

Back To Basics

Volume 2

DECEMBER 2004

Number 12

A Monthly Journal Dedicated To Teaching First Principles

SPECIAL ISSUE:

"YE OUGHT TO BE TEACHERS" #2

Johnie Edwards

There is no one better to learn from than those who have mastered something. When it comes to Bible teaching, Jesus is the Master Teacher. All of us who try to teach would do well to study how Jesus went about teaching. This second special issue of *Back To Basics* is designed to help us be more effective Bible teachers.

1) **JESUS FIRST DID.** It is said of Jesus, "The former treatise, have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach" (Acts 1:1). Jesus first did and then taught. No Bible teacher will ever be a successful teacher until they practice what they teach. Remember that Ezra, "prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments" (Ezra 7:10). No wonder then Paul wrote the Romans, "Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?" (Rom. 2:21). Some may have to quit teaching until their doing catches up with their teaching!

2) **JESUS TAUGHT WITH SIMPLICITY.** Bible teachers often make the mistake of teaching over the heads of their students. Jesus never did. To see how simple Jesus

made His teaching, take time to read the Parable of the Sower (Lk. 8:4-15). "A sower went out to sow his seed..." Folks understood such language. This accounts for the fact, "The common people heard him gladly" (Mk. 12:37). In fact, the gospel of Christ is characterized by "simplicity" (2 Cor. 11:3). So, keep your teaching simple.

3) **JESUS TAUGHT WITH BREVITY.** Jesus knew the attention span of His learners. It is known that we retain more of short teaching than long discourses. Read the profound sermon on the mount to see just how much can be packed into a short discourse. Jesus often used "one-liners" to get and hold the attention of people. A good example: "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul...?" (Mt. 16:26).

4) **JESUS TAUGHT WITH AUTHORITY.** Jesus knew and understood what He said. "The people were astonished at his doctrine: For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes" (Mt. 7:28-29). Study your material so as to know it like the back of your hand. Our authority is the Bible, the word of God, and may we get back to teaching it (2 Tim. 3:16-17)!

CLASSROOM TEACHING

Johnie Edwards

Most of our Bible class teaching is done in a classroom. By looking at some classrooms, you would not think too much emphasis is being put on classroom teaching.

1) CLASSROOM TEACHING IS SCRIPTURAL.

Occasionally there will be folks who question the right of Bible classroom teaching. It is argued that there is no example of the church being divided into various age groups studying the Bible. The Bible teaching overlooked by the no-class group is that there is general Bible authority for teaching. In addressing the apostles, Jesus said, "Go, teach, baptize and teach..." (Mt. 28:19). Jesus said, "It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me" (Jn. 6:44). When the Bible furnishes us with general authority to teach, there does not have to be specific authority for such! Classroom teaching is an expedient way of carrying out the command to teach. If not, why not?

2) CLASSROOM TEACHING MUST BE JUST

THAT. Too many teachers are not as serious as they should be when it comes to classroom teaching. Once a teacher steps into a classroom,

he/she must realize what they are there for - to teach! Teaching is serious business and the teacher has the responsibility to see that the students are taught the word of God. We are admonished, "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine (*teaching*); continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee" (1 Tim. 4:16).

3) CLASSROOM TEACHING MUST BE

COMPLETE. Some churches have no goals or purpose as they set up the teaching schedule. Work out a schedule where the entire Bible can be covered, in say, every three years. This takes some hard work, but you can do it. "...much study is a weariness of the flesh" (Eccl. 12:12).

4) CLASSROOM TEACHING SHOULD INVOLVE

CHANGE OF TEACHERS. A good time to rotate teachers is about every 3 to 6 months. Such a change gives a teacher relief, affords others opportunity to teach, and allows the teacher time for preparing new materials. A teacher rotation schedule ought to be made several months in advance to give teachers plenty of time to prepare for their class. Such will encourage more to want to teach, knowing they will not be "stuck" in a classroom indefinitely.

