

**TEXT: John 8:31-36**

**TITLE: "A DISCIPLE OF JESUS"**

**DATE: February 6, 2011**

**SERIES: THE THINGS THAT REALLY MATTER (#3 of 7)**

Number 3: The Core Value of Discipleship

This series is on our core values. Core values are the DNA that define who we are in Christ Jesus. They are not just creeds on plaque or notes in a book somewhere or banners on a wall. They are the essence of who we. Prayer is the first core value.

**INTRODUCTION:** Are you a disciple of Jesus? Not someone who attends church regularly or tries to be a good, moral person. Let me ask you again, are you a disciple of Jesus?

**I. (v.8:31) THE DESCRIPTION OF A DISCIPLE**

**"To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, 'If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples.'"**

1. Discipleship begins with Jesus.
2. A disciple is a Christian.
3. A disciple is someone who has trusted in Jesus for salvation and is learning from Him how to live, becoming like Him in the process.
4. Discipleship is the journey of living the Christian life, becoming like Jesus.
5. A disciple is one who has responded to the call of Jesus to follow Him.
6. Earlier in this chapter, Jesus made an amazing announcement, identifying Himself as the Light of the World.

**(John 8:12) "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."**

7. Jesus' claim to be the light of the world constituted a high claim indeed.
8. 'Light' from the Old Testament symbolized God's gift of life, the guidance of God, the protection of God, and even the very presence of God.
9. With this claim, Jesus gave a promise that whoever followed Him will have the light of life.
10. Jesus words implied that those not walking in the light of life would wander in the darkness of death.
11. Jesus was saying, "Unless you believe who I am, you will never see eternal life – You will die in your sins."
12. Jesus was offering Himself as God's sole means of salvation.

**ILLUSTRATION: \* (Presidential picture) History records that Andrew Jackson, 17<sup>th</sup> president of the United States, said just before he died: "I have full confidence in the goodness and mercy of God. The bible is true and upon that sacred volume I rest my hope for eternal salvation through the merits and blood of our blessed Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."**

13. As the Christ, the Son of God, Savior and Living Lord, Jesus calls people to be his disciples and follow Him.

**“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.” (I John 1:7)**

14. Discipleship calls for a decision about Jesus.

**ILLUSTRATION: Chorus: (Sing and Play)**

**\*\* I have decided to follow Jesus**

**I have decided to follow Jesus**

**I have decided to follow Jesus**

**No turning back, no turning back.**

**The world behind me, the cross before me,**

**The world behind me, the cross before me;**

**The world behind me, the cross before me;**

**No turning back, no turning back. (Unknown)**

15. Discipleship begins with faith.

16. The scripture says, **“Even as he spoke, many put their faith in him.” (John 8:30)**

17. Some have pointed out in verse 30 that literally in the Greek the meaning is "into him."

18. In other words, they stood on Jesus' word and trusted in Him.

19. The phrase indicates a deep commitment of heart to Jesus.

20. Verse 31 is a different phrase with a slight difference between the words in verse 31 and those of verse 30.

21. In verse 31, He speaks to the Jews who had believed Him.

22. Some interpret they had been intellectually grasped by His arguments and His words, but they had not yet committed themselves to Him or trusted in Him.

23. Speaking to those who had believed Him, Jesus points out a distinguishing trait of a true disciple of Jesus.

**“To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, ‘If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples.’” (John 8:31)**

24. Jesus began to test their faith by defining what it means to be a disciple.

25. A quick glimpse in scripture of what the disciples of Jesus faced reveals to us that being a disciple of Jesus is not an easy or superficial faith.

