



Helping

A TEEN IN CRISIS



A LEGACY YOUTH RESOURCE

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Addiction

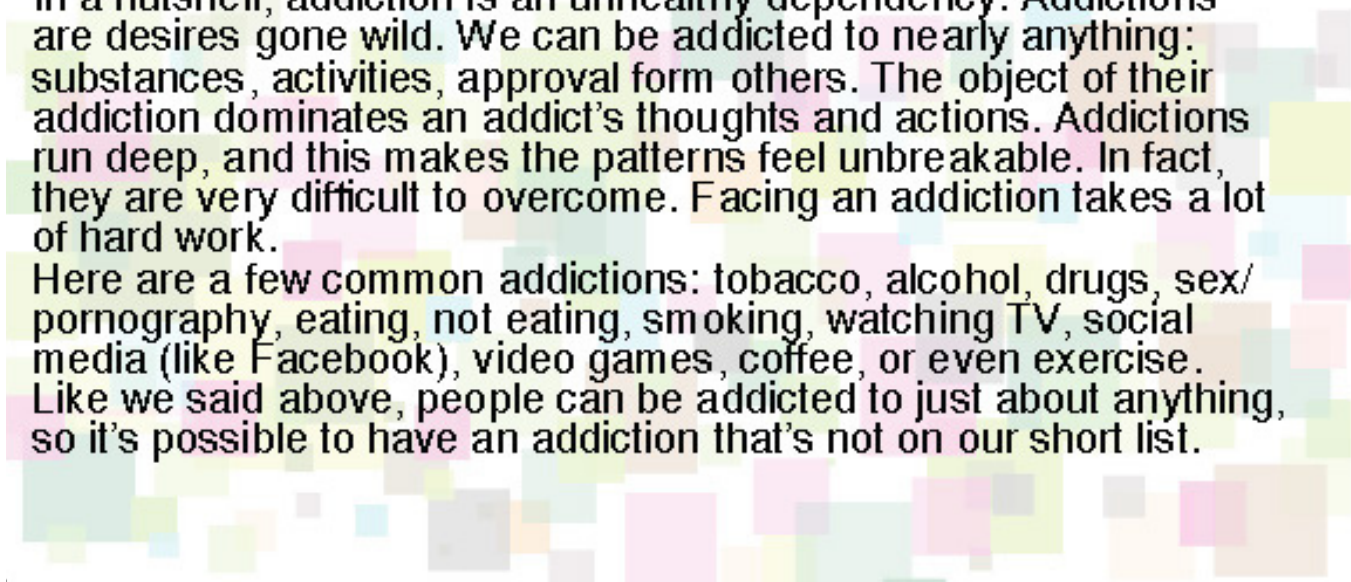


Homepointe Guide To Dealing With Addiction

WHAT ARE ADDICTIONS?

In a nutshell, addiction is an unhealthy dependency. Addictions are desires gone wild. We can be addicted to nearly anything: substances, activities, approval from others. The object of their addiction dominates an addict's thoughts and actions. Addictions run deep, and this makes the patterns feel unbreakable. In fact, they are very difficult to overcome. Facing an addiction takes a lot of hard work.

Here are a few common addictions: tobacco, alcohol, drugs, sex/pornography, eating, not eating, smoking, watching TV, social media (like Facebook), video games, coffee, or even exercise. Like we said above, people can be addicted to just about anything, so it's possible to have an addiction that's not on our short list.



ADDICTION?

POWER OF ADDICTION ?

An addiction exerts extreme control over a life. The addict prioritizes everything in his or her life in light of their addiction. In the beginning, the addiction is “fed” so the addict can have peace. The need never shrinks. In fact, it grows stronger. Over time, it forces a person to sacrifice good things (for example, relationships) to temporarily satisfy the addiction. This is when guilt enters the picture, but it’s not enough to stop the cycle, it just makes it worse:

- (a) An unhealthy desire rises up.
- (b) It’s resisted for a short time.
- (c) The desire is satisfied.
- (d) Followed by guilt and shame.
- (e) After a while, the unhealthy desire shows up again.

I WANT TO STOP!

What Now?

You’ve taken the first step: wanting to eliminate this unhealthy dependency is essential. Overcoming an addiction is a personal choice and no one else can make it for you. Congratulations for taking the first step!

We love you enough to tell you the truth: this will be tough, and you can’t do it alone. You are going to learn new ways to trust

God and look to him for strength. The battle will also be easier if you can connect with others for support and encouragement. Getting involved with a small group is a great place to help you connect with God and other Christians. Talk to one of the youth ministry leaders for more information about joining a Life Group.

God wants you to have a great life! The Bible says,

“It’s for freedom that Christ set us free.”
(Galatians 5:1)

God loves you more than words can express, and he doesn’t want us to be enslaved by anything.

Don’t give up! This is going to be a long haul. Patterns of addiction don’t happen over night, and neither will they be broken quickly.

We strongly encourage you to talk to someone. A trusted friend or an adult leader from the youth ministry can provide the support and help you need.

GOING DEEPER

Read and reflect on:

Romans 12:2 and Ephesians 5:15-18.

Reflect on how God wants you to live in light of addictions and these passages.