Back To Basics

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Back To Basics is a 12 page monthly journal dedicated to teaching first principles, published by Edwards Publishers. www.edwardspublishers.com

Subscription Information:

One Year: \$12.00
Single Issue: \$1.00

Available in bundles of 10 or more

THE TEACHING PROGRAM IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

John Isaac Edwards

The conditions of a people are unfavorable when they are without proper teaching (2 Chr. 15:3-6). The strength of the church is in proportion to the strength of the teaching. How important is the teaching program in the local church?

1) IMPORTANT FOR MEN TO COME TO CHRIST.

The Father draws men through teaching (Jn. 6:44-45). How ever important it is for men to come to Christ is how important teaching is. The kind of disciples made depends on the kind of teaching done (Mt. 28:19).

2) IMPORTANT FOR DISCIPLES TO OBSERVE

WHAT THE LORD HAS COMMANDED. If disciples are to observe everything commanded (Mt. 28:20), they must be taught everything commanded; nothing can be kept back (Acts 20:20).

3) IMPORTANT FOR BRETHREN TO BE

ROOTED, BUILT UP, AND STABLISHED. Rather than becoming "Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith" (Col. 2:7), many are beguiled and spoiled (Col. 2:4, 8). Teaching is preventive discipline. If we put more emphasis on the teaching program, we might practice less corrective discipline.

4) IMPORTANT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF

TEACHERS. A common problem is a shortage of teachers (Heb. 5:12-14). Some complain there are not enough teachers and chastise people for not teaching, yet there is no program to teach teachers to teach.

5) IMPORTANT TO QUALIFY MEN TO BE

ELDERS. Is it any wonder a church has no elders, when men are not being taught to be elders? The church must train men to be elders (Ti. 1:9).

6) IMPORTANT FOR WORSHIP TO BE TRUE.

Teaching directly affects worship (Jn. 4:24), and can render worship vain. Jesus told the Jerusalem scribes and Pharisees, "But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Mt. 15:9).

7) IMPORTANT FOR PRESENTING EVERY

MAN PERFECT IN CHRIST. Of Christ Paul wrote, "Whom we preach...teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus" (Col. 1:28). "Every man perfect in Christ Jesus" must be the overall objective of the teaching program in every church.

Does the local church have the very best teaching program possible?

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BASIC GUIDELINES FOR SUCCESSFUL TEACHING

John Isaac Edwards

There are some basic principles that all teachers need to know and put into practice. These *Basic Guidelines For Successful Teaching* are simple to understand and easy to use.

1) **BEGIN WHERE THE STUDENT IS.** The first basic principle is to find out where the learner is in his understanding. If you try to teach him Bible baptism when he does not even believe the Bible, then the teaching effort will be ineffective. Philip found where the Ethiopian Treasurer was by being a good listener and asking a good question (Acts 8:30). "Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture..." (Acts 8:35).

2) **GET FEEDBACK.** The student has information valuable to the teacher. You will have to get some response from the student to know how to proceed in teaching. Effective ways of obtaining feedback include: questions, tests, reviews, drills and discussions. Feedback is needed to know where the student is, if he is learning, and how effective you have been. Philip gained feedback from the Ethiopian when he asked, "Understandest thou what thou readest?" (Acts 8:30).

3) **BUILD ON WHAT THE STUDENT KNOWS.** If we learn what the student knows, we will have a good foundation upon which to build. "Like" and "as" are effective in building on the student's knowledge. Jesus recognized this as He said, "The kingdom of heaven is *like*..." (Mt. 13:31) and "the kingdom of heaven is *as*..." (Mt. 25:14).

4) **KNOW WHERE YOU ARE GOING.** There is a need for teachers to set clear, definite, obtainable goals and objectives in their teaching. Ask yourself, "What is my purpose in teaching?" Where

do you want the student to be at the end of the class? What do you want him to know or be able to do? Nathan knew where he was going as he led David to confession of sin in 2 Samuel 12:1-13.