26. Christianity is a demanding and serious.

27. When Christianity is delivered as easy, it is another kind of religion altogether.

**ILLUSTRATION: \*As someone once observed, “Christ is looking not for admirers but for disciples-those who will conform their lives to his.” (Unknown)**

28. Jesus puts the emphasis on the very heart of genuine discipleship.

29. The words, “If you hold to my teaching” underscore His divine authority and the centrality of the teaching of Jesus.

30. Because Jesus is Lord of God's Kingdom which has come to men, He is to be obeyed absolutely.

31. Loyalty to Him supersedes ties to traditions or self-interest.

**ILLUSTRATION: (Cartoon – second copy with punch line) Brenda Goodine writes, "My friend decided it was time to talk to her bright four-year-old son, Benji, about receiving Christ. "Benji," she asked quietly, "Would you like to have Jesus in your heart?" Benji rolled his blue eyes and answered seriously, "No. I don't think I want the responsibility."**

32. Being a real disciple of Jesus carries with it responsibility.

33. Disciples have the responsibility of holding on to the teachings of Jesus.

34. What does it mean to hold to the teachings of Jesus?

35. Again, discipleship is the journey of living the Christian life, becoming like Jesus.

36. I want to focus on some aspect of discipleship or key elements in the practice of being a disciple.

#### **A. A DISCIPLE HOLDS TO THE TEACHINGS OF JESUS BY OBEYING HIS WORD**

37. A true disciple is Word-oriented.

38. That's because that is what discipleship is all about.

39. To hold on is to stay in the word of God, continuing to live according to it.

40. True discipleship means abiding in His word, welcoming it, being at home with it, and living with it so continuously that it becomes part of the believer's life.

**\*A key principle spoken, "Live in the word so that the word lives in you."**

41. It is not just reading the Bible, it is living in the word of God so that it lives in you.

**"Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says." (James 1:22)**

42. We hold to Jesus' teaching because in those words, we hear the voice of the Father.

43. The word "disciple" is an interesting word that literally means learner.

**ILLUSTRATION: (\*\*John draw cartoon – second copy with punch line) Dana Jones tells that during the day she takes a few moments to unwind by reading the Bible. After seeing me her do this for several years, her four-year-old daughter became concerned and said, "Aren't you ever going to get finished reading that book?"**

44. Disciples are never finished learning from God's Word.

45. Discipleship includes the joyful spiritual discipline of spending time in the word of God, learning more of who Jesus is and what He wants to do in and through our lives.

46. A disciple is a learner who sits at the feet of Jesus, learning His word for our lives and applying it with obedience.

**EXAMPLE:** On what is known as the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus told the story about a wise man who built his house on a rock. When the storms came, it did not fall. Jesus told them that everyone who hears His word and puts it into practice is a person on solid ground that can stand the storms in life. In contrast, Jesus went on to say, **“But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand.” (Matthew 7:26).** When the storm came it fell with a great crash.

47. Disciples know the teachings of Jesus and apply them to their daily lives through obedience.

### **B. A DISCIPLE HOLDS TO THE TEACHING OF JESUS, BEARING MUCH FRUIT**

48. Discipleship is an intimate relationship of abiding in Christ.

49. To hold to Jesus' teaching stresses the need for faith to continue beyond its starting point.

50. Holding to Jesus' teaching is a sign of a true disciple because it is evidence of dependence, openness and loyalty to Jesus.

51. Disciples never become self-sustaining or self-sufficient.

**“Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.” (John 15:4)**

52. Discipleship is keeping that vital connection with Jesus, the Vine.

53. Fruitfulness is natural for the person abiding in intimacy with the Vine.

**“This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.” (John 15:8)**

54. The fruit of a relationship with Jesus should be seen in our lives.

**ILLUSTRATION:** Someone said, **“Fruitfulness is the public insignia of a believer, and yet, he is seldom self-conscious about it.” (Quinby)**

55. The evidence of a life of discipleship is not just the words we speak but the lives we live.

56. Jesus pointed out in His Sermon on the Mount that the fruit is related to the tree it is connected with, saying, **“By their fruit you will recognize them.” (Matthew 7:16)**