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Anger



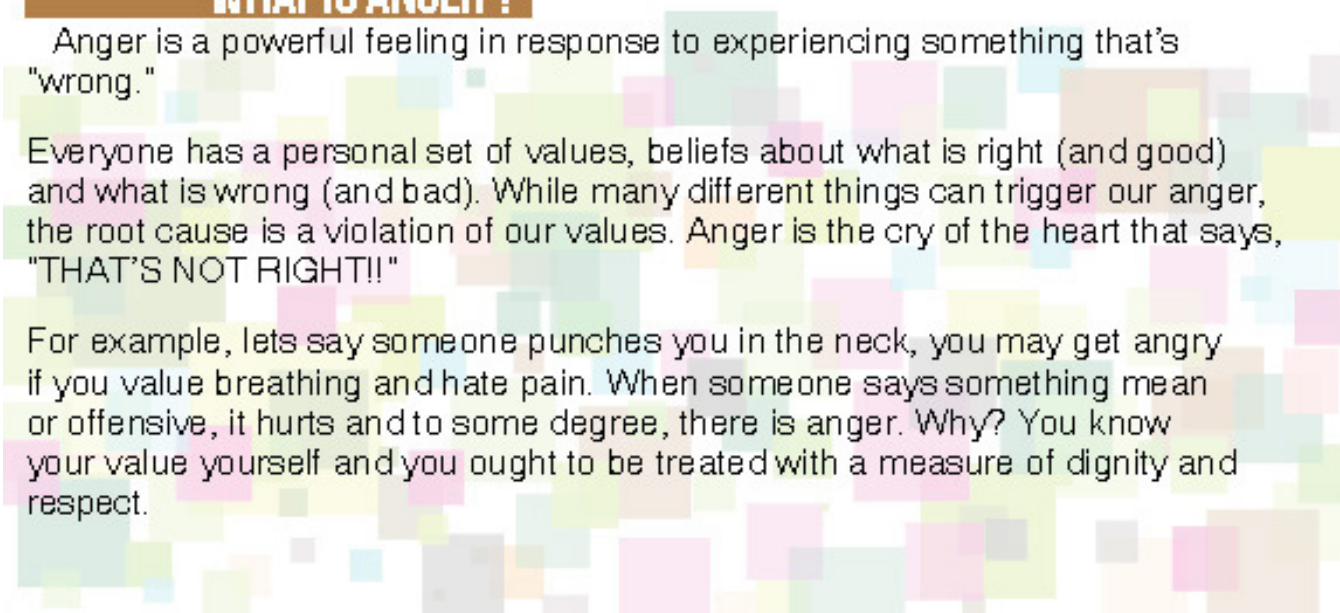
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WHAT IS ANGER ?

Anger is a powerful feeling in response to experiencing something that's "wrong."

Everyone has a personal set of values, beliefs about what is right (and good) and what is wrong (and bad). While many different things can trigger our anger, the root cause is a violation of our values. Anger is the cry of the heart that says, "THAT'S NOT RIGHT!!"

For example, lets say someone punches you in the neck, you may get angry if you value breathing and hate pain. When someone says something mean or offensive, it hurts and to some degree, there is anger. Why? You know your value yourself and you ought to be treated with a measure of dignity and respect.



ANGER

Many different things can trigger our anger, and it often follows on the heels of pain or sadness. When something you love is taken away from you, the natural response is anger.

IS ANGER A SIN?

Yes and No.

Anger reveals our values, it shows us what we are truly care about. When you are passionate about something, you deeply VALUE it enough that you get angry when it's taken away, hurt, ruined, etc. Is anger a sin? If you get angry at the things God gets angry about, then no, it's not. When we get angry because of our selfishness, then yes, it is a sin.

Jesus got angry when people tried to unfairly make money from people who wanted to worship God (see Luke 19:46). Note that Jesus didn't get angry when people tortured him and put him on the cross.

For instance, when your waiter doesn't bring your food on time, when the barista makes you the wrong drink at your favorite coffee place, when someone else gets the job, the spot on the team, or asked to the dance. These simple things can cause us anger, but they shouldn't. We should respond to these with patience, grace and acceptance, not anger. Here is a question to consider: am I angered by the right things?

THIS IS A GREAT THING ABOUT ANGER: it reveals who we really are! Anger is either an affirmation we are like God, or its a new avenue for growth in our lives.

We all get angry, it's a natural human response. Anger usually "MAKES US" do something stupid that we either regret or rationalize after the fact. How can we break this cycle and develop a measure of self control?

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS

The Bible says, "In your anger do not sin; when you are on your beds, search your hearts and be silent" (Psalm 4:4).

When we're angry, the first thing to do is PAUSE and SLOW DOWN (easier said than done, we know) so we don't make a mistake.

The Bible says to "be silent" so we can hear what God has to say. Once we've paused, the next step is to honestly evaluate what it is that made us so angry. After we've identified the trigger, then next question is to ask if God would get angry at the same thing? Once we've made it this far, how we're supposed to respond is usually very clear. We may need to share our anger with a trusted friend, confront the person who made us angry, give the situation over to God, offer the other person forgiveness...or maybe something not on our short little list!

OF COURSE: dealing with our anger is not so simple as the few sentences you've just read! The thing to remember is that God can use our anger to teach us more about him.

GOING DEEPER

Read and reflect on:

Matt. 21:12-14; Mark 11:16-18; Luke 19:45-47;
Ephesians 4:26.



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Da

Dating



Homepointe Guide To Dealing With Dating

A PLAN FOR SUCCESS

God Created Relationships

In the beginning, God created Adam and Eve because it was not good for Adam to be alone. We were designed to be in relationships with each other and with God.

There are all kinds of relationships: acquaintances, friendships, family, and marriage (to name a few). Typically, dating is a relationship in which two people are trying to figure out if they will eventually get married.

Dating is complicated, because you're constantly learning new things about yourself and the other person. It's smart to put together a plan so you can help yourself succeed.

(a quick aside: success isn't necessarily, "staying together." Sometimes the best thing to do is end a relationship. It's painful now, but the longer you wait, the worse the pain will get.)

DATING

Determine your expectations. Ask yourself, “What do I want from this relationship?” Every relationship is filled with expectations, and usually they go unsaid until there is a conflict. Take the time to examine what you want from the person you’re dating. Healthy people do this often; so get started!

Once you know your expectations, it’s time for the hard question: are these expectations fair, right, or healthy? No one person can give us everything we need. Sometimes we want things we shouldn’t.

Communicate your expectations, when the time is right. You can’t talk about your wants and needs all of the time!

Be an excellent listener and learn about the other person’s expectations. The more you know about the other person, the more you’ll know how to respond. Examine what they want, and ask yourself another hard question, “Is what they want healthy?”