5) **CREATE A NEED FOR LEARNING.** If the teacher can get the student to decide that he needs what is being taught, the teacher will not have to motivate him to learn. The motivation will come from within the student. If the student does not think he needs what you are trying to teach, the teaching will not be very successful. Jesus created a need as he evoked the response, "Sir, give me this water" (Jn. 4:15).

6) **GET THE STUDENT INVOLVED.** Too many classes could be taught without students! The successful teacher prepares activities which demand student involvement, and his teaching techniques require the student to be involved. Every case of successful teaching in the Scriptures involved the learning student.

7) **LET THE STUDENT REACH THE CONCLUSIONS AND KNOW HE IS LEARNING.** Instead of cheating the student by telling him the answer, let him do the mental work to reach the conclusion for himself. We have a much better memory of the conclusions we reach on our own than the conclusions we hear others express. Few things reward one as much as knowing he has learned. Learning motivates learning! The teaching of Jesus led the chief priests and Pharisees to the conclusion "that he spake of them" (Mt. 21:25).

Teachers set the atmosphere for learning. Create an environment that facilitates learning.

THE CLASSROOM

Johnie Edwards

Classrooms are more important to good teaching than most may think. Elders and teachers often have an indifferent attitude toward classrooms. Sometimes kids are put in a furnace room, broom or storage closet, without thinking of the impact the classroom has on the teaching process.

1) **SURVEY THE ROOM.** Every classroom teacher ought to survey their classroom, before they begin to teach. As you look at the classroom, look at it through the eyes of a child. Make a list of needed items and work to secure them.

2) **NEEDED CLASSROOM ITEMS.** Every classroom needs a marker board and bulletin boards. These need to be adjusted as to height so as to accommodate the size of the children. The kids need to be able to reach the boards. Make sure there is good lighting and comfortable seating. Don't put a two-year-old in a large, adult chair. Make your teaching room colorful;

not stark white. Carpet helps hold down noise. Every classroom needs good maps, posters, and basic Bible teachings. Put a time line in your classroom, and use it. Keep a file cabinet so you can file and keep good class material as a resource.

3) **KEEP THE CLASSROOM CLEAN.** Often classrooms are allowed to collect dust and trash. Take time to keep your classroom tidy, clean, and attractive. Kids like an attractive room. Most of them have such at school.

4) **CHANGE THE CLASSROOM.** Young people like to see changes in their classrooms. Keep the room exciting so the kids will want to attend Bible study, for that is what it is all about (2 Tim. 2:15). Put up new posters to correspond with the study being done. Keep the room colorful.

Now is a good time to go look through the classrooms to see if they need any attention.

Blessed Is The Teacher...

Blessed is the teacher who has not sought the high places, but who has been drafted into teaching because of his ability and willingness to teach. *Blessed is the teacher* who knows where he is going, why he is going, and how to get there. *Blessed is the teacher* who knows no discouragement, and who presents no alibi. *Blessed is the teacher* who knows to lead without being dictatorial; true leaders are humble individuals. *Blessed is the teacher* who seeks only the best for those whom he serves. *Blessed is the teacher* who teaches for the ultimate good of the most concerned, and not for the personal gratification and aggrandizement. *Blessed is the teacher* who develops teachers while teaching. *Blessed is the teacher* who marches with the group, and interprets correctly the signs on the pathway that lead to ultimate success. *Blessed is the teacher* who has his head in the clouds, feet on the ground and is anchored in God's word. *Blessed is the teacher* who considers teaching as an opportunity and service to the Lord and mankind.

DISCIPLINE IN THE CLASSROOM

Donnie V. Rader

One basic difference in a good class and one that is not is discipline in the classroom.

1) **THE NEED FOR DISCIPLINE.** *Little teaching is done when there is disorder and distraction.* Without discipline students will talk and laugh while the teacher attempts to instruct. Without order students will continually leave the room for the restroom or to get a drink. When a teacher is not in control a student will be allowed to veer the class or discussion off course. *Children (from toddlers to teens) will test the boundaries.* They will do all that they are allowed to get by with. It doesn't take long for a pupil to see how far they can go. One or two students can destroy a whole class.