### **C. A DISCIPLE HOLDS TO THE TEACHING OF JESUS BY LOVING ONE ANOTHER.**

57. Love serves as evidence of our relationship with God.

58. One cannot be a disciple without expressing love.

**(John 13:35) “By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”**

59. Loving as Jesus loves is the distinguishing mark of the follower of Jesus.

**“My Command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.” (John 15:12)**

60. Disciples are people motivated to love by love.

**“Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law. The**

**commandments, 'Do not commit adultery,' 'Do not murder,' 'Do not steal,' 'Do not covet,' and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law." (Romans 13:8-10)**

61. Love is not an end in itself but a means to the end that all men will know that you are my disciples.

62. The greatest testimony this church will ever give to the people of our community is the love we show.

63. Loving one another with true love is the priority.

**ILLUSTRATION: One author said it this way, "If we as a Christian community took seriously that the sign of our love for Jesus is our love for one another, I am convinced it would change the world. We're denying to the world the one witness Jesus asked for.**

**D. A DISCIPLE HOLDS TO THE TEACHING OF JESUS WITH ALL THEIR HEART**

64. There is no such thing as a part-time disciple.

65. Discipleship is a lifestyle of wholehearted surrender and service.

**"And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple." Luke 14:27)**

66. It takes all of you to be a disciple.

**ILLUSTRATION: \*Stanley Hauerwas of Duke University said, "It's hard to remember that Jesus did not come to make us safe, but rather to make us disciples, citizens of God's new age, a kingdom of surprise."**

**ILLUSTRATION: \* CHORUS: (Sing and play)**

With my whole heart Lord, Let me love you  
With my whole heart none above  
Praise and love you  
With my whole heart

With my whole life Lord, Let me love you  
With my whole life none above  
Praise and love you  
With my whole life

**E. A DISCIPLE HOLDS TO THE TEACHING OF JESUS BY BEING A DISCIPLE MAKER**

67. We are not called just to be disciples.

68. The mission God has given us is bigger than that.

69. We are called to be disciple makers.

70. We must pass on the teaching of Jesus.

**"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And**

**surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” (Matthew 28:19-20)**

71. We do not have to do it by ourselves for the Lord is with us but we must be disciple makers.

**ILLUSTRATION: \*Christopher J.H. Wright said it well, “It is not so much the case that God has a mission for his church in the world but that God has a church for his mission in the world. Mission was not made for the church; the church was made for mission-God’s mission.”**

72. God has called His disciples to fulfill His mission.

73. I opened this message by asking the question, “Are you a disciple of Jesus?”

74. Each of us must answer that question in the light of the description of Jesus and truth of scripture.

75. Jesus was talking about being a real disciple.

76. Not just thinking or pretending to be something your not.

**ILLUSTRATION: (\*\*Play a recording of “Massacre of Mozart) Florence Foster Jenkins, a soprano, loved to sing—especially the great operatic classics. She inherited money when she was in her 50s, which funded her musical career. It wasn't long before her popularity skyrocketed, holding annual recitals at the Ritz-Carlton in New York throughout the 1930s and 40s. But as one writer puts it, "History agrees, with hands held over its ears that she couldn't sing for sour apples. Jenkins' nickname, behind her back, was 'The Tone-Deaf Diva,' or 'The Terror of the High C's.'" She was called by some the funniest singer they ever heard. The writer adds that if you ever hear one of her old recordings, all that you'll hear will be "squeaks, squawks, and barks." But get this: she didn't ever grasp that she was bad! When people laughed and hooted as she sang, she took it to be delirious enthusiasm for great music. She thought they loved her and her music.**

In 1944, when she was 76-years-old, she did a benefit concert for the armed forces at Carnegie Hall in New York. Thousands lined the streets to get tickets, and the performance sold out in minutes. The recording of that concert is still the third most requested album from all Carnegie Hall recordings, punctuated by a painful rendition of "Ave Maria." What can we learn from Ms. Jenkins? People will say, "It doesn't matter what you believe, so long as you're sincere." But it does matter. Belief must match reality, or it is laughable, a delusion. She thought herself to be something she really wasn't. (Lee Eclov, Vernon Hills, Illinois; source: Doug George, "Florence Foster Jenkins: She played Carnegie Hall and she really couldn't sing a note?" Chicago Tribune (11-20-09)

77. Jesus does not want us to be mislead, so He clearly describes what a real disciple is.

78. Will you commit to being a real disciple of Jesus?

## II. (v 32-36) THE FREEDOM OF A DISCIPLE

**“Then you will know the truth. And the truth will set you free.” (John 8:32)**

1. Holding to the teachings of Jesus will enable you to know the truth.
2. The world is filled with information.
3. Technology has made information more available than it has ever been.
4. With modern technology, we can know the truth about a lot of things.