The best relationships—friendships, family, marriage, and dating—are based on humility and servanthood:

“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus...”
(Philippians 2:3-5)

Dating isn’t simple, and all of these steps don’t happen in a nice orderly way. This stuff is ongoing, but if you put some time

into thinking and praying about your dating, you’ll be headed for success.

In addition to the questions we’ve already listed, here are a few others to get you thinking:

- Why do I want to start a dating relationship?
- Is my faith solid enough that I’m ready to be dating?
- Is the person I’m dating committed to Jesus? (check out 2 Corinthians 6:14)
- Will this person help or hinder my spiritual life?
- Has dating become the biggest focus in my life? (Check out Matthew 6:33)

It’s a big mistake to jump into dating too soon. Some people run from relationship to relationship rather than dealing with their emotional issues. It may be better to stick to hanging out with groups of friends so a friendship can develop first. Dating isn’t easy because developing a meaningful friendship isn’t easy. If you ever want to talk, HSM is here to help.

GOING DEEPER

Read and reflect on:

Fruits of the Spirit as laid out in Galatians 5:22-23. If you’re in a relationship, how do you and your boyfriend or girlfriend exemplify these qualities? If you’re not in a relationship, how do these qualities relate to the kind of boyfriend or girlfriend you’re looking for?

Check out the book: *Datable* by Justin Lookadoo and Hayley DiMarco.



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Eating Disorders



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An Eating Disorder, such as anorexia, bulimia, or gluttony is an abuse of healthy eating habits. The abnormal eating, whether it is too little or too much, becomes physically destructive. Don't be ashamed! God loves you. He can help you.

ANOREXIA ?

Anorexia is when a person refuses to eat or lacks the desire to eat. This can be caused by many different factors, but is primarily linked to self image. In North America this can result from the media and peer pressure to conform oneself to being thinner than is healthy, which is quite common among both women and men. There is also a form of anorexia when a person actually views themselves as heavier than they are and has a distorted body image that is not based in reality. While onlookers see an extremely thin person, the individual still sees fat on their body. This is a psychological disorder and a person should seek professional counsel from a licensed therapist. Anorectics can hide themselves by wearing baggy clothes, eating small bights and moving food around their plate to give the appearance of eating more.

EATING DISORDERS

BULIMIA ?

Bulimia is when a person is binge eating (eating way too much all at once) followed by self-induced vomiting to avoid severe weight gain. Unlike anorexics, a bulimics' goal is not to bypass eating large amounts of food; they do however resist eating in front of other people. Instead, when they are alone they will eat up to as much as 1,500-5,000 calories in a sitting. Typically they eat 'junk food' like cookies, ice-cream, candy, donuts, crackers and chips; this is done in an out-of-control manner, consuming the food almost without thinking. Like the anorectic, the bulimic has a low self image and struggles from being out-of-control, while on the other hand the anorectic desires control by setting up strict eating habits for themselves. Bulimia is also associated with other out-of-control behaviors like sexually acting out, low self-esteem, depression and substance abuse. Signs of bulimia: Their faces often have a puffy appearance and their hair, skin and nails have an unhealthy appearance. Additionally, bulimics who vomit often have bad breath, mouth sores and dental problems due to the frequent passing of powerful digestive acids.

GLUTTONY ?

Gluttony is when a person is over indulgent and consumes an over abundance of food (or drink). This behavior results in a person being overweight to the point of being unhealthy and often times even obese. There is an important distinction here to be made, not all overweight people are gluttons, and not all gluttons are overweight. There are other reasons for being unhealthily overweight. This can result from laziness or being a sluggard, while also it can

stem from immense pain in a person's life, if they have no purpose, no hope, are depressed, or are suffering from emotional pain they will do what is called 'eating their emotions,' instead of seeking help for their problems they will eat as a way to escape their pain.

WHAT DOES GOD THINK ?

The Bible says that abusing your body is a sin. God knows your pain, knows your problems and struggles and is saddened for you and with you. He desires that you be able to live a fulfilled life, as a result of Him (John 10:10). In all three of these struggles, anorexia, bulimia and gluttony, the focus is far too much on SELF and FOOD. GOD IS CONCERNED WITH YOUR HEALTH NOT YOUR SIZE. As we enter times of trouble and problems we need to turn not towards earthly food, but the BREAD OF LIFE, Jesus Christ (John 6:35, 48, 51) who nourishes our souls. When we eat of Him our souls are satisfied. He can heal the broken hearted from all their misfortunes. When we focus on GOD and HEALTH, instead of FOOD and SELF, then we begin to be set free from thinking in terms of fat and thin. And begin to live in the reality of healthy and unhealthy.

I NEED HELP... NOW

Wanting to change is the first step. Trusting God to help you is the second. Take care to avoid situations that make you struggle. Talk to a pastor or youth leader so we can be praying for you and help you get connected. You don't have to handle this on your own!

GOING DEEPER

Read and reflect on:

1:26-27; Psalm 139:14; 1 Cor. 6:19.