2) **MAINTAINING ORDER IN THE CLASSROOM.** One teacher can take a class and have no problem keeping order while another teacher takes the same class and there is utter chaos. Why the difference?

Be in control. You are a leader when you teach. You are leading these students. Leaders must be in control. If you act nervous, indecisive, with little confidence, the students soon become the leaders of the class.

Keep the students busy. In the smaller classes there may need to be some class activities like singing or working on activity sheets. In the older classes the students could read, be called on for discussion, be asked to explain part of the text, be given a test, give a summary of the chapter, or make an outline and present it to the class. In some places memory work seems to be a thing of the past. Spending time going over memory work will keep young and old busy.

Teach the word. All teachers are charged to preach the word (2 Tim. 4:2; 1 Pet. 4:11). The teacher should have a goal (that is accomplished)

of teaching the lesson for the day. Classes often degenerate into class discussion that is not of the text, but something that may be meaningless.

Be a friend, not a buddy. Teachers should show interest and care for the student. A good teacher will adjust his pace and material to fit the student's needs. Too often a teacher wants to be liked by the class and thus tries hard to get them to like him. He may joke with them during class. He may allow them to get by with misbehavior because he doesn't want them to dislike him. Then he finds that they don't take him serious.

3) **BASIC GUIDELINES FOR DISCIPLINARY ACTION.** Good teaching and student involvement solves most problems. However, sometimes a student gets out of order. What can the teacher do?

Look at self first. Before the teacher jumps on a student or the whole class, they should ask, "Could I be creating the problem?" "Have I allowed too much with others?"

Tell the class beforehand what is expected. In the younger classes it may be good for the teacher to send a letter home with student hand-outs that explains to the parents (and students) what will be done if there is misbehavior.

When a problem arises. Call the student down firmly (not in a joking or angry manner). Talk to the student after class. Give a second warning telling the child that you will have to inform his parents. Let other students know that this kind of behavior will not be tolerated. If it continues, go to the parents. Send (or take) the student out of the class and to his parents if necessary. If the problem continues inform the elders.

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TEACHING CURRICULUM

John Isaac Edwards

Curriculum is simply a course of study. Curriculum is to the teacher as a map is to the traveler. As teachers, we are leading our pupils from where they are to where God wants them to be. Curriculum helps keep us on course!

1) **HODGEPODGE VERSUS SYSTEMATIC STUDY.**

In the average church, the curriculum is a jumble; a mass of things mingled together without order or plan. This results in confusion. The curriculum should be methodical in procedure or plan; marked by thoroughness and regularity. The teaching should cover a full range of Bible studies, designed to transform “a babe” into one “of full age” (Heb. 5:13-14). Many see the need for a complete and balanced curriculum in the public education system, but fail to apply it in the church. What if the curriculum in the secular school was organized like the curriculum in the Sunday school? You might want to meet with the superintendent, right?

2) **MAKING YOUR OWN MATERIAL.** You will probably never do a better job teaching than when you teach material prepared from your own study. Under the leadership of a competent eldership, a talented membership should be able to chart its own course, make its own material, plan its own program. Elders, teachers, and preachers can work together in setting goals for the teaching program, subdividing goals into achievable objectives for each level of learning, logically select topics that help the students reach the objectives, and put together teaching aids that augment the topics in the program.

3) **AVAILABLE CURRICULUMS.** There are many curriculums from which to choose today. Some have been compiled by faithful and able

brethren. Others are nothing but junk. In choosing curriculum, the contents must be carefully sifted through “senses exercised to discern both good and evil” (Heb. 5:14).

4) **THE BIBLE IS THE TEXTBOOK!** Graded material is an aid to good teaching. It should never become the main text. The Bible must always be the textbook to which reference is repeatedly made. “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

5) **STAY WITH THE MATERIAL.** As the teacher, you must maintain control of the class. Do not allow yourself to be drawn away from the subject or get bogged down. Stick with the material, and keep it moving!

