

How to Make a Good Wife Better

by Tom Palmer

A man of God should prioritize his relationship with God, his wife, and his family, and strive to be kind, loving, and nourishing to his wife.

Duration: 48:58

Scripture: Matthew 6:33

Topics: "Marriage Counseling", "Godly Love"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of being a man of God in various aspects of life. He highlights four priorities: being a man of God as a person, as a partner, as a parent, and as a preacher or professional. The speaker refers to the book of Proverbs, specifically mentioning the blessing of a good wife. He also discusses the qualities of God's love, emphasizing that it is unconditional, unselfish, and unending. The sermon encourages men to express their love for their wives through words and actions, such as spending quality time with them.

Transcript

Alright fellas, we're going to start to get on our way here if you want to find a seat. Alright, looks like just about everybody's in their place. Several months ago, Brother Harold was talking to me on the phone.

He said, at the men's prayer advance, I want you to do a session on loving your wife. I said, there's one problem. I said, no man should ever speak on that subject unless they've been married at least 25 years, and I only have 22.

He said, so what? So here we are. He didn't really sympathize, he just said, do it. So, here goes fellas, and we're going to spend this next time together talking about our relationship to our wives.

So let's go ahead and have prayer together. I will say this from the beginning, this particular session may be just a little bit different style than what we've had thus far. They say that good preaching teaches, they say that good teaching preaches.

This will be a combination of both. But I trust that our study of the Bible today will be helpful to us as men, and that as a result we will be able to be what we ought to be to our wives. Heavenly Father, I thank you today for the Bible.

Lord, as we open the Bible, and just simply look at the best marriage manual ever written, I pray that we as husbands will come away with a greater understanding, not only of the blessing it is to have a good wife, but the great responsibility it is. So Lord, please help me now as I share. Lord, I need your truth to impact my life today.

Help me, in Jesus' name I pray, Amen. Several years ago I was visiting a Christian college campus, and I happened to sit in on what would be called in most Christian college settings, the preacher boys class. And a guest pastor, who had been there for a couple days speaking in chapel and so on, was speaking to these young men preparing for the ministry, and I've always remembered a simple little four-point priority list that he gave to these young men.

Again, he's speaking to college-age men, but he said this, Number one, be a man of God as a person. Number two, be a man of God as a partner. Number three, be a man of God as a parent.

Number four, be a man of God as a preacher. Now I recognize that in this congregation this afternoon we're not all preachers, so for sake of consistency in the outline, if it works better for you, number four, to say be a man of God as a professional, that's fine, depending on what your profession may be. But this brother then went on to explain to these young men, and to me too, that this was God's order of priority in the life of a man.

And what's interesting is, every one of those four things is dependent upon what's above it in the list. In other words, I first have got to be a man of God personally, because if I'm not, I'll never be a good partner as a husband. And if I'm not doing a good job as a man of God in my personal relationship to God, and in my wife, we're not going to do real well as parents.

By the way, it's interesting to make note at this point, that second only to your relationship to God, is your relationship to family. It would do some of us well to be reminded that the professional aspect of our lives, our vocation, our occupation, at the highest point, can go no higher than number four. I remember coming away from that session, being so challenged again, to be the man of God, God wants me to be in God's order of priorities.

I want you to take your Bibles and let's just turn to the book of Proverbs. It's very interesting that in the book of Proverbs, there are a number of verses that talk about the blessing of a good wife. I'm simply going to share them with you by way of introduction, and then we'll move on.

But let's just quickly highlight these verses. First of all, Proverbs chapter 5, let's look at verse number 18. Let thy fountain be blessed, and rejoice with the wife of thy youth.

That's the Bible's way of saying that a good wife should bring joy into our lives. Over to Proverbs chapter 12 and verse number 4, a virtuous woman is a crown to her husband. You say, my wife has wanted to crown me more than once.

That's not really what was intended here. A good wife helps a man live like a king. Go to chapter 18 and verse number 22.

Whoso findeth a wife, findeth a good thing. You know, it's interesting, I spoke on this subject in a men's Sunday school class last Sunday. I decided to take these notes and just practice on this group so I could get ready for you fellas.

