, you've heard of the church that has 8,000 people. There's mighty deliverance.

I know there are pastors and leaders in this room today who are hungry to become a leader like that, not just for your own sake, but to see so many lives touched and changed. Gideon became so fruitful, so effective, and such a mighty deliverer. In verse 22 of chapter 8, it says, Then the men of Israel said to Gideon, Rule over us, both you and your son, and your grandson also, for you have delivered us from the hand of Midian.

They understood what kind of man this was. He was a take-charge kind of guy. He probably worked day and night to accomplish great tasks.

So they recognized his gifts and his leadership, and they asked him to rule over them, to become their king. But Gideon said to them, verse 23, I will not rule over you, nor shall my son rule over you, for the Lord shall rule over you. Gideon's getting it right.

He's trusting God. God's moving in strength through his life and ministry. Men want to give him credit.

Men want him to take power and control. And he refuses it. What a wonderful work.

He's not only a mighty deliverer, but he's a humble man. He's not looking for position or place. He doesn't need to be recognized in a political way.

Sometimes we go to conferences, and you can see pastors there who are looking to be with everybody, to shake everybody's hand, to get to know the other big leaders. They're trying to position themselves to get a higher office. And Gideon knows it's foolishness.

He wants nothing of it. He wants God, and not just political power. So he refuses it.

He says, my son won't rule over you. I won't rule over you. But God will rule.

God is going to be the leader of our nation. This is a precious thing. This is how we want to be.

But there's something in Gideon's life. He has one little thought. A small thing.

I don't want to be king. I don't need political power. But what I want is this.

Verse 24. Then Gideon said to them, I would like to make a request of you that each of you would give me the earrings of his plunder. All he wanted was some small earrings.

Just a little bit of these trinkets. It sounds like no big deal. He was a mighty deliverer.

God was using him. He was the man of God. And he was even humble and refused to take the kingship.

But he has this one small compromise. Verse 27 describes it even more. Then Gideon made it to a Nephite.

And he set it up in his city, Ophir. And all Israel played the harlot with it there. And it became a snare to Gideon and to his house.

And to his house. There was a snare. A small little thing.

Just something that could be used that got him off track. Most of his ministry was going right. He was obeying God in many areas.

But he wants one little thing. One small thing got in the way. What he does is takes these gold earrings and he builds a religious garment out of them.

Nephite is what the priests would wear. Why did he want to build this? Why would he want to wear this? I can think of only one thing. He wanted to be seen as spiritual.

He had mighty deliverances militarily. He didn't care about political power. But he wanted to look good spiritually.

I see this all the time. When people are in worship services. Trying to draw attention to themselves.

Wanting to show people how spiritual they are. I was preaching at Times Square Church one time. And the pastor sit up on the stage and some chairs along here.

And we have cameras in our church that sometimes look on the stage. And they have a big screen up on top. And there's a little monitor down by the pastors where they can see what's happening on the screens.

And I was worshiping the Lord on the stage. And the camera happened to pan by me and show a picture of me on the screen. And I had my hands raised and I was worshiping.

And on the screen I noticed my suit was kind of sticking up in the air because I had my hands raised. And I started thinking to myself. That makes me look kind of fat.

I better unbutton my button here. So I would look better. And I couldn't believe it.

Right in the middle of worship. Just getting ready to preach. And what I'm concerned about is what I was looking like.

God doesn't care what you look like. He doesn't want you to put on a religious front. He doesn't want you to draw attention to yourself.

But Gideon had this one snare. And because of that one small thing in his heart because of that one small compromise it tragically affected his family. It was a snare not just to him.

His religious pride was a snare to his whole household. In verse 34 it says, then the children of Israel did not remember the Lord their God. Gideon's own children forgot the Lord their God.

They no longer worshipped because of this one small snare. You may think your compromises are small but when your wife and your children see your compromises and they know you're preaching one thing but living another it affects them and they lose their faith. That's why so many young people particularly so many pastor's children are turning from the Lord.

When I went to Bible college my first year on my floor was a young man whose father was a very well known pastor a tremendous leader but he was not living for God.

