

A person stands on a mountain peak, looking out over a vast landscape. The foreground is covered in golden-brown grasses. In the middle ground, a large blue lake stretches across the valley, with several islands and peninsulas. In the background, a range of mountains is visible under a clear sky. The overall scene is serene and majestic.

STAND STRONG

HOW TO BUILD RESILIENCE

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Happy New Year! 2020! It is hard to imagine that we'll be using this date for the next year. For whatever reason, it seems significant to step into this new decade. As I think about the year 2020, it is easy to think of proper and accurate vision and eyesight. I recently had to change the prescription in my glasses in order to be able to see better. When I face something like this in the natural, I consider the possibility that God may be speaking to me about something supernatural.

Ephesians 1:18 is a prayer in which the Apostle Paul prays that we would have "the eyes of our heart enlightened" (ESV). We could say that "enlightened" means that someone has "turned the lights on," and now we have greater understanding of God and His word.

My desire is that we face 2020 with confidence and strength. But not self-confidence and personal strength, but a confidence and strength that comes from our Lord and from Him alone. As the writer of Hebrews encourages us, it is time to "look to Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith."

Fasting is one of the most powerful spiritual disciplines. I am not completely sure how or why it works the way it does, but I sure know that it does. Make no mistake about it, fasting is hard, and it requires commitment and focus. But I know it is worth it.

Biblically speaking, fasting is the setting aside of food for the purpose of seeking the Lord. You can decide for yourself how you will do that. Perhaps you'll fast specific foods, or specific meals, or one day each week, or even all solid foods for the 21 days. That decision is between you, the Lord, and those closest to you.

During this season of fasting, we are also encouraging you to set aside all unnecessary forms of media for the purpose of clearing your mind from distractions. We've produced this prayer guide as a tool to serve you on this journey. Let's enter this season of fasting with the expectation that we will all see Him better!

In Christ,



Kevin Eshleman

FIRST 15 DAY 1

READ: Ephesians 1:1–2

Of all of Paul's letters, it is in Ephesians that we find the highest spiritual truth concerning the Christian life. The letter contains some of the most high and significant spiritual riches, while at the same time being incredibly practical.

As we begin this time together in the letter to the Ephesians, may our prayer reflect both aspects of this letter: spiritual truths and practical living. May we grow deeper in our understanding of God and His ways, while at the same time receiving the grace we need to daily live in the reality of the transformation God brings into our lives. Feel free to spend time praying according to one of the prayer patterns demonstrated in this booklet. Invite God into every aspect of your day and your life.

FINAL 15 DAY 1

REFLECTION

QUOTE: "The trap the enemy wants us to fall into is worshiping the blessings rather than the Blessor." Robert Morris

Today I express my thanks for: _____

Today I saw the activity of God in: _____

FIRST 15 DAY 2

READ: Ephesians 1:3–14

Notice the tense of the verbs used in the passage from Ephesians. He blessed us, chose us, predestined us, etc. Why is it so easy for us to try to work for that which God has already accomplished on our behalf? Why do we strive, worry, wonder if we've done enough. Jesus paid it all. He has accomplished it all. He has provided all that has ever been needed. Are you secure in that reality today?

It is interesting that it is so easy to turn the attention to us, what we've done, how we've behaved, what righteous acts we've accomplished. But it is never enough, simply because God didn't design it that way. He has done it all on our behalf.

Are you able to rest in that reality? If not, can you invite the Holy Spirit to give you the revelation of the finished work of Jesus Christ on your behalf?

FINAL 15 DAY 2

REFLECTION

QUOTE: "Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a known God."
Corrie Ten Boom

Today I express my thanks for: _____

Today I saw the activity of God in: _____

FIRST 15 DAY 3

READ: Ephesians 1:15–23

I love it when scripture prays for us! It is very easy for us to be concerned about our prayers. We wonder if we are praying according to God's will. Am I using the right words, praying for the right things?

If you have ever wondered that for yourself, today's passage is for you. What a wonderful passage to pray for ourselves and for those around us. That the eyes of our heart might be enlightened, that we would know the hope of his calling, his glorious inheritance, his great power toward us, and that we've been seated (there's that past tense again) in heavenly places with Jesus, FAR above all rule!