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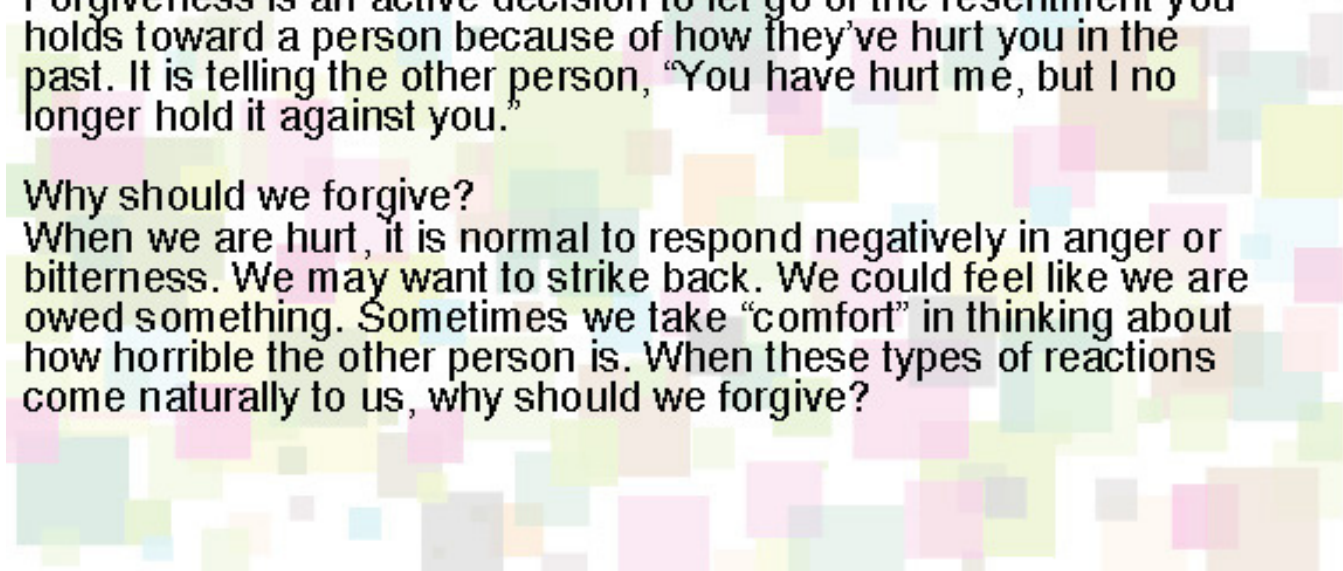
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WHAT IS FORGIVENESS?

Forgiveness is an active decision to let go of the resentment you holds toward a person because of how they've hurt you in the past. It is telling the other person, "You have hurt me, but I no longer hold it against you."

Why should we forgive?

When we are hurt, it is normal to respond negatively in anger or bitterness. We may want to strike back. We could feel like we are owed something. Sometimes we take "comfort" in thinking about how horrible the other person is. When these types of reactions come naturally to us, why should we forgive?



FORGIVENESS

To put it simply, we forgive because God commands us to. It's an act of obedience. In Matthew 18:14-15, Jesus says, "If you forgive those who sin against you, your heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you refuse to forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins."

Following Jesus Christ and having a forgiving attitude go hand-in-hand. Why does Jesus want us to do something that's so difficult?

FORGIVENESS BENEFITS

Holding a grudge hurts us more than anyone else. Forgiving those who hurt us is actually the best thing we can do for our own hearts. It's not the easiest thing, but it's the only thing. Nursing a grudge is like slowly sipping poison and the longer we hold on, the sicker we become.

A grudge becomes like a prison. Your thoughts and feelings hostage, trapped in self-pity and destructive anger. The only way to escape is to let go and forgive. Unfortunately, forgiving someone isn't a one time thing, every time the bitterness creeps back on to the scene, we have to forgive again...and again.

HOW TO FORGIVE

Forgiveness begins by remembering how much God has forgiven us. Why? When we realize how much we've blown it, we are more compassionate toward others. Here is a hard truth: God has forgiven each

of us more than we will have to forgive one another.

When we forget how much God has forgiven us, it becomes harder to forgive others. Why? We think, "I'd never do anything like that! I can't forgive that person."

After looking "up" to God and "in" at your own heart, it's time to look "out" to the person who hurt you. You may need to tell the person that you forgive them. This is often the case, but not always.

Forgiveness isn't the same thing as trust. We need to forgive others, no matter what, but we don't need to keep trusting them. God doesn't want us to be hurt over and over again by the same person.

Commit all of this to prayer, and God will strengthen you. This is a difficult practice, but necessary for the spiritual life of joy and fulfillment.

GOING DEEPER

Read and reflect on:

Matthew 6:12, Luke 17:4, Luke 23:24, 1 John 1:9, Colossians 3:13.



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Grief



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UNDERSTANDING GRIEF?

Grief is an intense emotional pain, sorrow, or regret over the loss of someone important. Grief normally has multiple stages: 1. Shock or Denial, 2. Anger, 3. Guilt, 4. Bargaining, 5. Sadness or Depression, and 6. Acceptance.

MYTHS ABOUT GRIEF

Mature Christians don't grieve. Nothing could be further from the truth! Everyone experiences grief in the wake of losing someone significant.

Grief is best handled alone. Grief tends to isolate people. Cutting off support from friends while dealing with grief is a mistake



GRIEF

because it's a burden best shared with God and close friends.

It's not OK to be angry with God. God is big enough to handle our anger. He understands our pain and loss. Anger is a normal part of grieving, and God meets us in our pain.

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS

The book of Psalms (in the Old Testament) is a collection of prayers and songs devoted to God. They are "raw and uncut," meaning they show true human emotion.

"Have mercy on me, LORD, for I am in distress. Tears blur my eyes. My body and soul are withering away. I am dying from grief; my years are shortened by sadness. Sin has drained my strength; I am wasting away from within." Psalm 31:9-10

The author of this psalm wasn't afraid to share his true feelings with God.

Did you know that even Jesus got sad? John 11:35 is the shortest verse in the Bible, "Jesus wept." He cried because his friend Lazarus had died and his close friends were overcome with sorrow.

The Bible also teaches that God is always with us, even during painful times. Lamentations 3:31-33 states, "For no one is abandoned by the Lord forever. Though he brings grief, he also shows compassion because

of the greatness of his unfailing love. For he does not enjoy hurting people or causing them sorrow."

Dealing with grief is monumental. It defies understanding. In our darkest moments, God is with us.

I NEED HELP... NOW!

God loves you and he cares for you. He knows your pain and he wants to be with you now, in the moment. He's not waiting for you to "get your act together."

Try talking to God. Share your feelings with God, even if you need to shout them out. There's nothing you could say that would surprise him, he's heard it all before and he knows everything about you.

Share your pain with someone. Share what you're feeling with your parents, a close friend, or a youth leader. God created us to need each other and we are better together!

Your youth ministry is here to help! If there is something more we can do, please let us know! Talk a pastor or youth leader so we can be praying for you and help you get connected to someone who can help.

GOING DEEPER

Read and reflect on:

Read, reflect and pray through Psalm 23.



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In

Insecurity



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WHAT IS INSECURITY?