**ILLUSTRATION: (\*pictures of each- already done) Did you know...**

**--that a West Virginia man once escaped from jail by using a rope made out of**

**dental floss?**

**--that a kangaroo jumped a pile of lumber 10 1/2 feet high and 27 feet long?**

**--that only two people in Saudi Arabia subscribe to Surfer magazine?**

**--that Englishman John Evans kept 66 bricks, weighing a total of 296 pounds,**

**balanced on his head for 10 seconds, a world record?**

**--that Iceland consumes more Coca-Cola per person than any other country in**

**the world?**

**--that Heinz ketchup, poured from the mouth of an upended bottle, travels at an**

**average speed of 25 miles per year?**

5. There is lots information out there, but what difference does all that information really make in our daily lives?
6. Holding to the teachings of Jesus results in knowing the truth about God, Jesus as Son, about sin and all that is necessary for salvation.

**ILLUSTRATION: Writer Os Guinness tells about a young, searching Christian who exclaimed, “I always knew the Christian faith was true, but I never realized it was this true!”**

7. The truth he is writing about is the truth that is bound up with the Person and the work of Jesus.

**“Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” (John 14:6)**

8. Jesus is the source of truth.

**ILLUSTRATION: One author wrote, “My eight-year-old embraces some interesting sources of truth. We were coming home from the grocery store recently when he asked, “Dad, do you believe in the Bermuda Triangle?” “Jack,” I replied, “if you’re asking me if I believe that this place exists, my answer is yes. If you’re asking me if I believe all the mysterious stories about ships and planes disappearing, no: I think that’s all baloney.” “Well, Dad,” Jack said with a note of defensiveness, “I believe in it. And I bet you want to know why.” “Yes, Jack. I do.” “Well, I was watching Scooby Doo ...”**

9. Your source of truth can determine the trustworthiness of the truth.

10. The truth of Jesus is perfectly aligned to the Father's will and character, and is therefore unfailingly true.
  11. "Jesus told the Jews, **"My teaching is not my own. It comes from him who sent me."**(John 7:16)
  12. The truth comes from knowing Jesus.
  13. The spiritual disciplines that are part of discipleship, like prayer, Bible study, worship, and Christian fellowship, are part of being a disciple and knowing the truth.
  14. We must not neglect them.
  15. Spiritual disciplines are meant to bring freedom, not bondage.
  16. We must not measure our spiritual maturity by the practice of the disciplines themselves, but rather, by the fruit they produce in our lives.
  17. When we practice the spiritual disciplines with submission and surrender, we yield ourselves to God so He can do His work in us, molding us into the disciples He wants us to be.
  18. The truth of Jesus Christ does not leave us the same.  
**"Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."** (John 8:32)
  19. Disciples of Jesus are not like everyone else, for the truth of Christ is transforming.
  20. When the truth of Christ touches a life, that life is changed in purpose, power, and destiny.
- ILLUSTRATION: An anonymous person said, "Tell your boss what you think of him and the truth shall set you free."**
21. The truth of Christ truly sets us free, for disciples experience a freedom that is only known through Jesus Christ.
  22. The question is will you receive and live in the freedom Christ offers?
- ILLUSTRATION: A man who robbed a bank 10 years ago and was sentenced to 70 months in a federal penitentiary decided he liked prison life so much that he committed another crime, just so he could return! Danny Villegas walked inside a Federal Credit Union in Florida and told the teller he was robbing her, adding, "You might as well call the police right now."**
- Villegas then sat down on a couch in the lobby and waited for police to arrive. "He said he wanted to rob a federal bank because he wanted to go back to a federal penitentiary," said Lt. Ron Wright of the South Daytona Police Department. Villegas had worked in construction in Texas for five years, but had grown tired of the work. "Apparently," added Wright, "he robbed a bank in Fresno, California, 10 years ago, was sentenced to 70 months in a federal penitentiary in Phoenix, and enjoyed his time there. (Hugh Poland, Kingwood, Texas; source: Associated Press, "Police Say Man Staged Florida Robbery to Go Back to Prison," Houston Chronicle (1-9-07))**
23. He had a choice of living in freedom, but He chose to live in bondage.
  24. The Jews who had believed Him were offended by His comments on freedom with its implication that they are not already free.