Matter of fact one day he came up to me and he offered me some marijuana he said, come on let's go get high he was a preacher's son and in this Bible college a lot of preacher's children went to there and there was so much compromise so few of them seeking God partying all weekend getting drunk using drugs sneaking women into their dormitory rooms because they didn't trust what they saw in their family they thought it was hypocritical they didn't want their father's religion just because of some small compromises I worked with a young man we started a church together in the inner city we had just gotten out of college and he was so on fire for God Brian was energetic he had the flame of the Lord in his soul he was always preaching the gospel he studied the word day and night sometimes in

the morning he would come to my office he said I was studying this last night and look at this revelation that Jesus gave me it would be very deep and profound and he was always leading people to Jesus and we would go into restaurants one time I remember somebody walked in and he had a cane and he was limping and he sat down in a booth across the restaurant and my friend Brian looked at me and I knew what was in his mind he was going to get up and go pray for that man and I said not now Brian I used to get embarrassed like that there is a lot of people here this is not a Christian restaurant they are going to think you are strange and he said I don't care and he got up and went over there and said can I pray for you that Jesus would heal you and he put his hand on his leg and he prayed in

faith and power he was like Gideon he was a mighty deliverer he was passionate about Jesus but about 6 months later I noticed something in Brian's life he was no longer telling me things from the word he was still witnessing, still preaching but he had less revelation his spirit seemed to be diminished the fire seemed to be subsiding and I asked him one day Brian what's wrong he said what do you mean what's wrong he seemed different and he looked surprised he said there is just one small thing I'm still praying I'm still crying out to God I still study the word but there is one little thing just every once in a while when I go into a store and they have the magazines the pornographic magazines sometimes I pick them up and I just leaf through them and then I put them down it's just a

little thing but I repented of it and I'm asking God to restore me 6 months later his spirit seemed even more diminished we talked once again he said the problem has gotten a little bit worse it's just a small thing sometimes I just buy the magazine and I bring it home but then I just throw it out because I don't really want that it's just a small thing about 3 months ago I was in the Ukraine my wife called me she said honey

I just got off the phone with Brian since that time we were working together he has gotten addicted to pornography and my wife was calling me and said Brian is coming over to the house because his wife has just left him he is taking the children the ministry that he worked with had fired him and in the long run he lost his wife he lost his children he lost his

ministry he lost the home that he was living in they even repossessed his automobile and he had nothing left it seemed small in his eyes but God wanted nothing to do with it and God loves Brian and He wants to restore him and He doesn't hate him as a matter of fact right now God is doing a deep work in his life stripping away all those things but there is just one thing and many of us in this room have that one thing that one controversy that God has with us we can be mighty deliverers we can preach powerful sermons we can have great leadership skills we can have the energy to get amazing things done but if we cling to that one compromise it becomes a snare to us it becomes a snare to our children I don't want to hear this report pastors you don't want to hear this report that the

children didn't remember the Lord that their children forgot God that the children backslid you don't have to turn there but the next chapter we read the story of Gideon's children how one of the brothers who wanted power ended up killing all 70 of his own brothers murder, envy, strife, hatred we're born through this one compromise and it doesn't have to be a very evil one it doesn't have to be adultery or lust it doesn't have to be anger or murder for Gideon it was something that was religious the snare that came into my life was also a religious one I told you earlier this morning how I was so desperate to build a church so desirous to see something great happen working in my own flesh to be a mighty deliverer I had a goal of building a church of 20,000 people and I was working as hard

as I could to see it happen but I was missing out on Jesus and because of that I wasn't ministering to my family and to my children I got so busy I got so consumed with the work that I stopped listening to the Lord and it became a snare to me and my family and I remember one day coming home from work I had been preaching I had been counseling people who were in need I had been working with our youth pastor I had been developing strategies for the next 5 year plan of our church and I came home from church after a long day and I had been preaching and I was weary just worn out and I saw the sports section of the newspaper and I said finally some time to relax I took a deep breath sat down in my most comfortable chair I opened up that newspaper and I began to read the sports scores I started

feeling better oh my favorite team won all of a sudden I see something crinkling the bottom of the paper shaking the bottom of the paper it was my little 5 year old daughter she slipped her head up underneath the newspaper she said hi daddy I said honey I'm busy I've had a long day I can't talk right now and I pushed her head down away from the paper continued reading the paper and she slipped her head up under the paper again hi daddy I missed you today I love you and basically I just said this yeah I love you too and I pushed her out of the way third time she started that thing that little children do asking the why question parents you know what I'm talking about are you happy today daddy why why are you reading the paper because I want to relax why do you want to relax because I've

had a busy day I pushed her head down again I wanted time alone one more time she puts her head up through how you doing daddy and I grabbed her by her arm and I yelled at her can't you leave me alone all I want is 5 minutes I'm a busy man I've worked hard all day and you can't even leave me alone quit bothering me tears came to her eyes she ran away she began to weep I ran to her I said sweetheart I'm so sorry forgive me you see I got so busy I wanted to deliver the world but I was losing my own daughter it took a while for that to heal because I had been neglecting her she was wanting her father's love she saw

me minister to the whole world but I wasn't ministering to her my teenage son at the same time he was learning to drive many of you fathers know that can be a very trying

experience as you teach your teenage son to drive but I wanted to try to take some father-son time with him I had just been to a meeting called the promise keepers in America do you have that here? have you heard about the promise keepers?