Insecurity is debilitating fear and doubt. Some fear and doubt is good (you ought to be afraid of putting your hand in a fire. Too much fear and doubt will ruin a person's life (for example, believing that everything you touch might burn your hand).

The opposite of insecurity is confidence, which is the attitude that comes from an accurate understanding of what we can control and the faith that God controls everything.

IS INSECURITY WRONG?

We've tried to give a precise definition of insecurity: it's too much fear and doubt. Living with deep insecurities is not God's design



INSECURITY

for our lives. It's impossible to be experience the joy and significance we can have in Jesus when we live in fear. God is calling us to be more like him, and that means leaving our comfort zones. We can take these risks if we are filled with self-doubt. In the tough times and wild seasons of life, we can't rest in God's peace if we don't trust him.

Insecurity undermines our trust in God and ourselves. It forgets that God is in control of everything and that we have the power to make good decisions.

OVERCOMING IT

There is a great thing about insecurity: once we recognize it in our lives, it reveals a great opportunity to grow. We can turn our insecurities into stepping-stones toward becoming more like Jesus.

Overcoming insecurity is a mixture of learning more so you can trust more. We can't go in a new direction until we have a new perspective.

Begin with prayer, asking God to walk with you through this season. He loves you and will never leave you! He wants to do something great in through your insecurity.

Work hard to identify the source(s) of your insecurity. Take some time to think deeply: What's causing your fear/doubt? How is your fear/doubt changing your life? This isn't easy, but it will be worth it.

Connect with God's Word to see what he has to say about your fear/doubt. As you reflect on what you read in the Bible, God will reveal the truth you need to hear. We have placed a few verses that you can get started with below.

Connect with another believer whom you respect. This could be a trusted friend or a youth leader. God often uses another person to encourage or instruct us with just the thing we need to hear.

The Creator of the universe is the master designer. He created you as an original masterpiece. You aren't a mistake and you are made to make a difference. You matter, you are important.

The value of something is determined by what a person will pay for it. God paid the highest price for you—he sent Jesus to die—because you are valuable to him.

GOING DEEPER

Read and reflect on:

Read and reflect on Genesis 1:27, Psalm 139:13, Luke 15, and Ephesians 2:10.



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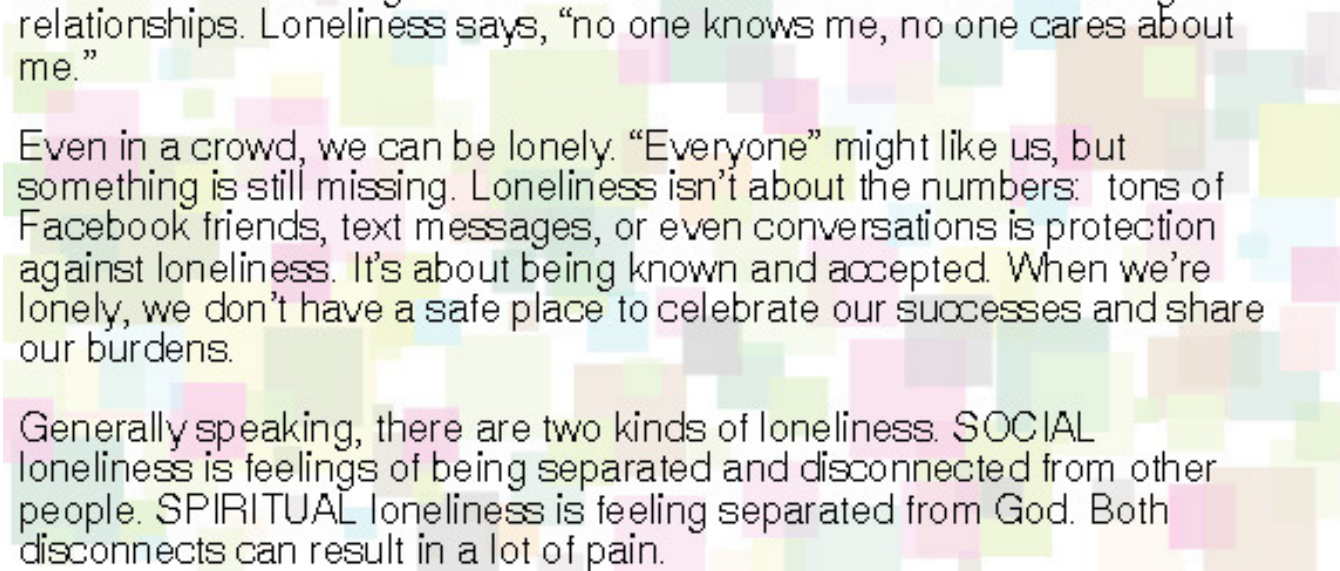
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WHAT IS LONELINESS?

Loneliness is a feeling of isolation and disconnection from meaningful relationships. Loneliness says, “no one knows me, no one cares about me.”

Even in a crowd, we can be lonely. “Everyone” might like us, but something is still missing. Loneliness isn’t about the numbers: tons of Facebook friends, text messages, or even conversations is protection against loneliness. It’s about being known and accepted. When we’re lonely, we don’t have a safe place to celebrate our successes and share our burdens.

Generally speaking, there are two kinds of loneliness. SOCIAL loneliness is feelings of being separated and disconnected from other people. SPIRITUAL loneliness is feeling separated from God. Both disconnects can result in a lot of pain.



LONELINESS

Loneliness leads to deep feelings of sadness and it erodes confidence. It's difficult to be filled with any kind of joy when we FEEL like we don't have any friends.

FEELING LONELY?

Try to be encouraged: You are not alone in your loneliness! What we mean is that EVERYONE experiences loneliness and feelings of being disconnected. This is a natural part of the broken world we live in; it's not right, but it is common.

Begin with prayer and talk to God about your feelings. This is critical because God wants to do something great in your life, even when you are feeling disconnected from others. God often wants us to trust him with more of our lives when we feel like we have no one else to trust.

What kind of loneliness are you feeling? Are you disconnected from other people, or from God?