And I started the Sunday school class off by saying, I want five men to raise your hand and tell us something you're thankful for. To be honest with you, it was almost a trick question. But thankfully, one of the men raised his hand and said, I'm thankful for my wife.

I wonder today, would you have responded by recognizing the goodness of God in giving you your wife? But notice, and obtaineth favor of the Lord. One of the ways that God favors us, pours out His blessing upon us, is through a good wife. Look at chapter 19, verse 14.

House and riches are the inheritance of fathers, and a prudent wife is from the Lord. Finally, we go to chapter 31 and verse number 10. Who can find a virtuous woman? For her price is far above rubies.

Gentlemen, in reality, true riches are the things you have that money can't buy. The things that are so valuable that you really can't put a dollars and cents figure with them. The Bible says that the value of a virtuous woman, a good, godly woman, is above the price of rubies.

You know, we are in a unique stage in our family right now. My wife and I have been married 22 and a half years. And we're sort of working through various stages of family life.

Several months ago, maybe not even several months ago, I happened to walk over to my wife. I put my arms around her, she put her arms around me, and we had a big bear hug. However, my 13-year-old son was sitting on the couch watching.

And so as we're hugging like this, our eyes met, and he started to grin. And with the hand behind her back, I went like this. At which point, in his adolescent way of thinking, he said, Get her done! By the way, fellas, I do understand that one of the best things a dad can do for his kids is to love his wife.

We're on another extreme, though, because May 13 is going to be another big day in our family. Because I've got to walk my girl down the aisle and give her to the young man that God has brought into her life. By the way, you want to get concerned about what a husband ought to be, wait until your daughter is getting ready to get married.

You know what? I have spent more time thinking about what kind of a guy this fella needs to be to my girl, and then I always get convicted. You know, I watch him when he's in our home, and I watch him when he's out with us in ministry, and I watch when they're talking, and I listen when they're on their phone. And isn't it amazing? Here I am as a dad, evaluating all these things and thinking, Look, buddy, you are getting my one and only girl.

You better be a good husband. And here's the reasons why, and I start down the list, and all of a sudden I think, Oh my, but that still is what God wants for her dad to be to her mother. I guess what I'm saying is, it's one of those times even in our family, we're in this learning process.

Well, as a result, several months ago, I took some time to take the Bible. Fellas, I can honestly tell you, I have used no other book to prepare for this sharing time but the Bible. There are some wonderful books written about how to be a good and godly husband.

I have no problem. But to be honest with you, all I wanted to do was just take my Bible and say, What does God's Word say about this business of being a husband? And in my study of the Word of God, there were eight responsibilities that I found that I as a husband have to my wife. And I put them in just a simple little list and entitled it, Making a Good Wife Better.

I've been blessed. I've obtained favor from the Lord. I have something that is valuable in my wife.

Now I have to accept my God-given responsibility. I'm going to ask you to just simply take your Bible and let's just look at these eight things. We'll add a comment or two, maybe an example or an illustration or two.

But simply allow the Word of God to speak to us men today. Turn in your Bibles to the book of 1 Corinthians chapter 7. We'll actually find that there are several things tucked away here in this chapter initially. 1 Corinthians chapter 7, you will notice that we're just going to sort of grab these little nuggets of God's truth, alright? 1 Corinthians chapter 7, verse number 3. Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence.

Gentlemen, benevolence is kindness. In fact, in parentheses, you might want to write this. The kindness she deserves.

I think it was Adam Clark who in his notes called it a matrimonial debt. And just simply emphasized the fact that I owe my wife kindness. By the way, have you ever thought back to your pre-wedding days and considered how kind you were when you were trying to get her? Isn't it a shame that we didn't realize how important it was to be kind to keep her? What does it mean to be kind to my wife? It means, for example, being helpful to her.

Mannerly, being a gentleman. Fellas, in the 21st century, we have lost the qualities that make a Christian gentleman. And you know what that means? That means opening a car door.

That means holding a door open. That means pulling the chair back for her to be seated. You say, she's strong enough, she can pull it out herself.

Well, I reckon she is. But kindness can be displayed through those mannerly things that I do for her. Kindness involves thank yous.

It involves communicating my appreciation to her for what she does for me. Getting up from the meal and giving her a kiss and a thank you. Thanking her for the stack of clean clothes on the dresser.

