Bring Them Up: The Father's Role in the Family

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[0:00] Dads, and you know, I want to understand that honoring is more than a gift, or even an expression of appreciation.! It's great to be appreciated, but the respect for the responsibilities of dad is also needed.

You know, it goes both ways in that to understand the roles and the things and needs of fatherhood, because fatherhood is a role that's both, I think we can all agree for all the dads, it's very challenging sometimes, but it's also very rewarding.
You know, and the one thing, it doesn't take long to learn in life that things that have great challenge often come with great reward. You know, the accomplishment that we have there, and when we see those things taking place as our children grow and they mature in life, and you see them become even parents, you know, now as a grandparent, I look at some of those things differently, you know. You look and see that what you have invested in as a father, because fatherhood is not an investment in the present, it's an investment in the future. It's an investment in those things to come, both in this life and the next.
The things we invest in as a father are important. But, you know, the role of fathers in society has definitely changed over time. You know, the expectation society does, they prioritize things sometimes, trying to get us to get things out of balance, and not balancing life correctly, and sometimes with work and family, or between protecting and providing, or even sometimes, you know, honestly, sometimes dads feel inadequate to accomplish the responsibilities.
[1:51] You know, sometimes you don't want to consider that, but oftentimes dads don't feel like, hey, I know what I need, I don't know how to handle this right now. I don't know what, how am I going to accomplish those things at this moment.

And we can feel inadequate, or charting a path through those expectations that you have between work and family and church, and all these things that we're responsible for.
You know, it's quite a job to navigate all those things and those relationships that we have. And oftentimes, I think these can lead to a dad being frustrated, or we find even lead to anger or impatience very easily.
You know, you can become frustrated. But fatherhood, I want you to understand, is not without some help and guidance to accomplish it. You know, God never gives us a task that he doesn't give us instruction on how to walk through it.
You know, that's the great thing about God. God doesn't just give us a lofty goal. He says, this is the objective, and now here's the tools to implement to make that happen.
[3:00] To put those things, but to use those tools is sometimes difficult. Because like anything, if you're building anything, balance of what tools to use at the right time is important.

Because, you know, you can't use a saw to drive a nail. I mean, that's the reality of sometimes we feel frustrated, and sometimes we try to use the wrong tool to accomplish the task. And today we're going to look at fatherhood here a little bit, because God does give us information on leading your family, and you're raising your children.
It requires wisdom and perseverance. And we're going to see here this morning, if you found Ephesians chapter 6, we'll read the first four verses if you want to stand together and honor a reading of the Word of God this morning.
As we find here, because this passage really lays out a balance here when it comes to fatherhood and our families. Because notice in verse 1 here, it says, Heavenly Father, as we come before you today, Lord, we just thank you for our dads, and Lord, for each dad here today.
Lord, those that one day hope to be dads. Lord, it's just a role that doesn't begin at the moment that you become a dad, but Lord, it lays the groundwork even before in our life.

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[4:41] The things we learn from our own fathers, and things that we learn from your Word, Lord, as we gather through. Lord, as we honor dads today, Lord, we just pray for each one for the challenges that life brings, and trying to balance these things.

Even as we look at some things today, Lord, but Lord, we also just ask you to encourage dads today. Lord, we need to be encouraged, Lord, that you didn't give us a task that's impossible, but you gave us a task that may be challenging and difficult.
But Lord, it's a task that can be accomplished through the guidance of your Word. And Lord, as we seek you and rely upon you for direction in those things.
And Lord, we just give you all the praise in Jesus' name. Amen. May be seated. You know, as we look here this morning, because Ephesians does give us some guidance for children and parents, you know, the term used here for father, it has an implication of moms attached to it.
And I think that's a natural inclination in Scripture, that dad and mom stand together. But as we read earlier last week in Ephesians 5, dads have a unique responsibility of headship and leadership within the family.
[5:55] And so when it talks about fathers, fathers, you need to oversight these things. But this is also, this morning, some of the things we talk about are something for moms to pay attention to also and to deal with.