Pray this passage for yourself today, and for others! Pray it with confidence and absolute certainty that Jesus will do this very work!

FINAL 15 DAY 3

REFLECTION

QUOTE: "The will of God will never take you to where the grace of God will not protect you." Billy Graham

Today I express my thanks for: _____

Today I saw the activity of God in: _____

FIRST 15 DAY 4

READ: Ephesians 2:1–4

The word *contrast* is defined as, “the state of being strikingly different from something else in juxtaposition or close association.” A great example of contrast would be the appreciation of sunshine after days of rain, or the thankfulness for spring after a long, harsh winter.

The passage for today paints a powerful contrast as Paul describes our condition before Christ, and it is not pretty! Perhaps it is not often that you reflect and remember how things used to be before you met Jesus, but I encourage you to do that today. This healthy exercise will net incredible thankfulness in your heart.

Your life in Christ takes on new levels of appreciation and thankfulness as we contrast it against how things used to be. Invite God to remind you throughout your day of what your life was like before experiencing the profound love of Jesus. This will also help remind you of the testimony you carry of the transformational power of Jesus.

FINAL 15 DAY 4

REFLECTION

QUOTE: “I may not be where I need to be, but I thank God I am not where I used to be.” Joyce Meyers

Today I express my thanks for: _____

Today I saw the activity of God in: _____

FIRST 15 DAY 5

READ: Ephesians 2:5–10

In light of your reflection from yesterday's passage, today we experience the glorious contrast! My extreme darkness is pierced through by the overwhelming light of God's profound love. Despite my failures, the success of Christ has been paid forward to me. The work of Christ has accomplished what I could never do, and although I once was dead, now I am alive! His free gift of grace has been offered to me, for which I am eternally grateful! This is the good news of the Gospel.

Take some time today to reflect on the reality of your position in Christ. Verse 6 says that you are seated with Him in heavenly places! Ask the Lord to highlight to you what it means to sit with Christ. What does it look like to find rest in the work of Jesus and receive your position in Him without any work of your own?

FINAL 15 DAY 5

REFLECTION

QUOTE: "I have never met a person I could despair of, or lose all hope for, after discerning what lies in me apart from the grace of God."
Oswald Chambers

Today I express my thanks for: _____

Today I saw the activity of God in: _____

FIRST 15 DAY 6

READ: Ephesians 2:11–15

Growing up, my mom would tell me, “It’s what is on the inside that counts,” encouraging me to not be so quick to judge based on appearance, but to be mindful of a person’s heart. Before Jesus surrendered His life on the cross, what was on the outside absolutely mattered. Genesis 17:10–11 shows that the covenant established by God was that of circumcision, and Deuteronomy 6:25 tells us that righteousness was equal to obeying all of the commandments.

From today’s reading, we are comforted by the work of Jesus. He fulfilled all the requirements of the law in his flesh and then destroyed the flesh through crucifixion, introducing a new covenant in His blood by which all people can draw near to God. No longer is righteousness from works but by faith in Christ, and all people, regardless of their past, race, nationality, gender, or age, can draw near and become one with God through the covenant of His blood!

FINAL 15 DAY 6

REFLECTION

QUOTE: “When the Holy Spirit shows us Christ, and we believe on Him, then at once, with no further act on our part, there begins for us a life in union with Him.” Watchman Nee

Today I express my thanks for: _____

Today I saw the activity of God in: _____

FIRST 15 DAY 7

READ: Ephesians 2:16–22

Oneness! Our passage today reflects the oneness that we have with God as well as the oneness that we have with others in the Body of Christ. As followers of Jesus, it is important that we understand our identity and position in Him, but it is also important that we understand our identity and position in the context of others!

Today's passage gives us a great opportunity to examine our own life with the Lord as we live that out in community with others. The Christian life was meant to be lived in community with others.

With that in mind, consider these questions: Do I know where I "fit" in the Body of Christ? Do I harbor any unresolved issues with specific expressions of the church? Am I able to honor all in the Body of Christ? Today is a great opportunity to come to a new level of unity and oneness with Jesus and His people.