There's a great upside to a disconnection from God: he ALWAYS wants us back, and there's nothing we can ever do to change this. His mercy is available to everyone. There's also a real tough downside: if we're disconnected from God, it's the result of our decisions and there's no one else to blame. That's a hard thing to hear, we know! The good news is that you can return to God and renew your relationship with him. Check out some of the other pamphlets for ideas on how to do this in your life. Better yet, talk to an HSM leader as we are here to help you grow in your faith.

If you're feeling disconnected from others, here's a great place to start: start caring and serving other people. That may not make any sense at first. The best way to be loved by others is to love them first. This is what Jesus did, he loved us first in hopes that we'd love him back. It works in friendships too: get to know other people, and in time, they will want to get to know you.

Remember to take risks, and when the time is right, share the important stuff. Sometimes we hold back, because if someone knows us, then they can reject us. The fear of rejection keeps people lonely.

A side note about pain in the past: If you've been hurt by others, learn from it, but don't let it trap you. The past doesn't have to determine your present. Again: the fear of rejection keeps people lonely, trust God to help you overcome your fear.

It's important to share "when the time is right." You won't connect with others if you "dump" all of your problems in the beginning of a friendship.

Love others first, serve them by getting to know them. When the time is right, take a risk and share something real and important. Don't give up, you will find some people to connect with!

GOING DEEPER

Read and reflect on:

Matthew 6:33; James 4:8; Psalm 102; Gen. 2:18.



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Marriage/Divorce



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MARRIAGE/DIVORCE ?

Marriage is the coming together of a man and a woman with the commitment to share life together for the remainder of their lives. God created marriage (more on this in a moment).

Divorce is an agreement between a married couple to break their commitment to one another. Divorce falls short of God's design for us, much like bitterness, gossip, or acting out in anger.

MARRIAGE/DIVORCE

BIBLE AND MARRIAGE

When God created the Heavens and the Earth, he saw that Adam was alone and incomplete. God made Eve, and the two were a perfect compliment to one another. God's design for marriage: it ought to be between a man and a woman, it ought to last an entire lifetime, and it ought to be the only place for sex.

None of these are particularly popular in our world today. The truth is that it's in ALL of our natures (yours and mine) to believe what we want to believe even when it contradicts God's teachings.

BIBLE AND DIVORCE

There are a few different Christian views about divorce that are based on scripture. Everyone agrees that God's best design is that a marriage ought to last a lifetime. God does permit divorce in some situations, in cases of sexual immorality (and some believe emotional abandonment). God hates divorce: it's a breaking of faith between (a) us and God, (b) husband and wife, and (c) parents and children. Some religious leaders once asked Jesus if divorce was "OK," they were trying to trap him with his answer. Jesus said that this was the wrong question, the right question is, "Why does God permit divorce?" The answer: because people have hard hearts.

A believer in Christ may have to divorce. A believer in Christ should never seek divorce.

PARENTS DIVORCING ?

Divorce is incredibly tough and we know it hurts! Our encouragement is that you wouldn't carry this burden on your own. Share your struggles with a safe friend or a youth leader. A small group is also another great place to find the support you need. We also have access to many great counselors if you feel like you need to meet with a professional.

It's common for some kids of divorcing parents to feel like their parents' problems are their fault. This is not the case! Their issues don't exist because of their kids, and in most cases, their problems existed before they ever had kids. It's important for ALL kids to honor their parents, even when they are eating a divorce, but this doesn't mean you can fix their problems.

Divorce is ugly, and it hurts. Sharing the burden with others, and learning to rely more on God are the best things to do the middle of this difficult season.

GOING DEEPER

Read and reflect on:

Deuteronomy 24:1-4, Matthew 19:3-10, 1

Corinthians 7:10-15



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Sh

Self-Harm



Homepointe Guide To Dealing With Self-Harm: Cutting

Self harm is the intentional injury of body tissue without intent of suicide. The most common form of self harm is cutting. However, it can also be; burning, scratching, hitting body parts, pulling hair, or ingestion of toxic substances, among other things.

WHY CUTTING?

People tend to harm themselves because of deep pain in their lives. Deep pain, generally speaking, causes anger or sadness. Anger and sadness are like good friends, you can often find them hanging out together. When a person is angry it is typically because they have been offended, abused, experienced loss of some kind, or denied something that they wanted. Likewise when someone is sad, to cope with being sad they express anger towards the cause of their sadness, whether it is a person or a circumstance. In these situations people often desire to control their environment so that whatever was causing them sadness does not happen again. If control is not an option, then self harm can occur, because self

harm is controllable, the person can do it when, how and to the degree they want to, this gives them a sense of control over their life. Another reason is to express their pain, without properly processing the pain in their lives they use self harm to say in essence, 'this is how much I'm hurting on the inside.' The physical pain has the ability, for some, to mask the emotional pain. Rarely do people harm themselves because they are curious about it. More often it is inner pain expressed outwardly. There are other causes, but these seem to be most common.

IS CUTTING A SIN?

Yes. Did you know that you were created in the image of God! The Bible says in Genesis 1:26-27, "...Let us make man in our image, in our likeness... So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them." This means that you have great value and worth simply for being alive. The Bible goes on to say that when God created humanity he said that it was GOOD, meaning it was perfect, it was right, it was pleasing to Him. One of Leonardo Da Vinci's masterpieces is the Mona Lisa; Vincent Van Gogh's famous The Starry Night is certainly a masterpiece, and you are God's masterpiece. An artist puts their heart and soul into creating a masterpiece; if someone were to even slightly damage it they would be devastated. To harm oneself is to harm a masterpiece of God and it devastates Him because He loves you so much and put His heart and soul into creating you.

ALREADY CUTTING?