Because as a parent, we can all get caught up in these things. We can provoke our children and make it difficult for them to do their part in honoring their parents.
To do those things. But these instructions to fathers divulge their unique role in shaping their children's spiritual and mental maturity.
You know, I want you to understand, our role today as dads is not just to raise up kids and get them out of the house. Now, that might be an objective, but that's not the goal.
You know, as a dad, I think every dad says, I want to see my kids grow up and mature and be able to step out on their own. That's a sign of maturity to be able to do that.
[6:55] But the goal is not just to leave, just not for them to leave the house. The goal is to equip them and train them for what they need when they are out on their own. To be able to navigate the challenges of life.

And today we're going to take a few moments here this morning to even look at these things of encouragements to dad in their biblical responsibilities. Not only to know, but to fulfill what I really think is a very high calling in their lives.
Because being a dad is important. You know, it doesn't take much looking at statistics to see the importance of dad's role in the life of children. The impact is great.
It's lifelong impacts in the life of a child with the picture they have of their father. And we're going to see and look at this a little bit this morning. But look here in verse 4 in our text here.
It says, And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath. Provoke them not to wrath. You know, the challenge of being a parent, the constant expectations, the responsibilities.
[8:02] I mean, as a dad, you're supposed to care and provide for your children. You know, and sometimes the way kids act and all the things going on in life, you can get frustrated. I mean, life can be frustrating because you're trying to do what you know to do, but it's not working out the way you thought it would.

You know, it can be frustrating. And kids, kids can be frustrating. You know, and it's not just when they're young. You know, I often tell parents, you know, they get, when they have little ones running around, it can be a lot of energy and a lot of consumption of physical energy.
But, you know, as kids get older and you start training them up, sometimes you can get frustrated with just the reactions and their responses as they grow. You know, these are things that are naturally occurring.
It's just, it's not just a one-time thing. Okay, I do this one thing, and they're going to turn out right. I want you to understand what we're talking about here is a long-term investment.
It takes time. It takes energy. It takes consistency. It takes energy in our lives because sometimes I want you to understand, even if you're doing what's right, your kids are not going to be happy with it.
[9:16] Matter of fact, I'll put it this way. If your kids are always happy with your decisions as a parent, you're probably doing something wrong as a parent. If they're always happy with everything, there's probably something wrong because you're probably indulging them.

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And it's not our job to indulge our children. It's our job to train them and correct them and instruct them. To prepare them.
To equip them. You know, sometimes you're not always happy with those that are trying to accomplish those goals because it pushes into your life in a way that challenges your children.
You ought to be, your children ought to feel challenged from some things in life. But I want you to understand here that what he's talking about here, not provoking your children to wrath, we're not talking about a one-time event.
Because like I said, parents are, your kids are sometimes not going to be happy with you. Because wrath is not just upset with a one-time thing. Wrath that it's speaking about here is anger mingled with contempt.
[10:21] That's a whole different thing. That's a long-term effect with many inputs impacting it. It has to do with a philosophy and a practice that a parent uses.

And to grab a hold of that because, you know, the dynamics of this, sometimes this happens when we're being too harsh or even inconsistent. You know, it's easy for parents sometimes to be constantly nitpicking every fault to the point the child becomes frustrated and resentful.
Because it's like, what can I do right? You know, that's what it's talking about here. We have to be careful what we're speaking of to understand how we need to address these things.
Because as we understand that they can become resentful and wrathful, the Bible tells us, God tells us that that's not the way for your children to mature.
You know, we find a lot of children that harbor a lot of things from their childhood. Now, I want you to understand one thing, especially for parents. I'll give you a clue.
[11:32] You're not going to do everything right. Okay? But, you know, God even makes provision for that. It's called confession and forgiveness. God gives us tools to deal with those things if they're used in the right way.

But you know what part of the problem is? We leave those tools on the wayside because pride and other things get in the way. To be able to grab a hold of what we need to do in our life.
And oftentimes we'll see things come to this point or even be driven to this point from one thing because we try to fix everything at one time instead of keeping perspective in the moment.
You know? If there's an issue of disobedience or defiance or disregard, one of the things I'd encourage you is to take a moment to consider what's the one key thing I need to address?
Because sometimes you can't fix it all at one time. But if you address the big issue, you'll find oftentimes the smaller issues take care of themselves. But that takes some intention on the part of the parent, doesn't it?
[12:42] It takes some intention on our part as the mature one. You know, let me say this. Parents, don't be surprised when your kids act immature.