FINAL 15 DAY 7

REFLECTION

QUOTE: "Keeping the Sabbath day holy is much more than just physical rest. It involves spiritual renewal and worship." James E. Faust

Today I express my thanks for: _____

Today I saw the activity of God in: _____

FIRST 15 DAY 8

READ: Ephesians 3:1–13

Paul suggests that God has a cosmic plan, not just one for a single tribe known as the Jews. And Paul felt that he was personally called by God to join in that cosmic plan! Maybe it is the same for the Church and for us as individuals? God has a plan and a message for the “rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms,” and we are invited to join Him in delivering that message.

This is where we begin to transition from the position of sitting in the authority we’ve been given to walking in authority as we spread the rule of God’s Kingdom into other realms (v.10).

The first move involved in that authority is the welcoming of others and together sharing in the promises found in Jesus Christ and the authority that is released through them (v. 6).

Today is a good day to reflect on those in our community that you are thankful you have the chance to work alongside. Name some.

FINAL 15 DAY 8

REFLECTION

QUOTE: “Satan never wastes a fiery dart on an area covered in armor.”
Beth Moore

Today I express my thanks for: _____

Today I saw the activity of God in: _____

FIRST 15 DAY 9

READ: Ephesians 3:14–21

Being rooted in God's love releases power and authority. Paul couldn't help but think about that beautiful truth and then to marvel at a God who invited us, as a fallen and divided people, to join His eternal purposes. Where does our power and authority come from to walk into those eternal purposes? By knowing the height, depth, and width of God's love for us (v.18,19).

It is no small paradox to think that sitting in God's love releases power to walk confidently into our broken and complex world and to see it healed.

Today reflect on an area in your life where you felt God's love to the point you could then give love away.

FINAL 15 DAY 9

REFLECTION

QUOTE: "The spiritual life does not remove us from the world but leads us deeper into it." Henri J.M. Nouwen

Today I express my thanks for: _____

Today I saw the activity of God in: _____

FIRST 15 DAY 10

READ: Ephesians 4:1–6

With these verses we find ourselves turning our focus from our calling and position in Christ to walking out practically how to live here on the earth through our conduct and lifestyle. How do we bring this truth of our calling into our homes, construction sites, offices, shops, kitchens, schools, etc.? Paul gives us five stepping stones for our walk: humility, gentleness, patience, tolerance, and love. We walk one step at a time. Take a small step or a big one if you can, but walk. For it will lead to “the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace,” the goal for these deliberate steps.

Feel free to spend time praying according to one of the prayer patterns demonstrated in this booklet. Invite God into every aspect of your day and your life.

FINAL 15 DAY 10

REFLECTION

QUOTE: “The one who obeys God’s instruction for today will develop a keen awareness of His direction for tomorrow.” Lysa TerKeurst

Today I express my thanks for: _____

Today I saw the activity of God in: _____

FIRST 15 DAY 11

READ: Ephesians 4:7–10

Through Christ's descent and ascension, He won freedom and the battle for us! He not only won the battle, but He put Himself in the position to give the Holy Spirit to the church! Through the Holy Spirit, His power was shown through giving a multitude of spiritual gifts to all. Have you embraced the gifts given to you? Or do you feel inadequate and have placed them on a shelf or even denied them? We don't have to "try" to operate and function in our own strength, but to "trust" in the power of the giver of the gifts. The source is not in ourselves, but in the Holy Spirit living within.

Feel free to spend time praying according to one of the prayer patterns demonstrated in this booklet. Invite God into every aspect of your day and your life.