GOD LOVES YOU! The most common response to sin is hiding. In the Garden of Eden when Adam

first sinned against God he hid. Why? Because he was afraid, Adam felt shame in the fact that he was exposed and naked before God. But God knew Adam's sin and pursued him nonetheless. If you are injuring yourself, DONT HIDE. God desires to help you and heal you. However, He can only do this if you come out of hiding, confess to Him and share with someone else (James 5:19). When we bring ourselves to Christ, there is no reason to be ashamed, He has cleansed us from our sins and loves us despite our failures. Romans 8:1 tells us, "There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." This means that because of Christ, through His sinless life, death on the cross, and resurrection from the dead, we are now free in Him from guilt and shame He took it upon Himself.

MOVING FORWARD

Tell someone you trust like a youth leader or another trusted adult. This can oftentimes be the most difficult step, but also the most crucial. When you have the urge to cut contact the trusted adult or friend immediately. When you're tempted take some time to identify what triggers the desire to cut, write this down and share it with someone. Dependent upon the reason for cutting, it may be necessary to seek professional help from a licensed therapist. Remember, cutting is a symptom not the problem. Healing is possible! True healing comes through the power of the Holy Spirit, and the Spirit was promised to those who surrender their lives to Jesus Christ through a personal relationship with Him. Come to Jesus, experience healing.

GOING DEEPER

Read and reflect on: Psalm 119:114, 116; Proverbs 25:28; James 5:16.



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Substances



Homepointe Guide To Dealing With Forgiveness

WHAT IS THE BIG DEAL ?

What is the big deal? Can't I just have a little fun?

Let's answer the second question first: YES! You can have "fun." God offers everyone true JOY and LIFE, and he created you to experience more of this than you can ever dream or imagine. (Check out John 10:10).

So what's the big deal? Alcohol and drugs contain chemicals that alter the way you think and feel, and this is important for lots of reasons:

1. This "fun" is superficial. The highs are easily ruined, and when even when they run their course, they don't last long.

DRUGS/ALCOHOL

2. This “fun” has a HUGE cost: addition and addiction. What do we mean by addition? Each time it takes more to get the same feeling. One drink becomes two, which becomes four, and so on. When our desires become uncontrollable, we shape everything in our life around this new addiction. This leads to a downward spiral of self-destruction.

There’s not an addict in the world who is living the dream of his 10-year-old self.

Many people turn to alcohol or drugs to “deal with life.” Being under the influence of alcohol and drugs has never solved any problems. We simply become numb for a short time and while we’re under the influence, the problems grow bigger.

Being under the influence of drugs and alcohol ruins our ability to think clearly and make decisions. When God made us in his image, he set us apart from everything else by giving us the ability to choose. When our mind is “under the influence” we have hindered our ability to choose.

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS

Jesus made wine (on your own, look up John 2: 1-12), but that doesn’t mean it’s ok for anyone to drink whenever they want. In our country, you have to be 21 to drink. According to the Bible, Christians should follow the laws of the land, assuming they don’t contradict scripture (Check out Romans 13: 1).

The Bible has a lot to say about on this subject, but one verse does a great job of summarizing what God things about this: “Don’t be drunk with wine, because that will ruin your life. Instead, be filled with the Holy Spirit” (Ephesians 5: 18, NLT)

PRESCRIBED DRUGS?

Doctors prescribe drugs in hopes of fixing a problem. It’s OK to use these drugs according to the instructions. God often works through doctors to bring healing!

I NEED HELP... NOW!

WAY TO GO! THAT’S GREAT!! IT TAKES MANY PEOPLE DECADES BEFORE THEY HAVE THE COURAGE TO DO THE RIGHT THING. God loves you and he’s ready to forgive anything you’ve done and get you back on the right path. (Check out 1 John 1:9)

Wanting to change is the first step. Trusting God to help you is the second. Take care to avoid situations that make you struggle. Talk a pastor or youth leader so we can be praying for you and help you get connected. You can talk to us. You don’t have to handle this on your own!

GOING DEEPER

Read and reflect on:

2 Timothy 4:5; 1 Peter 4:7; 2 Peter 1:5-13.
In your opinion, how do these scriptures relate to using alcohol or drugs?.



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Suicide



Homepointe Guide To Dealing With Suicide

If you're reading this... It's our guess that you either know someone that is suicidal, are curious about what God says about suicide, or you have had thoughts about suicide. Either way, we're glad you've grabbed this!

YOU ARE NOT ALONE!

The Bible says that God will never leave you nor forsake you (Deuteronomy 31:8; Joshua 1:5). It may not feel like it, but God is always with you. His presence fills the entire earth, and nothing can separate you from the love of God (Romans 3:38). You are not alone. It's normal to get depressed and even have suicidal thoughts.

IT'S OK TO BE SAD

Psalms, the longest book in the Bible, is filled with songs written in times of deep personal sadness. The Apostle Paul (he's the guy who wrote more than half of the New Testament), after suffering great hardships, said, "...we despaired even of life" (2 Corinthians 1:8). Paul wanted to die!

What kept him alive was his hope in Jesus Christ.

THERE IS ALWAYS HOPE

God knows your pain. He knows your situation and what you have to face. He loves you more than words can express. He created you, and paid the highest price for you to be in his family. You are an original masterpiece, not an accident, not a person without purpose. God says this to Jeremiah, and it's true about you, too:

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a HOPE and a future."

Jeremiah 29:11

You are alive because God has great things he wants to do in your heart and through your life. God has a plan for your life!

WHAT GOD THINKS?

God hates suicide. Life is a gift from God—no one forced God to give us life. As the Creator, God alone has the authority over life and death. He created people in his image (Genesis 1:27), setting us apart from everything else in creation. Murder (and self-murder) is contrary to the great plans God has for each and every person he created.

God knows that it is normal for us to worry, be overwhelmed, and get depressed. Two thousand years ago, Jesus came to earth so that we might have a full and abundant life (John 10:10). In the midst of our darkest moments, we can talk to God and rely on him:

"Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all

he has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus."

Philippians 4:6-7

THE TRUTH

You are precious and valuable to God and He wants you to be joyful and fulfilled in your life. You may want to end your life because you think it's the only way to be at peace, or to end the pain you're experiencing, or avoid the overwhelming pressures of this life. There is another way! Jesus says, "Come to me all who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28).