That's the reason you're supposed to equip them to mature. That's the reason the Bible says when you're a child, you do childish things. But when you grow up, you ought to put those things away.
How do they put them away? They mature. They understand what's taking place. And we find here, you know, I'd encourage you if you're dealing with those things, look for what is the key lesson that needs dealt with.
What's the most important thing at that moment and deal with the one thing. And that way it's not overwhelming to you and it's not overwhelming to your children.
Try to deal with those things in perspective because secondly, first is perspective, second is timing. You know, I think sometimes as parents, we get in trouble because we don't understand when is the right time to deal with something.
[13:45] The right time is important. If you ask, this is the, you need to ask yourself, is this the time we need to address this issue or do I need to pause?

Do I need to step back for a moment? That might be five minutes. It might be a day. Depending on the situation and the circumstance because you say, preacher, why should I just dive in?
Because some things, yes, you need to dive in and deal with immediately. There's some things, if there's immediate danger, you better get after it right now. It's the same reason if there's a hot pot on the stove, you don't let your kids say, oh, let them grab ahold of it.
They'll figure it out. We'll talk about it tomorrow. That's foolishness because why? There's an immediate danger that needs dealt with. An immediate dynamic that needs to be addressed and sometimes those things are, but sometimes it's important to know when to step back because you

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say, preacher, why do you need to step back?
You know, sometimes as parents, we let our emotions and our feelings get in the way. One of the fastest ways to cause your children to provoke them to wrath is to discipline by emotion.
[15:00] You expect them to control their emotions when you can't control yours. Do you realize that's a training moment? You're displaying those things and understanding, you know, because sometimes through emotions or like sometimes parents will discipline or get upset or angry at their children because they feel embarrassed or frustrated.

And they take things out of a proper perspective. You know, I want you to understand if you're not gonna provoke your children to wrath, you have to have understanding of not only yourself, but what God teaches.
Because sometimes it's important to give things time and to deal with them. That's where understanding the circumstance or the situation, because provoking your children can also come through things like partiality or favoritism.
Favoritism within a family, I'll say is probably one of the biggest reasons children get angry. Favoritism causes great disruption within a household. You know, look over to Genesis 37 for a moment.
Because here's a, the book of Genesis is filled with family dynamics. You know, that's one thing about the book of Genesis. You have all sorts of reality of family dynamics happening.
[16:24] And here in Genesis 37, we'll find here that it's Jacob here dealing with his children. And if you know anything about Jacob, he had two wives, Rachel and Leah, and the two wives were at each other.

And then here dad steps in and shows favoritism and partiality. And you know what? The Bible reveals exactly what happened and how those things came together in that context.
Because as we look here at Genesis 37, I want you to see something very important here this morning. Look at verse three. And it says, Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children. Because he was the son of his old age and he made him a coat of many colors. Now we don't have time to get into all the context here, but I want you to point out what was, what did Joseph do, or what did Jacob do?
He let all the other children know that, hey, you're second place to Joseph. You hold second seat.
[17:31] You're less important. It's one of those things that Joseph can do no wrong. But you know, these other bum children I have, and I'll just say something there. If you have bum children, you know who to blame? You can go home and look in the mirror.

But notice what happened here with his family. Look at verse four. And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they did what? They hated him and could not speak peaceably unto him.
I think that's a good example of a parent provoking their children to wrath. Because think about, what did the brothers do? They wanted to kill him and they sold him into slavery. Told his dad that he died.
Animal devoured him. And partiality provoked anger, didn't it? This partiality was also, let me just tell you, it was spurred by their moms, Leah and Rachel. There was envy and strife between them. And then when Joseph, there's already tension in the family and Joseph just puts the final nail in it by his choice. The son that he loved above others. You know, think about what it tells us also in Colossians 3.
[18:38] Colossians 3 in verse 21 says, Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged. You know, discouragement is the precursor to wrath. We need to be careful with this, dads.