FINAL 15 DAY 11

REFLECTION

QUOTE: "Missionaries are simply a bunch of nobodies trying to exalt Somebody." Jim Elliot

Today I express my thanks for: _____

Today I saw the activity of God in: _____

FIRST 15 DAY 12

READ: Ephesians 4:11–16

After listing five leadership gifts to the church, Paul shifts his emphasis to the church body. The responsibility now rests on the whole body of Christ. Members of the body are now called on to exercise their individual gifts. You may ask, “what is my spiritual gift?” The way to find out is to roll up your sleeves and get to work in a ministry. See a need? Step in and give it a try. As you begin to take steps, you will discover areas in which the Holy Spirit has specifically gifted you in ministry. As His power flows through you, real spiritual change will happen around you. Feel free to spend time praying according to one of the prayer patterns demonstrated in this booklet. Invite God into every aspect of your day and your life.

FINAL 15 DAY 12

REFLECTION

QUOTE: “We are most like beasts when we kill, like humans when we judge, and like God when we forgive.” William Arthur Ward

Today I express my thanks for: _____

Today I saw the activity of God in: _____

FIRST 15 DAY 13

READ: Ephesians 4:17–24

Do you keep an old shirt and pair of pants just in case you need it later? I always have old painting clothes. Did your spouse or someone ever say to you, “You’re not wearing that, are you?” Here in Ephesian 4, we are told to walk no longer as the Gentiles do, who are darkened in their understanding and live a pointless life of greed and impurity.

This is not what we learn from Christ, who gave us a new wardrobe. Take off the old, which belongs to the past, be renewed in your spirit and mind, and put on the new that was created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

Do you fight sin with your dirty clothes on? Do you keep some old clothes in your spiritual closet because they are comfortable? As we walk with Christ, we need His new garments. Ask God to show you if you are hanging onto some old garments that need to be thrown out.

Feel free to spend time praying according to one of the prayer patterns demonstrated in this booklet. Invite God into every aspect of your day and your life.

FINAL 15 DAY 13

REFLECTION

QUOTE: “He who is filled with love is filled with God himself.”
Saint Augustine

Today I express my thanks for: _____

Today I saw the activity of God in: _____

FIRST 15 DAY 14

READ: Ephesians 4:25–32

Verse 25 starts with “Therefore.” What is the therefore there for? Now that we have put on the new garments, it’s not about doing right and wrong but about walking in the Spirit. We can forgive others because Christ has forgiven us. The secret of the power we have is in (3:20) “Now to Him who is able to do more.... according to the power at work within us.” “Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit (Zech 4:6). We can be trapped into working at doing good instead of walking in the goodness of God that is ours. “Nothing has done greater damage to our Christian testimony than trying to be right and demanding right of others.....as Christians, our standard of living can never be “right or wrong,” but the cross. The principle of the cross is the principle of conduct.” Watchman Nee. We have everything we need. Let’s walk in what we have in the power of the Spirit. Feel free to spend time praying according to one of the prayer patterns demonstrated in this booklet. Invite God into every aspect of your day and your life.

FINAL 15 DAY 14

REFLECTION

QUOTE: “I may not be where I need to be, but I thank God I am not where I used to be.” Joyce Meyers

Today I express my thanks for: _____

Today I saw the activity of God in: _____

FIRST 15 DAY 15

READ: Ephesians 5:1–10

Be imitators of God as beloved children. And walk in love... The word "imitators" comes from the same Greek word we get our English word "mimic" from. That can seem overwhelming. How do we mimic God's actions? The next phrase is key, "as beloved children." As children are loved and secure in their relationship with their parents, they will automatically start saying and doing what their parents say and do. The same is true of our heavenly father. The more we watch what He is saying and doing, the more we will walk the same way. Let's keep our eyes off the things that are impure that will distract us from our view of our Father God. Verses 7–9 tell us not to partner with them but walk as children of light. For the fruit of light is found in all that is good, right, and true. Be a reflection of Jesus today!

Feel free to spend time praying according to one of the prayer patterns demonstrated in this booklet. Invite God into every aspect of your day and your life.