Thanking her for clean sheets on the bed. Little cards and notes. Little things that she likes.

You know, there are certain things I know my wife likes. For example, my wife likes those little cinnamon fireballs. I can't stand the lousy things.

But more than one time, I have been in a quick shop or a fuel stop. You know how you go up to the counter and there's a bucket of those things. And they're a nickel a piece.

And more than once, I've grabbed several of them. Bought them, took them home. And just said, I brought you something.

You know something? I'm a hero at that point. My wife likes coffee and some of these flavored cappuccinos. And I would never know how many 89 or 99 cent cups of that stuff I've picked up when I'm out and about and came home.

And walked into the house and said, guess what? See, those are just little tokens of kindness. That go a long, long ways. Being kind means helping with chores.

Hey guys, I know when you come home at the end of the day, you've been worked out, you've been worked over, you've been worked up. But you know what? It's a blessing to be kind to your wife and say, well, I'll wash after the meal. Or helping clear the table.

It's those kind of things that are extremely valuable. Render due benevolence. Give her the kindness she deserves.

Treat her like a special woman in your life. Number two. We'll just stay right in this same chapter, but go down, if you will please, to verse 33.

But he that is married careth for the things that are of the world. Look at this phrase. Here's a nugget of truth for husbands.

How he may please his wife. What are we talking about? We're talking about not only agreeing with her. This one's a hard one, guys, but write it down.

It's got to be there. But getting excited about it. I have to be honest and say, there have been times in my life, something was exciting to my wife, but it wasn't exciting to me.

Oh honey, look at this. Huh? I want you to see this. Yeah? And it was something that mattered to her, but I communicated by my insensitivity that it didn't matter to me.

We have a little house back in Pennsylvania. The Lord provided it for us about five and a half years ago. And when we built the place, we put a rather large room as the main part of it.

We call it our family room, but it's kind of the dining room and the living room. And a lot goes there. And we were actually out on the road when some friends finished it, and they just finished the drywall, painted the whole thing just sort of a flat white just to get it covered.

For the last several years, my wife has been hoping we could sort of warm it up a little bit in there, maybe paint it a little different shade and kind of create a warmth through the color. And she had some ideas about border and those kind of things. And every time she would bring it up, I was just kind of like, Uh-uh, I don't want to spend the money, and I don't care to take the time.

White paint will work just fine. It's not the paint on the walls that makes the house homey. And all the husbands said, Amen.

Boy, I hope my wife never hears this recording. But then last October, my wife and daughter went up to Maine for four days to be the speakers at a women's conference. And about a week before, I got an idea.

I called my dad. I talked to my dad. I said, Listen, Dad, what do you think? Would you help me? After Patty leaves, would you help me do that family room? He said, Sure, I'll help you.

Dad's a good border hanger and a good painter. I said, All right, don't say a word. Early, early Wednesday morning, I took my wife and daughter to the airport, dropped them off at the airport, left the airport and headed immediately to Lowe's.

I bought the paint, bought the supplies. By the way, this thing nearly cost me. Because an hour and a half later, my wife called home and found out I wasn't home yet.

Let me tell you, I had fun explaining my way out of that one later in the morning. Where were you? The airport's a half hour. I called an hour and a half.

We needed water filters at Lowe's. And we did. I got home and immediately started moving furniture, taking pictures down.

Dad, he moved right in. Dad's sort of the cutting in man. I'm a roller, but I'm not real precise in that stuff.

So my dad started in and he did that and I started to roll. My wife, weeks before, had found a border she liked. She had showed it to my mother.

So I took my mother. We went. We found just the border my wife had wanted.

Unfortunately, it wasn't mossy oak or real tree advantage. So that kind of ruined my thinking, but be that as it may. We bought what we needed.

We brought it home, got the painting done. Dad stepped in. He did this beautiful, kind of like a chair rail border type deal around the room.

I started putting everything back up. We never said a word. She'd call from Maine.

What have you guys been doing? Nothing. What are the boys doing? Helping me. Never said a word.

Sunday morning, I went to the airport and I picked her up, brought her home. She went in the trailer to unpack her suitcase. I said, well, I'll go over in the house.

I'll start to get things ready for lunch. A little while later, I heard the door open and I'm just kind of standing there by the stove grinning. And she came strolling through the kitchen, just kind of nonchalantly.