This verse is a promise that when you are going through difficult times, no matter what is happening, if you lean heavily into Jesus, He will take care of you and bring you peace and rest for your soul.

ATTEMPTED SUICIDE?

GOD LOVES YOU! His heart breaks for you and even though it doesn't feel like it, he is with you in your pain. **TALK TO SOMEONE SOON.** You don't need to carry this burden alone. You shouldn't carry it alone.

I'm struggling...

Silence is not golden. If you are hurting, talk to an Youth leader or another trusted adult. If you are thinking about taking your life soon (like today or tomorrow), call 911 right now. Don't even think about it!

GOING DEEPER

Read and reflect on: Psalm 33:20; Psalm 84:2; 2 Corinthians 1:7.



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Up

Unplanned Pregnancy



Homepointe Guide To Dealing With Unplanned Pregnancy

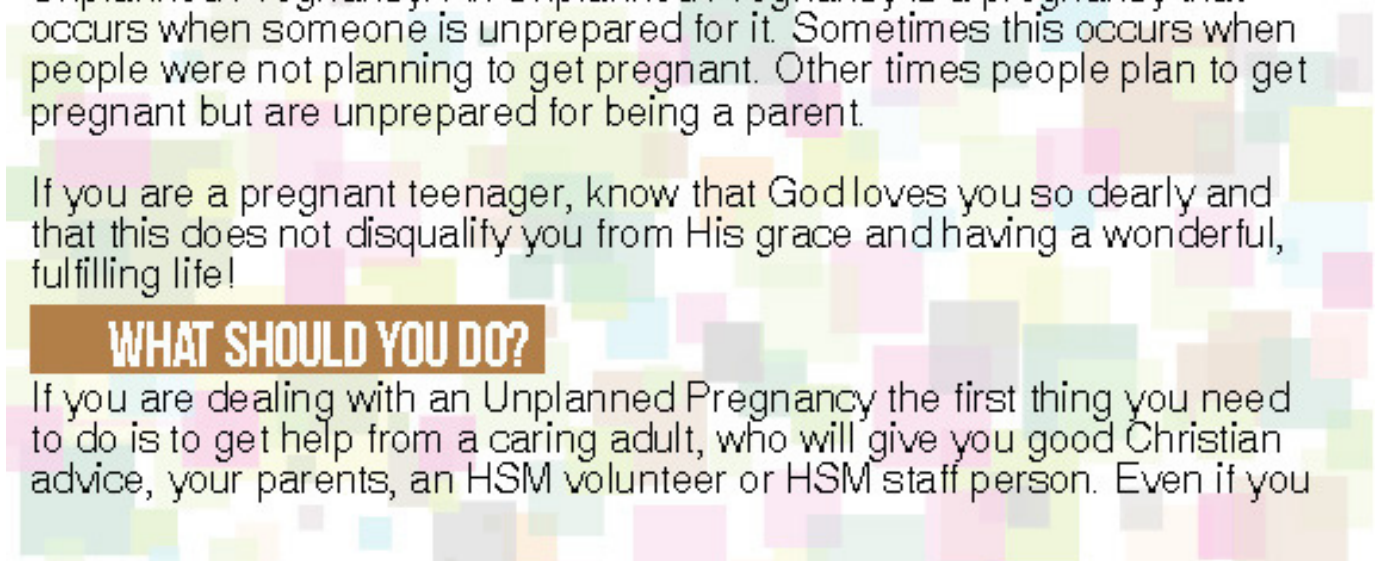
DEFINITION

Unplanned Pregnancy: An Unplanned Pregnancy is a pregnancy that occurs when someone is unprepared for it. Sometimes this occurs when people were not planning to get pregnant. Other times people plan to get pregnant but are unprepared for being a parent.

If you are a pregnant teenager, know that God loves you so dearly and that this does not disqualify you from His grace and having a wonderful, fulfilling life!

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?

If you are dealing with an Unplanned Pregnancy the first thing you need to do is to get help from a caring adult, who will give you good Christian advice, your parents, an HSM volunteer or HSM staff person. Even if you



think your parents will not respond well to you telling them this, they need to know. The caring adult can help you decide how best to do this. This caring adult will help you with the pregnancy. After you have told a caring adult they can help process with you what you would like to do.

THREE OPTIONS

There are typically three options that people consider regarding Unplanned Pregnancy.

The first option is to keep the baby and become a parent, this is not easy by any means! But with the right circumstances, family help and disciplined structure this can be a great success.

The second option is to consider giving the baby up for adoption. For many teenagers this is the best option available.

The third option that people consider is abortion. Now, if you are reading this and you have already had an abortion, please know that God deeply values you and cares about you and is saddened for the difficult decision that you had to make. God still loves you. While at the same time, it would be wrong if we didn't tell you what the Bible teaches about abortion. The Bible teaches that life begins upon conception. Psalm 139:13 says "For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb." Before the baby ever takes a breath God has a plan for them. Therefore if a baby is aborted, their life is ending prematurely by the hand of someone else, this is called killing, which makes it a sin against God and He is greatly saddened and offended by this. Again, God can

forgive you for this if it has already happened. He desires to care for you and walk with you through the pain of this great loss; you should not be guilty if His forgiving blood has washed over you. After getting these people's advice you should have them help you through your pregnancy.

IS IT A SIN?

The Bible does not teach that an Unplanned Pregnancy is a sin but it does teach that sex outside of marriage is a sin. While the actual pregnancy is not sin it may be a result of a sinful choice.

WHAT DOES GOD THINK?

The first thing most people think when this happens is that God hates them. But this is not true. God loves you and cares about you. He is willing to forgive you. If you have already admitted your sin to God He has forgiven you. If you haven't yet admitted to Him your sin all you have to do is admit it and He will forgive you. "But if we confess our sins to him, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness." 1 John 1:9. It doesn't matter if you have had an abortion, already had an unplanned pregnancy or have one now. God loves you and can forgive you.

GOING DEEPER

Read and reflect on:

Psalm 139:13-16. Think about how God views babies in the womb.



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