FINAL 15 DAY 15

REFLECTION

QUOTE: "Prayer is the portal that brings the power of heaven down to earth. It is kryptonite to the enemy and to all his ploys against you."
Priscilla Shirer

Today I express my thanks for: _____

Today I saw the activity of God in: _____

FIRST 15 DAY 16

READ: Ephesians 5:11–21

Paul commands us to “walk out” our faith in very practical Christian living so that we bring light into a world of darkness. These verses on wise living form the basis of how we, as believers, should conduct ourselves. Consequently, believers are in urgent need of the Holy Spirit’s power to live in a manner pleasing to the Lord. Before making specific applications concerning Christian living, Paul urges us to walk by means of the Holy Spirit. This is what it means to walk wisely. Today the Holy Spirit is inviting you to make the most of every opportunity, to understand the will of the Lord, and to be filled with his presence.

Feel free to spend time praying according to one of the prayer patterns demonstrated in this booklet. Invite God into every aspect of your day and your life.

FINAL 15 DAY 16

REFLECTION

QUOTE: “Rule with the heart of a servant. Serve with the heart of a king.”
Bill Johnson

Today I express my thanks for: _____

Today I saw the activity of God in: _____

FIRST 15 DAY 17

READ: Ephesians 5:22–26

Paul's encouragement to be filled with the Spirit extends beyond a church service and into the Christian home and marriage. Constant contact and intimacy can at times be trying and requires the empowering work of the Holy Spirit. Paul reminds us that our interactions with others, especially those close to us, must begin with a proper fear of the Lord. We are again reminded that we do not stand on our own strength, but rather our strength comes from being in submission to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Feel free to spend time praying according to one of the prayer patterns demonstrated in this booklet. Invite God into every aspect of your day and your life.

FINAL 15 DAY 17

REFLECTION

QUOTE: "It's not about how much you do, but how much love you put into what you do that counts." Mother Teresa

Today I express my thanks for: _____

Today I saw the activity of God in: _____

FIRST 15 DAY 18

READ: Ephesians 5:27–33

We have to remember that our submission to Christ, even when it feels difficult, is for our ultimate good. We are the recipients of Christ's sacrificial love, made holy and blameless. Even with our imperfections, Christ nurtures and takes tender care of us. We are not left stranded or alone in this world to somehow cope with all its difficulties. Christ is not only the head and leader of the church, but also the source by which the church is cared for and strengthened. Today we chose to stand in Christ.

Feel free to spend time praying according to one of the prayer patterns demonstrated in this booklet. Invite God into every aspect of your day and your life.

FINAL 15 DAY 18

REFLECTION

QUOTE: "Faith never knows where it is being led, but it loves and knows the One who is leading." Oswald Chambers

Today I express my thanks for: _____

Today I saw the activity of God in: _____

FIRST 15 DAY 19

READ: Ephesians 6:1-9

Have you ever intentionally done something hoping somebody specific would notice? Perhaps you were trying to convey a message or subtly boast in your own ability. In this passage, Paul homes in on the importance of doing everything from a place of wholehearted devotion to Christ. Whether it is choosing to honor and obey your parents or instructing those individuals you oversee, we are not merely doing this for the approval of human eyes. May we all operate from a place of loving devotion to Christ rather than a duty performed to please human masters. Ask yourself this question today: "Is my obedience to Christ rooted in an authentic love for Him?" Stand firm in your obedience to Christ in all things! May you experience the reward that comes from obeying Christ and following His order. Stand strong!

Feel free to spend time praying according to one of the prayer patterns demonstrated in this booklet. Invite God into every aspect of your day and your life.

FINAL 15 DAY 19

REFLECTION

QUOTE: "He has chosen not to heal me, but to hold me. The more intense the pain, the closer His embrace." Joni Eareckson Tada

Today I express my thanks for: _____

Today I saw the activity of God in: _____

FIRST 15 DAY 20

READ: Ephesians 6:10–20

Of all the imagery used to describe the armor of God, there is one piece that is unique and stands alone. Envision a knight who is decked out, ready for battle. All of the components of a knight's armor are for protective purposes, to defend the shots and strikes of the enemy. While this is true, Paul chooses to list one offensive weapon that followers of Jesus have to fight with—the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. God's strategy for us to combat the evil one is not found in our own abilities, but in His unchanging, all-powerful ability governed by His Word. Dress yourselves in the armor of God and stand victoriously today! Do not leave the house "undressed!" Stand strong in the hope, peace, and joy that is available in Christ. Allow His Word to fight your battles!