6) **READING IS NOT TEACHING.** Does this sound familiar? The teacher decides on a study book for the class. Copies are ordered for the number expected, with a few extra for visitors. The teacher reads the material to the class, or may call on some in the class to read. At the end of each section, the teacher may ask if anyone has a comment they would like to make. Then, after the material has been read, the teacher repeats the questions at the end of the lesson and allows time for someone to give answer. If no response, the teacher gives the answer and moves on to the next question until time is up. Surely, we can do better. A good teacher can make bad material good, but a bad teacher can ruin good material! If you use a class book, use it effectively.

TEACHING DIFFERENT AGES

John Isaac Edwards

Each student in your class is a distinct individual with unique abilities and characteristics. You must acquire not only a good knowledge of the Bible, but also a good understanding of your students.

1) **WE ARE DIFFERENT.** No two of us are exactly alike; not even identical twins. We have different intellectual capabilities, reading and writing levels, oral and reading vocabularies, spiritual backgrounds, and interests. Really, you are not teaching a class; you are teaching students. Get to know them individually.

2) **DIFFERENT LEARNING STYLES.** Researchers suggest three basic learning styles: Visual (reading), aural (listening), and physical (actively doing things). Not all students learn the same way. While some may learn in one way, others may be capable of learning much more in another style. Our teaching style must be adapted to the learning style of the student.

3) **AGE IS NOT EQUAL TO STAGE.** As a person may be 50-years-old and only have the mentality of a 5-year-old, some may be 85-years-old and still be “newborn babes” (1 Pet. 2:2). We make a serious blunder when we assume that one advanced in years or that has attended services for many years is “of full age” (Heb. 5:14). There are different stages of spiritual development. Paul wrote, “And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able” (1 Cor. 3:1-2). Your teaching will be ineffective when you try to put meat in the mouth of babes.

4) **CURRICULUM AND LEARNING ACTIVITIES MUST BE AGE AND STAGE APPROPRIATE.** Posters, flannel boards and other visual aids should be eye-level with the student. Activities should be on the level of the student’s development. The course of study must be crafted to accommodate every student. The effective teacher is flexible so as to challenge the most gifted without slighting the simple.

5) **GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF VARIOUS AGE GROUPS.** Following are some general characteristics of the various age groups into which Bible classes are often arranged.

Twos and threes: Extremely active, attention span very short, responds to guided play, rapidly growing vocabulary, learns through all five senses, tires easily, forming simple concepts of social interaction, learning to distinguish between right and wrong behaviors, learns by repetition.

Fours and fives: Very active, imitators, attention span growing to about 10 minutes, forming more complex social skills so that they can play with and not just alongside others, big imagination, learning to share, tires easily, curious, growing vocabulary.

Grades one and two: Active and talkative, very imaginative, has developed sufficient social skills to work in small groups, learning to read and write, developing a sense of morality, thinks concretely, eager to learn, emotionally immature, attention span up to 15 minutes.

Grades three and four: Energetic, likes

group activities, a growing sense of morality, memorizes easily, attention span increases to 15 minutes, increasing sense of self worth and identity, continues to require individual attention, can make application of Bible principles to concrete life situations, possesses an increasing awareness of sin and salvation.

Grades five and six: Energetic, independent, inquisitive, talkative, imaginative, wants to be like his peers, beginning to think abstractly, likes competition, hero worshiper, memorizes easily, attention span up to 20 minutes.

Grades seven through nine: Growing and changing rapidly, extremely self-conscious, independent, peer approval extremely important, capable of abstract thinking, able to reason to solve complex problems, developing his own faith and value system, inquisitiveness leads to doubts, increasing interest in opposite sex.

Grades ten through twelve: Independent, rapidly increasing abilities, sometimes a “know-it-all,” emotional, doubts, settling on own faith and value system, strong peer influence, can reason and solve complex problems, cliquish.