I went to one of their meetings and they encouraged fathers to spend time with their sons so I felt obligated to do this it really wasn't in my heart but I felt I should good fathers, it's their duty to spend time so I got in the car and began to drive down the road my phone rang it was my assistant pastor and we talked for a while I hung up the phone I said son how are you doing? before he could answer the phone rang again I talked to my youth pastor about a youth crusade coming up I hung up the phone I began to think about my next day's schedule we were probably driving 10-15 minutes I hardly said a word to him and he lifted me and he said dad, you're so boring you have no life towards me do you not care about me? why do you not care about me? you ask me questions but you're not really

looking for answers you begin to talk to me and your phone rings I begin to cry out because I need you and I can tell you're thinking about plans for your church you're thinking about your next big sermon but you're forgetting me you don't care about me and once again I went home and I began to cry Jesus, first my daughter and my teenage son I'm just forgetting about them I'm so busy in ministry seeing great things happen but my own family beginning to drift away not truly being close not having that intimacy but Jesus wants the children to have fathers and mothers who when they want to minister the first person they think about ministering to is their own family the first sermon they think about preaching is speaking God's truth into their lives my 19 year old son he's 19 now but at that

time when we were drifting apart he began to get mixed up in the world he's a very gifted musician and they started a rock group and they sang very secular rock songs very hard heavy metal music and the band he was in started to become well known and so the band would go to these big concerts and soon hundreds and thousands of people were coming and after the concert they would go to parties and he began to compromise he began to get involved in things that a Christian young man should not be involved in he gave his life over to sin in ways that were breaking God's heart and I began to pray for him and he came home one day and he said to me, dad they offered me a record contract they said I could make millions of dollars they said I could be rich and famous could travel all over the world

doing music in big stadiums having CDs in the music store but something happened in his life from that time when he was 16 God began to change my heart I began to put priority in my family began to pray for them every day but I didn't point a finger at my son and say son you're in compromise you need to change you need to quit running around with the wrong crowd he didn't need a lecture what he needed was this for his father to change so that I could invest invest the life of Christ teach the love of Christ not just lecture him but truly love him with the love of Jesus the way Christ loves the church we are to love our family and as God changed my heart he broke my heart about my neglect I never once had to rebuke my son and I'm not saying rebuking sin is wrong but this rebellion got into

his heart because the gospel of Jesus was not attractive to him he didn't want what his father had but he began to see a change in me a peace that came over me a fresh touch of Jesus no longer driven just to be successful but just hungry to love God and love others and I want to tell you some good news about three weeks ago he called me up he said dad I've got something I think you're going to want to hear Jesus got a

hold of my heart touched my life I'm a changed man everything is new and yesterday I walked up to the band and I said guys I love you and I know you're not going to want to hear what I have to say but I'm quitting the band today you make your millions you get the groupies chasing you you become famous because I've got something else now I've got Jesus I've got him in my

heart he's changed my life and I'm giving it up I'm giving up the band all the fame and fortune you can have it all but I want Jesus I said son that's great news there's nothing better I could hear yesterday he called me long distance he said dad I just got in my new apartment I'm in New York City today is my first day of work I'm working in Harlem one of the worst neighborhoods in New York City he's involved in a children's ministry he's leading worship for about 100 children in the inner city he said dad I'm not going to get rich the girls aren't chasing me but I have Jesus and I couldn't be happier he said thanks dad for being a good example my son's in the ministry today because God changed his father's heart and I'm in the ministry today because of my own father not because he's a

great preacher I don't serve Jesus because he wrote the cross and the switchblade but I saw something in his life how he was present to us willing to spend time with us one time he came home from a very long trip he said son I've missed you I've been gone for two weeks and I really long to spend some quality time with you he said let's go for a bike ride I think I was about 12 years old we went for a really long bike ride I had a great time he was so present to me asking important questions I had a wonderful time the next day we wake up he said son let's go for another bike ride we went for another bike ride oh we had a great time together the third day he wakes up he said son let's go for a bike ride I took a deep breath dad I love you but I've got a life too I've got friends they're