**“They answered him, ‘We are Abraham’s descendants and have never been slaves of anyone. How can you say that we shall be set free?’”**

**(John 8:33)**

**ILLUSTRATION: \*Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, German poet and dramatist, (1749-1832) said, “None are more hopelessly enslaved than those who falsely believe they are free.”**

25. Jesus did not differ with their assessment of history but drove at an issue far deeper – slavery to sin.

**“Jesus replied, “I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin.”**

**(John 8:34)**

26. Jesus explains that He is using slavery as a metaphor for sin and death.

27. To commit sin, Jesus explained, places one in submission to sin as one’s master.

28. Jesus, as the Son who has full rights and privileges in His Father’s household, has authority to declare full freedom from the tyranny of sin.

29. Jesus’ promise to set His disciples free is a promise of life, an alternative to the grim prospect of dying in their sins.

30. Jesus is the supreme liberator

**ILLUSTRATION: *Decision* magazine, a few year ago, told of Kumar, a Christian in South India, was grieved because none of the 13 people he had invited came to watch a Billy Graham evangelistic broadcast at his home on December 23rd. He began to pray, and around 9 p.m. he felt God compelling him to invite his wife's sister's family to watch the next night's broadcast. Immediately, he set about to contact them. It wasn't easy. His sister-in-law's family had no phone, so Kumar had to call their neighbor and plead with him to go and bring them to the phone for an urgent message. When his brother-in-law, Satish, reached the phone, Kumar asked him and his family to catch a bus to his city as soon as possible. Satish said he had no money. Kumar encouraged him to borrow the money and said that he would reimburse Satish for the tickets. Satish consented, and at 4 a.m. he and his family boarded a bus for the long trip to Kumar's house. They arrived at 5 p.m., and an hour later they watched the *My Hope* telecast from the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. Afterward, Kumar gave his testimony and asked if the others wanted to put their faith in Christ. They were all looking at one another, and Kumar wondered what they were thinking. Then Satish, noticeably distressed, stood and explained that he had lost his job because the tea factory that he worked for had closed. Further, the company was demanding that the family vacate their company-owned house. Seeing no hope, the family had decided that on December 25 they were all going to commit suicide. Now they saw that through Jesus there is hope, and they prayed with Kumar to accept Christ. Satish said he felt like a new man, and, after staying several more days with Kumar, the family returned home, ready to face the future with Christ. (This excerpt was taken from *Decision* magazine, March 2006; Bob Paulson, "My Hope: India," *Decision* (March 200))**