And she walked into the family room. And she turned around with tears running down her face. Fellas, to be honest with you, I even liked the border.

And the reason was because she liked it. And I realize there are limitations. I understand that.

And we can't always do everything. I'm realistic. But you know what? I think there are times we can do and just won't.

And yet I believe pleasing his wife as the word of God challenges us is a part of that. Let's move on. Number three.

Let's go to Ephesians chapter 5. Ephesians chapter 5 and look at verse 25. By the way, this thought is repeated a number of times in Scripture. Ephesians chapter 5, verse 25.

Maybe you just want to circle the key word. Husbands, love your wives. Look down to verse 28.

So ought men to love their wives. Look at verse number 33. Nevertheless, let every one of you in particular so love his wife.

In the margin, you may just want to make note that Colossians 3 and verse 19 said it a fourth time. Husbands, love your wives. Now, here's the way the typical man thinks.

I remember hearing about the couple where she came to him and she said, Honey, you never tell me you love me anymore. And this mallet head says to her something like this. Well, honey, the day we got married, I told you I loved you.

And if I ever change my mind, I'll let you know. Now, that's the way we think of it. But may I quickly remind you, all you need to do to understand loving is to look at God's love.

In fact, God is love and God is the perfect demonstration of love. Three things about God's love. Number one, it's unconditional.

God commendeth his love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. May I remind you that God did not love us because we were lovable or lovely. Not at all.

He loved us unconditionally. Number two, God's love is unselfish. God so loved the world that he gave.

A little statement says you can give without loving, but you'll never love without giving. Thirdly, God's love is unending. Nothing shall be able to separate us from the love of God.

Gentlemen, there you have the perfect example of love. How do I love my wife? Tell her. Tell her.

She needs to hear it. Here's another way. Time.

You will always have time for what's important in your life. I just read this the other day in an article. Some statistic, and I don't know how they figure these things out, but it was documented in the article I was reading that a survey determined that the average American husband and wife spend less than three minutes per day in meaningful conversation.

Oh, we're just so busy. Here's another way. Touch.

Guys, our wives are feelers. God made the female gender to respond to what she can feel, to touch, and that's why a handhold or an arm on the shoulder or an arm around the back is very, very important in communicating our love to our wives. Husbands, love your wives.

Number four. Let's stay right here in this Ephesians 5 passage. Look at verse 28.

So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. Verse 29.

For no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth it. What is the Bible doing? The Bible is creating a comparison. A man who loves his body nourishes it in the same way a man who loves his wife should nourish her.

Now, this word nourishment is very similar to the concept of Ephesians 6, verse 4, speaking of children, bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. It's talking about growing them up. And specifically, spiritually.

You know, we have men in this room, myself included. We are men of God in the ministry. We preach to hundreds.

We teach classes. We write books. We write articles.

We lecture in colleges and Bible schools. But we dare not neglect the first person we ought to be nourishing in the things of the Lord. Our wife.

Several years ago, we got a gift certificate for \$100 to a good Christian bookstore. And we went to the bookstore, and I guess I'm like a lot of fellas. I like to look around the bookstore, and I usually could find a bunch of things I'd like.

But my wife had been looking for a Bible. I guess I can't even say she'd really been looking. She had just expressed her desire for a new Bible.

Because the one that she had was really in rough shape. I said to her, I'll tell you what. We've got a \$100 gift card.

Let's go get you a Bible. And we went to the bookstore. And big display.

All kinds of variety. We looked through them. She paged through them.

She felt the leather covers. She looked at colors. She looked at the notes.

And finally, she found the one she wanted. She said, this is it. I said, alright, you need a good Bible case.

And so we went over to the Bible cases. And she went through, and she picked a good Bible case. And you know what? We spent most of the gift card that day.

But you know what I found out? And you know what I'm talking about. There's something about a new Bible, isn't there? And we brought that new Bible home. And I saw my wife fall in love with the Word of God on a new level.

And it was neat because now I saw her digging in deeper. My wife is not a well-educated person. She's never been to college.

But you know what? My wife is learning the Word of God and growing and maturing. The other day we were at Walmart, or I think it was. And she said, I need one of those little 3x5 flip cards.