wondering why I'm spending all my time with my dad they want me to come play with them so I said dad I'm sorry I don't have time for you today and I love that that he was a busy man he was a mighty deliverer he had a great ministry changing lives all over the world but he cared for his own son and there's two reasons I'm preaching the gospel here today because I love Jesus and he called me number one and secondly because my father was a good example not just preaching it but living it amen but my wife got involved in the situation as well when I was going through that time in that period where there was this snare in my life my wife could feel it as well I was becoming a stranger to her she came up to me one day she said you're so busy and it's so hard to be a pastor's wife there's a lot

of pastor's wives here who could say amen to how hard it is to be a pastor's wife she has a very difficult job the church has high expectations of her she has to attend all the meetings she has to talk to everybody in a nice way she can never have a bad day or an off day she told me one time I would like to one time sometime I would like to just do this one thing I'd like to just yell at somebody in the church just to get out the anger because things are difficult at times and for many pastor's wives they have no one to talk to you can't complain about your husband to somebody else when your husband is the pastor and then people call you day and night and they'll complain about your husband they'll say the church services are too long they're spending money the wrong way they have all

kinds of complaints and the pastor's wives hear all these things and they take them into their heart but they don't tell their husbands because they don't want to bring their spirit down so they're holding on to a great burden and the wife came up to me one day she said is there anything else that you've ever wanted to do with your life have you ever thought about being a doctor a plumber a sanitation worker anything because I'm tired I don't want to be a pastor's wife anymore I don't care where we live I'm just worn out I'm just tired and I asked her what was the reason she said I have nobody to talk to she said you can talk to

me and she almost laughed she said talk to you she said the phone rings every time we start a conversation you're always thinking of something else I seem to get

the leftovers I seem to get the leftovers just the crumbs off the table I come to the church office and I see you in there with your staff and you're spending hours with them talking and strategizing and praying and you come home and I ask you how you're doing and you say fine and she says she wants more tell me more I've been talking all day I don't want to go all over it again but I want to know you we've been married 25 years you don't understand I want to talk to you you always want to talk you talk all day at the office but you have nothing to give me and again my heart was broken here my own wife and children because of my snare were losing heart there were nights my wife was crying herself to sleep waking up at 4 o'clock in the morning praying God help me through another day but as

I told you God began to change my life God began to minister to me began to break my heart and I began to change but I didn't really grasp how much my wife needed my whole heart she was saying I wouldn't really speak into her life I would communicate information but I didn't really penetrate her heart there was no deep communication there was no genuine affection and when a pastor gets that way we just end up using our wife they become an assistant in the church they become a cook in the kitchen they become someone to help us raise our kids we can be involved with them romantically but we don't truly give them our heart our minds and our hearts and our lives are not fixed on them and they know they are being used they know they are being used and their hearts are sinking there is a

sadness, there is a weariness because they don't want success they don't want fame, they don't want money but they want their husband to show the love to show the presence of God and the presence of their own heart to be open to them when the Lord began to change my heart I was preaching a sermon very similar to this my wife came up to me after the sermon and I could see a little tear in her eye I said that sermon really touched you didn't it she said no I said what's wrong that was a good sermon she said you were so vulnerable you told the story of your heart and your life you weren't just preaching theology you were sharing a deep part of your heart she said Gary that's the first time I ever heard that you told your church all what's in your heart before you even told me you can preach

things deep vulnerable things but you can't talk to me that way why does the church know things like this before I know these things and once again God began to break my heart and I told Jesus I've got to change if I'm going to be a man of love it's not just going to be in the pulpit it's not just going to be in my office with my staff it's not just in my it's not just in my city trying to be a great deliverer it has to start in my home my little daughter has to get up in my lap when I come home from work and I have to delight in that and I have to give my wife a big hug and a kiss and have time and energy for her because if I'm not doing it in my home then I'm a phony I'm a hypocrite I'm preaching about it but if I can't live it in my home then I have no right to preach about it and God

is here today He's in this very room today to speak to mighty men of God and to touch mighty women of God to begin to heal women's hearts that brokenness that you're facing that suffering that you're going through that sense of being all alone I want to tell you some good news God is here today He's here to heal you to strengthen you, to renew you but other good news is this He's also here to change your husband to renew his love for you as He renews His love for Jesus as this conference is about renewing your passion for Jesus and all of our agendas and ambitions are put down and our one ambition becomes to serve Jesus and to love Jesus then that love will come your way as well Jesus is going to heal homes in this very place today sometimes when we go to conferences the last people we'll