31. Jesus, the Son of God, has freedom to declare from the tyranny of sin. **“So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.” (John 8:36)**
32. No other means to escape sin’s controlling power and mastery, other than the Son’s power to make free, will find success. **“But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching to which you were entrusted. You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.” (Romans 6:17-18)**
33. Through obedience to Christ, you can experience His freedom.
34. The enemy wants to tell you there is not freedom from sin and death, but Jesus offers freedom.
35. Jesus is the door to freedom.
- ILLUSTRATION: Thomas Costain's book *The Three Edwards* describes the life of Raynald III, a 14th-century duke in what is now Belgium. Grossly overweight, Raynald was commonly called by his Latin nickname, Crassus, which means fat. After a violent quarrel, Raynald's younger brother Edward led a successful revolt against him. Edward captured Raynald, but did not kill him. Instead, he built a room around Raynald in the Nieuwkerk castle and promised him he could regain his title and property as soon as he was able to leave the room. This would not have been difficult for most people, since the room had several windows and a door of near-normal size—none of which were locked or barred. The problem was Raynald's size. To regain his freedom, he needed to lose weight. But, Edward knew his older brother. Each day, he sent a variety of delicious foods into the room. Instead of dieting his way out of prison, Raynald grew fatter. When Duke Edward was accused of cruelty, he had a ready answer: "My brother is not a prisoner. He may leave when he so wills." Raynald stayed in that room for 10 years and wasn't released until after Edward died in battle. By then, his health was so ruined that he died within a year—a prisoner of his own appetite. (Rich Doebler, from his sermon series titled "grace).**
36. The choices he made robbed him of the freedom he could have had.
37. In Christ, there is freedom.
38. It is a freedom from our fallen selves and the power and guidance to act in accordance with God Himself, the source of all goodness and life.
39. Jesus does not give us freedom to do what we want, but He give us freedom to follow Him and be all that God meant us to be.
40. Through Christ, we do not have to live in bondage to sin. **“So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.” (John 8:34)**
41. True freedom is experienced in Christ.
42. We do not have to live in bondage to bitterness in the heart because, in Christ, we can be free indeed.
43. We do not have to live in bondage to sinful habits that destroy for, in Christ, we can be free indeed.

44. People do not have to live in bondage to pornography for, in Christ, we are free indeed.
45. People do not have to live in bondage to sin because, in Christ, we can be free indeed.
46. We do not have to live in bondage to emotions that cripple us because if the Son sets us free, we are free indeed.
47. True freedom is found in Christ

**“It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.” (Galatians 5:1)**

48. Jesus came to set us free.

**ILLUSTRATION: (\*Prop – chains, etc. that I can bring) (\*Appropriate picture of) Harry Houdini (1874 – 1926) was perhaps the greatest escape artist of all time. He broke out of every prison, every set of handcuffs, every straight jacket that ever tried to hold him – except... a tiny jail cell in the British Isles. A simple cell stumped Houdini. Usually it took Houdini a couple of seconds to pick a lock, but he worked on this particular, innocent-looking, cell-door for more than two hours. Houdini scrambled at a furious pace and became more and more frustrated as his efforts proved futile. Finally, in utter exhaustion, he collapsed and fell against the door - and surprise! The door swung open. See, it had never been locked! The Great Houdini had tried to break out of door that wasn't even locked!**

49. Jesus is the truth that opens the door to freedom.

50. It is not a freedom through trying harder but a freedom that comes through holding to the teaching of Jesus.

51. It is the freedom Christ wants us to have.

**CONCLUSION:** Discipleship is the journey of living the Christian life, becoming like Jesus. It really matters.

Are you a disciple of Jesus?

#### **I. JESUS GIVES A DESCRIPTION OF A DISCIPLE**

**A DISCIPLE HOLDS TO THE TEACHINGS OF JESUS BY OBEYING HIS WORD**

**B. A DISCIPLE HOLDS TO THE TEACHING OF JESUS, BEARING MUCH FRUIT.**

**C. A DISCIPLE HOLDS TO THE TEACHING OF JESUS BY LOVING ONE ANOTHER.**

**D. A DISCIPLE HOLDS TO THE TEACHING OF JESUS WITH ALL THEIR HEART**

**E. A DISCIPLE HOLDS TO THE TEACHING OF JESUS BY BEING A DISCIPLE MAKER**

**Are you holding to the teaching of Jesus?**

#### **II. JESUS DECLARES THE FREEDOM OF A DISCIPLE**

Are you living in the freedom Christ has for you?

Discipleship is the journey of living the Christian life becoming like Jesus. It really matters.

Are you the disciple Jesus wants you to be?

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