Young adults (20-35): Ambitious (have plans for development in career, advancement in work and income, building for the future), adjusting (having taken on adult responsibilities they often have heavy financial obligations), seek recognition (want their voice to be heard), involved (often active in numerous things), capable (because of youthful zest and increasing abilities these can be most useful and active in the church).

Middle adults (35-65): Settled (permanently place in life’s work; more adjusted to things as they are; inclined to become complacent), concerned (their children are maturing, they are concerned about their future; they yearn for financial security, wonder about retirement),

experienced (these have added knowledge with practice and are able to guide others), some are withdrawn (because of timidity or past failures they want to be on-lookers rather than participants).

Aged adults (65 and up): Fixed (family growth is over, goals have been reached or no longer beckon them; say, “can’t teach an old dog new tricks.”), wise (at least they should be but all are not so, Job 32:9), lonely (many, being shut-in, long for companionship, personal attention, love. A call, card or visit means much to them), retiring (many are inclined to rest on their past service and become slack in the Lord’s work; due to feebleness and poor health they will be curtailed in many activities).

Not everyone can effectively teach everybody. One may be an excellent adult teacher, but a poor teacher for children. Teachers should be placed in the class where they are best suited.

I Would Gather Children

Some would gather money
Along the path of life,
Some would gather roses,
And the rest from worldly strife;
But I would gather children
From among the thorns of sin,
I would seek a golden curl,
And a freckled, toothless grin.
For money cannot enter
In that land of endless day,
And roses that are gathered
Soon will wilt along the way.
But, oh, the laughing children,
As I cross the sunset sea,
And the gates swing wide to heaven
I can take them in with me!

Kid's Activity Page

Paul Adams

Memory Verse: *"Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth"* (John 17:17).

Truth Teachers And False Teachers

Teachers must be very careful to always teach the truth according to God's word. Look up the reference and find who taught the truth and who taught error. Draw a line to the correct answer.

The Serpent (Genesis 3:1-8)

Jesus (John 14:6)

Paul (Acts 26:25)

Diotrephes (3 John 9-10)

Korah (Numbers 16:1-11)

Balaam (Revelation 2:14)

John The Baptist (John 5:33)

Hezekiah (2 Kings 20:1-11)

The Old Prophet (1 Kings 13:11-19)

Gaius (3 John 1-8)



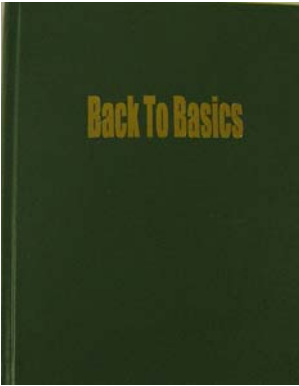
**Truth
Teacher**



**False
Teacher**

*"Suffer the little children to come unto me,
and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God"* (Mark 10:14).

GET *BACK TO BASICS* IN YOUR TEACHING!



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Johnie and John Isaac Edwards are in position to come spend a weekend with the church where you worship in teacher training and helping the local church develop the very best teaching program possible. Phone (812) 883-4974 or e-mail BcktoBscs@aol.com, if interested.

“How Readest Thou?”
Test Your Bible Knowledge

Why is a woman not to teach over the man?

Two reasons: 1) The order of creation; 2) The transgression (1 Tim. 2:12-14).

Answer:

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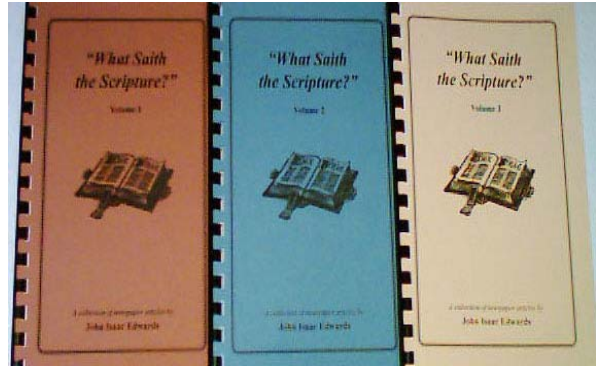
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