We need to be deliberate to foster a respectful and loving relationship with your children. You know, be careful about actions that will provoke them to anger because of a chosen offense.
You know, sometimes we choose the offense. Joseph was singled out by his father. His father chose to do it. We got to be careful and not be driven by how we feel and think about what's the impact.
That's teaching our children also to control their emotion. Now, I'm not saying to be cold. That's a whole different discussion because you can be warm and under control because, you know, you can get the other side of the thing.

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You can be so loving that you hurt your children. I'll use that term loving in a worldly concept because it's like, oh, I love them, so they need to be able to do this. You know, they can't do what, they need to be able to do what the other kids need to do because, you know, if Joey's doing that, Sam should be able to do this.
[19:50] And you have, parents, you need to be careful because that's a problem also. As we're going to look here in the next section here of the command that he gives, you know, we have to consider our actions as a father.

Are they building up or tearing down? But here in Ephesians 6, we find that it's not just a don't do something. Now, the one thing I find in Scripture is God will tell you don't do something and then he also tells you to do something as a replacement for that.
You know what? God never wants us to be empty. He says, hey, replace this, take this out and put this in. You think about through the Scripture in our life as a believer, he tells us to put off things and put on things.
He tells us that if you get rid of this, you need to put this in. Because you know what the problem is? There's not room for both. Something has to go to put something else in.
In life, you don't get storage containers to put things in. Buy more, put it in storage. God says it's all you have. Something has to go to put something else.
[21:01] And so we're going to see here this morning, notice here in our passage here back in Ephesians chapter 6. You know, I don't want you to be discouraged anymore. I want you to be encouraged in what God has because notice what he says at the end of verse 6.

He says, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. You know, dads, we have a responsibility to nurture our kids, a responsibility to bring them up in the Lord.
This is a framework that God gives us. The framework is provided to us in the Word of God. We're to lead spiritually. We're to prepare our kids for life. You know, Jesus is even an example of this also.
You know, consider Luke chapter 2. Luke chapter 2 and verse 52. The Bible says this, and Jesus increased in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man.
What's it say? He matured as a complete person. Our objective as a parent ought to see our kids grow up to be complete people, to love the Lord, to understand who God is, what God has done for them.
[22:12] You know, in our example, especially dads, the priorities we place will directly impact the outcome of your children. I want to let you know whether you're at the grandpa stage or the first time dad stage or hoping to one day to be dad, I'll give you a clue.

Those hoping to be dad have a great advantage right now because you know what? You can look and understand and you can prepare yourself to be what you ought to be. The problem with being grandpa, sometimes you look back and say, I wish I would have.
And there's things you can't undo. But I want you to understand, I didn't tell you that to discourage you, I'm telling you that to give you understanding. That's the reason those other elements need to come in. Because sometimes as a parent, you need to ask for forgiveness.
That's part of training your kids too. You know what's an important thing? To have your kids understand that, hey, how do you deal when something's been wronged or somebody's been wronged? To model that is important.
That mental and physical relationship both with God and with others is important. So what does it mean to nurture? Nurtures provide that which feeds or cultivates growth.
[23:21] It involves what they consume. You know, we need to be careful about what our kids consume. Physically, you know, if we let your kids eat too many sweets, what happens?

It has a health impact. But you know, oftentimes where kids learn to do that is from parents. Now, I'm preaching to myself, I love sweets, man. Ice cream is the greatest thing ever invented. If I had a choice between ice cream and coffee, I think ice cream might win.
But if it was coffee-flavored ice cream, then it's just a double win. But you know what? You have to learn that those things need, there's certain things in life need moderation. And teaching your kids that is important. And as parents, we're accountable for what your kids ingest, both from food, but also from entertainment, and also especially their belief system.
Because part of our responsibility of parents is to equip our children in understanding who God is. Because how are they going to do their part? Look back at verse 1 there in chapter 6.