With the little, you know what I'm thinking of. She said, I'm going to start putting verses on there to memorize. So that I can go over them regularly.

Hey, listen. That ought to be important to me. Because that's a part of helping my wife spiritually to grow.

Yes, I want my congregation in my class to learn the Word of God. I want them to be growing up and maturing. But my wife needs to be very, very important in that way.

Stay right here and look at a fifth thing. Ephesians 5, verse 29. But nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church.

You know, Jesus on one occasion was speaking about the specialness of His relationship to His followers. To those that He cared for. And how did He describe that relationship? He described it as a hen gathereth her chicks under her wing.

That's the thought we have here. Cherish your wife just as Jesus did for the church. You know what that means? That means there's got to be a closeness.

I guess I like to be pretty down to earth. Pretty practical. And in my own thinking, here's what I came up with.

Cuddle her. Keep her close. Keep her right under your care at all times.

Let's quickly move on. Stay here in Ephesians 5. Go to verse 31. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and shall be joined unto his wife and they too shall be one flesh.

Key word, joined. Interestingly enough, it's the same thought as we have in Acts chapter 11 where the gospel comes to Antioch. The Gentiles believe, of course we know that there they were first called Christians, but the passage says that Barnabas spent an extended period of time exhorting the believers to cleave unto the Lord.

What was Barnabas saying about relationship to the Lord? What is Paul saying here about relationship to a wife? It means literally to be glued together. Some of you are woodworkers. And you know what it's like when you take a couple of boards and you put a good dose of carpenter's or wood glue on the pieces and you put them together and then you take a clamp and you clamp that thing down and just lock them together and you let them sit overnight or 24 hours.

You take that clamp off. Do you know what carpenters will tell us? You can break that board anywhere but where the two pieces joined. Why? Because those two pieces are joined so tightly, several things, two have become one.

They are so close that nothing can come between them. They are inseparable. Fellas, I am convinced that a man who wants to make his relationship to his wife better will protect that relationship from anything that will divide.

I have to confess that I was in for a shock the first month of marriage. You know, I suppose my wife and I, like probably a lot of you, were naive enough to believe those people who during our engagement period said, Oh, you're just the perfect couple. Did anybody hear that? We did.

Oh, you two are just made for each other. You're perfect for each other. And we believed it.

Then we got married. And you know, it was an amazing thing how it didn't take us long to start figuring out that we really weren't the perfect couple. In fact, there were some areas where we were sort of misfit.

And we were going to have to work to make things fit. And we were going to have to build and bond a relationship. It was inseparable.

But you know what happens so many times? Couples get married. And by the way, what a sad thing when a couple gets married. And even on occasion, six months, a year.

It's a done deal. You know what happened? Things started to come into their relationship. You know, I never realized how damaging a harsh word could be.

Or even an inappropriate tone in my voice. A look. A disappointed expectation.

An unfulfilled commitment. Gratitude that wasn't expressed. Let me tell you something.

So quickly, those things can come in and divide. You know what some of us think? Ah, time will heal all wounds. Well, as time doesn't heal a wound, time just lets a wound get infected.

And you know, when you think about it, many times a couple began to experience some of those minor breakdowns. He was just late for supper. She just didn't make the mashed potatoes like mom always did it.

He's never known the use for a hamper. She would rather sleep in and not fix breakfast. And you know, those little things come.

And you know what? Then there's a little sarcasm. And then there's a little insult. And then there's a little... And the next thing you know, back and forth and back and forth.

And fellas, I'll tell you what. If you don't learn how to deal with those things, you'll be signing lawyers' papers before long. And that's what so often happens.

We look at this verse. Be joined unto his wife. Man, this is great.

Wait a minute, fellas. It's not just becoming one with the one you love. It's an awesome responsibility to protect that relationship and not allow division to come.

Ever dawned on you that in reality, if you were born again, believers, the one thing you really only had in common was the Holy Spirit inside of each of you? And we've got to let the Spirit of God keep us close and protect us. Number seven, dwell with them according to knowledge. Let's go over to 1 Peter chapter 3. 1 Peter chapter 3, verse number 7. Likewise ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge.

I remember one day my dad explaining that verse to me. And he just made it so simple. Know your wife.