meet are the minister's wives and that's whenever we have a conference all over the world we always make sure the wives are involved I was preaching at a pastor's conference in Cuba this year and I was encouraging the men to love their wives and I was preaching about passion for the women in our life and one of the bishops he's sitting in the front row he stood up right in the middle of the sermon his wife was standing in the back he said, honey, I'm sorry forgive me he's preaching about me somebody next to him stood up turned around to his wife said, me too, honey I'm sorry somebody else stood up many women started talking to each other they couldn't even preach anymore everybody was hugging and weeping and praying because in that country there are mighty deliverers there are very strong

men but they neglect their wives and repentance was in order because if that small snare is there it's not only a snare to your household it's a snare to you and it has to be changed and God wants to do that now He wants to change our lives He wants to put first love back in our marriages and what God has done in my life when I speak to my wife on the phone when I'm traveling when I'm home we have the greatest times together my staff meetings are very short now because I can't wait to run home and spend time with my wife and she told me recently I love the ministry again because I see the change in you stand with me if you would because God wants to see a change take place here today I'm going to give a very simple invitation if you're a minister's wife a woman in ministry or maybe a

daughter and there's a hurt in your soul you feel neglected troubled maybe you have a wonderful husband but it's just the trouble that the church the weight of the church is upon you or husbands in this place you may not shout across this auditorium you may not yell at your wife at the back to forgive you but if you need forgiveness I want you to take your wife by the hand and lead her here to the altar and then if your wife's not here but you want to get something right with God I want you to step out of your seat as well and turn your heart to Jesus so that the snare would be gone and your wife and your children would see the change come forward right now I have full confidence here today that I've opened up God's heart God's word and the good news is this that God never has a message

proclaimed unless He accompanies that message with His power He's not going to let something be preached and not support it with the power to enforce it so if He had preached to you He promises then in power to give you the ability to receive it and I want you to receive your miracle here today first I want to pray with you men men if you want God to change your heart just lift one hand to Jesus let me pray for you Lord Jesus change our hearts we are needy God we are ready for a change this is our hour this is a divine moment you are taking me right now Jesus through a new journey it's beginning today it won't be finished today I know it will take time but Jesus you are changing me because I repent and I receive your promise to be a new man and take out the snare the religious pride the

anger the striving take it out Jesus let it be gone take out the neglect the busyness that causes us to neglect our families balance us Jesus where we can live full lives in ministry but the first part of our life the first part of our ministry is to our own family Lord Jesus give me mercy give me power Jesus to accomplish this not by might not by power but by your spirit in Jesus name now wives I want to pray with you we are young women that have stepped forward all the women whether you are married or not I want to pray a prayer of healing for you I want to ask the other women in the church in the building today to stretch out your hands towards these women here in the hall let's agree together in prayer because I know you need a touch from God today some of you are not sure you can go

on another day you are tired of life the way it is but God wants to heal that today and renew you to give you wings of eagles let's pray together Jesus we pray now for the women that have come forward thank

you that they are your precious daughters and that you have a great plan for their life and you want to use them mightily but I sense your saying to them today Jesus that they need a fresh touch from their husbands from their families from their churches but most of all Jesus from you Jesus breathe on them now Jesus pour out your spirit of love on them Jesus refresh them now give them hope Jesus take away the pain the sorrow the suffering the loneliness the anger the fear the past history the unforgiveness let them lay it down Jesus so that they don't have a snare so that they can be

cured before you so that they can be healed heal them now in Jesus name women receive that now from Jesus receive that fresh touch from the Lord he is present to heal I see his spirit here touching many lives hallelujah let's worship the Lord together here feel free to stay up here at the front if you want let's just sing a song of worship and we need to have confidence now that Jesus is beginning a great work in us there is going to be something new in our homes that everybody is going to see we are going to pray for our children like never before just before we worship the Lord is putting something else on my heart how many of you here at the front or throughout this whole auditorium have backslidden children or children who are cold towards the Lord hold it up for just a minute hold it

up high we need to pray for one another right now don't we let's pray Jesus let's pray for these with their hands raised for the children who are far from God do a miracle in their life Jesus wherever their children are right now refresh them speak to them woo them and draw them that they would come to you that there would be a testimony a phone call like I received from my son that the prodigal son is coming home bring them home Jesus I thank you Jesus that you are going to get rid of all the snares in our households we won't be perfect we will fall short of the glory of God but the snares are gone and our children are going to see the love of Christ they are going to be strangely attracted to that and they will come Hallelujah if you believe that say Amen and sing the song like you

believe it

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