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It says, Children, what? Obey your parents in the Lord for this is right. Let me ask you a question. How are the kids supposed to know that? And it's different from memorizing the verse.
[24:31] How are they supposed to know what it means? Then I'll ask you the other part. How do they know how to do it? Because we all know you can know something and not do something. We need to be careful of what we're teaching our children.

This involves both their physical well-being and spiritual well-being. How do they learn by training? And training involves correction and guidance and the responsibility here is for fathers along with the moms.
I want you to understand this passage isn't an exclusive dad thing because if dad is the head of the home and mom is subject unto dad in a biblical sense, we're going to talk about that coming up because the Bible talks about that relationship and that's very important.
You know, one of the problems that you find in families when mom says one thing and dad says another. You want to divide and show partiality in your family? There you go, right there. As parents, you better be on the same team for your sake and your children's sake because if you're not on the same team, you know, it's amazing how many people separate after their kids leave home.
You know why? They became on two different teams instead of being on the same team. I'll give you a little clue for married people. I want you to understand your kids are going to leave home and you're going to have to live with your spouse by yourself again.
[25:49] That ought to be something you look forward to and not something that you don't. But oftentimes, people look at one another and they look, who are you?

Because they weren't on the same team. To understand the importance of this and make sure dads of what mom is doing and sometimes you need to get together and get those things ironed out. But I want you to understand it's not a responsibility just for mom or for taking kids just to Sunday school to say, hey, that's going to take care of everything. No, dads, it's your role. It's your responsibility.
You know, think about, look at Abraham who guided his family in worship and obedience to God. I want you to understand when you look at Abraham's life, he wasn't perfect in any way. But as Abraham matured, we see some things that God says about him that tells us that Abraham matured himself up and passed some mature things on to his children.
Look over in Genesis chapter 18. Genesis chapter 18 and verse 19 tells us this, and God says, for I know him that he will command his children and his household after him and they will keep the way of the Lord to do justice and judgment that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he has spoken of him.
[27:14] You know, we need to incorporate the things of the Lord and the things of life into our children. You know, consider what the Bible tells us in Deuteronomy chapter 6. Deuteronomy chapter 6 and says this, and these words which I command thee this day shall be in thine heart.

Now, that's an important direction because you can't give something you don't possess. We don't get to operate like the government. We don't get to just get an endless check. You can only give to others what you possess.
What is there? And thou shalt teach them diligently unto who? Thy children. Now, notice how you diligently teach. Notice what it says. And shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house and when thou walkest by the way when they liest down and when they risest up.
When does that happen? When your kids see you living life, how do you respond to others? How do you walk through difficult situations? How do you make right choices?
What choices don't you make? What choices do you make? How do you prioritize? If two things are, if there's nothing wrong with two things, what makes one more important than the other? You teach your children.
[28:25] You know, one of the problems I think we often have as dads and parents in general is sometimes our own pride gets in the way of us training our children because we're too proud to say, no, I need to make this decision and not that one.

Verse 8 tells us here, thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. You know, something that ought to be seen, something that's shown. You know, there's an old saying that says more things are caught than taught.

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Your kids pick up mannerisms and all sorts of different things from you. You know, they pick up a picture of who God is from their parents. You know, the reality is sometimes they come with a smile on their face on Sunday morning and roast the preacher on the way home.
You know what that tells your kids? It's presenting a picture of them of what are the things of God, what's the priority, how to honor somebody, how to do those things.
I'm not saying you never have a problem with the preacher but you need to, it's never them timing and perspective things again. It needs to be dealt with the right way instead of tearing down things.
[29:27] But look also here back in our text in verse 4. It says not only nurture but admonition. Admonishing. Because nurturing or training involves more than correction and instruction but also love and patience and understanding.

You know, a father's role cannot be overstated. You know, we need to teach them by the choices and the things and the priorities. How do we respond? How do we show them what maturity looks like?
A father's display of love and patience towards his children has a direct impact in their confidence, in their stability.
It has a direct impact upon their life. That practical daily skill of understanding how to walk through life and it gives confidence and stability to the kids when it's founded on the word of God.
It provides them with a picture also of a heavenly father that cares for them. You know, it's amazing how many people get a tainted view of God because they have a tainted view of fatherhood.
[30:41] They think God is just like their father. Well, I've got some good news for you. God's a lot better than your dad. God's a lot better than the best dad because even the best dad is going to make some mistakes, do some things they ought not to do, but God never has and never will.