You know, it'd be fun right now to take a little quiz, wouldn't it? What's your wife's favorite food? What's your wife's favorite color? What's your wife's favorite thing to read? Where's your wife's favorite place to shop? And just see, I wonder, how well do we really know our wives? My dad, when he was giving me that little explanation, he said, three things you've got to make sure you always know about your wife. Number one, know her needs. Number two, know her weaknesses.

Number three, know her fears. That's not an all-inclusive list, but it sure is a good place to start. Know your wife.

Finally, the last thing we'll highlight of this little Bible study today is this. It's also in 1 Peter chapter 3 and verse 7. Giving honor unto the wife. Placing a value upon her life.

And may I quickly say, letting her know it. I did a little project one time for my wife. Without her knowing it, I sat down and made a list of 25 things I was thankful for about my wife.

You say, 25? All right, 20, whatever you want. To be very honest with you, if all you did was put two or three, it would make her feel valuable. Leave it on her pillow.

Stick it on the mirror. Put it on the counter. I, last year at our anniversary, didn't buy her a card.

My wife and I struggle sometimes with this card thing. We've gone into the store before and the Hallmark cards, or she'll go one way, I'll go, and we'll each pick a real mushy card. We come back, exchange them,

read them, put them back in the shelves, and leave.

She got to read what I wanted to tell her. And I got to read what she wanted to tell me, and we saved the money. But instead of writing a card... Oh, by the way, I do buy cards for Mother's Day and anniversaries.

Those are the two. Those two, I don't want to miss. But on our anniversary last year, I just sat and wrote about two pages about the ways my wife had been a blessing to my life.

Wrote it out, a couple pages long, typed it out on the computer, printed it out, and presented it to her. That's to let her know she's really valuable. We did a thing a number of years ago now, it's probably about six, seven years ago, we did a thing for my wife, total surprise.

We had Mother Appreciation Day in our family. And I had talked to the kids about it the day or two ahead of time, and in the morning I got up, and I got her up, I said, let's go for a walk. This was all part of the plan, of course.

And I took her for a walk down in the town, I think we were somewhere in Mississippi, and we walked downtown, went to a quick shop, let her pick a cup of coffee, and we walked home, and of course the deal had been that as soon as Dad and Mom walked out the door, man, they came bailing out of bed, and they were making breakfast, and they were putting up banners and hanging balloons, and they fixed the place all up. And when she came back into the trailer a little bit later, we welcomed her home to Mother Appreciation Day. We had gone out and bought gifts for every hour that day.

Every time we hit the top of the hour, one of the children presented her a gift, a favorite kind of flavored coffee, or bubble bath, or a certain kind of mince that she likes. And if I remember correctly, I think I'd gone and bought a bouquet of flowers, and we wrote notes. You see, here's what happens.

She's got to be valuable to me first, but I've got to help communicate that to my children. Not only am I blessed, kids, you're blessed. Honor her.

Let her know she is valuable. Now, let me say this in conclusion. Fellows, everything I've shared with you is biblical.

However, I realize there may be a man, there may be a number of men sitting here today who are in a less than ideal marriage situation. Maybe you are going through or have gone through a difficult time, even a separation and breakup. Maybe there are men here who have a wife that's unsaved, or maybe there are men here who have a wife that's running from God.

Or maybe you were one of those couples that didn't get saved until long after you were married, and there was a lot of excess baggage that still has to be dealt with. Fellows, please understand, I'm not presenting this to you today just as some little magical formula. Please understand that.

But I do believe that when it comes to a good and godly marriage, God wrote the book. And I believe that if we as husbands, if we as men, would take these eight admonitions of Scripture and just simply go before God, and maybe you'd even want to write these verses out, and just meditate on them, pray through them, and then say, God, how can I do it? How can I do it? How can I do it? I believe God would enable us to make a good wife better. You know, it's so easy in a marriage to always pray, Lord, change her.

I've done that. Something's not quite functioning smooth. Man, it's so easy to go talk to the Lord and say, God, if you would just change her.

But you know what I've learned? It's not God change her, it's God change me. You'll say, marriage is a 50-50 deal. No, it's not.

Marriage is a 100-100 deal. And I'm convinced that if I'll be my 100%, God can use me in her life. May God help us.

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