Feel free to spend time praying according to one of the prayer patterns demonstrated in this booklet. Invite God into every aspect of your day and your life.

FINAL 15 DAY 20

REFLECTION

QUOTE: "Often, stepping outside your comfort zone is not careless irresponsibility, but a necessary act of obedience." Andy Stanley

Today I express my thanks for: _____

Today I saw the activity of God in: _____

FIRST 15 DAY 21

READ: Ephesians 6:21–24

As this season of prayer of fasting culminates, reflect on the ways God has personally revealed Himself to you. Give thanks for that which He has accomplished in you and believe Him to work through you in that area to touch others. Contemplate the new personal habits that were formed or refined over the past three weeks. How did you experience new life in this process? What will you implement into your daily life from this point forward? In all things, may you find rest and peace in Christ. May you find grace to stand strong in the victory that has already been purchased for those who call upon the name of Christ. May God pour out His Spirit upon you and bless you with an undying love for Him!

Feel free to spend time praying according to one of the prayer patterns demonstrated in this booklet. Invite God into every aspect of your day and your life.

FINAL 15 DAY 21

REFLECTION

QUOTE: “Lord, make me an instrument of your peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love.” Francis of Assisi

Today I express my thanks for: _____

Today I saw the activity of God in: _____

THE LORD'S PRAYER

One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When He finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray..." (Luke 11:1).

"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one, for yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever" (Matthew 6:9-13).

"OUR FATHER IN HEAVEN..."

1. CONNECT WITH GOD RELATIONALLY

You have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God's Spirit when he adopted you as his own children. Now we call him, "Abba, Father" (Romans 8:15 NLT).

God loves for us to call Him our Father. Establish your intimate relationship with Him and thank Him for the relationship you have with Him.

“...HALLOWED BE YOUR NAME...”

2. WORSHIP HIS NAME

God's name is a place of protection—the righteous can run there and be safe (Proverbs 18:10 MSG).

What are His Names?

Righteousness – He makes me clean.

Sanctifier – He has called me and set me apart.

Healer – He heals all my diseases.

Banner of Victory – He has defeated my enemy.

Shepherd – He speaks to me and leads me.

Peace – He is my peace in every storm.

Provider – He supplies all of my needs.

“...YOUR KINGDOM COME, YOUR WILL BE DONE ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN...”

3. PRAY HIS AGENDA FIRST

He will always give you all you need from day to day if you will make the Kingdom of God your primary concern (Luke 12:31 TLB).

God's Priorities:

Saving the lost

Guiding those in authority – parents, spiritual, governmental, and workplace leaders

His will in us

“...GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD...”

4. DEPEND ON HIM FOR EVERYTHING

I look up to the mountains—does my help come from there? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth! (Psalm 121:1-2 NLT).

Ask God for what you want and need, and then trust Him for the answer.

“...FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS AS WE FORGIVE OUR DEBTORS...”

5. GET YOUR HEART RIGHT WITH GOD AND PEOPLE

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9).

Ask God to check your heart and motives. Receive His forgiveness for any area that He brings to mind. Forgive anyone who has offended you in any way. You can even forgive people in advance.

“...AND DO NOT LEAD US INTO TEMPTATION BUT DELIVER US FROM THE EVIL ONE...”

6. ENGAGE IN SPIRITUAL WARFARE

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms (Ephesians 6:12).

Take your stand against the enemy, and fight the good fight of faith. Every lie that the enemy has told you should be replaced with the truth of God's Word.

“...FOR YOURS IS THE KINGDOM AND THE POWER AND THE GLORY FOREVER.”

7. EXPRESS FAITH IN GOD'S ABILITY

“Ah, Sovereign LORD, you have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and outstretched arm. Nothing is too hard for you” (Jeremiah 32:17).

End your prayer time by reminding yourself of God's ability. Return to praise and make your faith declarations.

“Yours is the Kingdom” – All rule belongs to You.

“Yours is the Power” – All mightiness flows from You.

“Yours is the Glory” – Your victory shall be complete.



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