He's the perfect father. You think about the picture of the prodigal son there in Luke 15. It talks about the father saw him had compassion and ran and fell on his neck and kissed his son and we realize here that the picture is that of a heavenly father who cares about you that seeks reconciliation.
You know, how one pictures their dad influences their picture of God. You know, if they see God and their dad as one that provokes them to anger, they'll see God's instruction comparably. They'll look at the things of God and say, if my dad's like that and God commands all these things then God must be mean and cruel and all the things that people get a picture that are counter to who God really is.
You know, the role that you have as dad is essential. You know, I want to encourage you because you know what? The best thing is is every day is a new day with the Lord.
[32:01] I'm not saying that one change in your life as a dad's going to change everything in your family, but I guarantee it's one step getting in the right direction. Because often when we have problems, I want you to understand you didn't get there overnight and you're not going to solve a problem overnight.

You know, it's amazing how many people think, well, this is 15 years in the making, I want it solved tomorrow. No, sometimes it might take 30 years to iron out 15 years of problem, but you need to make the investment to say this is the direction, this is what we're going to do from here on.
I know where we were, but I know where I want to go and make a difference, a distinction in our life. You know, I want you to consider where you need improvement even this week as a dad.
You know, where can you improve? What things does God tell you you need to change a little bit or deal with? Don't be discouraged in your role as dad. I want to encourage you to step up and to follow God's principles that you might bring them up in the nourishment and admonishment of the Lord.
To bring them up in the right things because the greatest legacy a father can have is a faith in Christ and a love for his family. To understand those things, it starts with your own relationship with the Lord.
[33:20] You know, this morning, I want to encourage you to consider where are you with God? It starts with you and God first. You know, have you trusted him as your savior because you cannot lead your family in faith if you don't first possess it.

If you're not willing to obey it. If you're not willing to do it. It's important because God set the stage of what, how he cares for those that are his.

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When you consider that he gave his only begotten son to save you. He didn't do it to provoke you to anger or to condemn you. He did it that you might believe upon him.
You know, consider a very famous verse, John 3, 16 and verse 7 he says, for God so loved the world that he did what? He gave his only begotten son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life.
For God sent not his son into the world to do what? Condemn the world but that the world through him might be saved. What God did was to provoke us unto love and to good works.
[34:28] To provoke us unto him that we might know him and understand that he gives us the guidance we need to be the dad that we ought to be.

I want to encourage you this week to consider those things. Consider yourself as a dad whether you have children yet or not. You know what?
Your preparation for being a father starts from your own father raising you up and preparing you and the choices you make are important. I wanted you to consider this morning what things does Lord speak to you about today in the decisions and the things and maybe you're here today and not sure about where you stand with God I encourage you today would be the day that you would get started on the right footing the best footing the only footing that gets you to be the dad that you ought to be and that's to know Christ as your savior.
As heads are bowed and eyes are closed this morning what about you today? You know I know we had a message towards dad but really it applies to all of us in our relationship to God.
Maybe the Lord spoke to you about some things or situations or dynamics in your life and maybe you say Lord I need to do some things different. Maybe you need to take some time to seek God and to look at God's word get some counsel okay how do I walk through these things?
[35:51] How can I start and change the direction? Or how can I do better continuing in the direction towards serving the Lord?

Heavenly fathers we come before you this morning Lord we just thank you and praise you. Lord we're thankful that even though you tell us things to be careful of Lord you also encourage us to tell us hey you're giving us those things that we need to do and to accomplish what you would have for us to do as dads here today.
And Lord we just love you and thank you Lord praise we have an opportunity to respond to your word today that your spirit might stir each heart each life to look at ourselves to say where am I with you and Lord where do I need to be different according to your word and Lord we ask these things in Jesus name as the piano plays what about you?

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