

PATIENCE

1. The Definition of Patience.

- a. Hebrew.
 - (1) **Ge 49:18** 18 I [Jacob] *wait* (קָוָה) for your salvation, Yahweh.
- b. Greek.
 - (1) μακροθυμέω: “to remain tranquil while waiting, *have patience, wait...to bear up under provocation without complaint, be patient, forbearing*” (BDAG, 612).
- c. “Biblically speaking, ‘to wait’ is to manifest the kind of trust that is willing to commit itself to God over the long haul. It is to continue to believe and expect when all others have given up. It is to believe that it is better for something to happen in God’s time than for it to happen on my initiative in my time. As was just said, waiting for God is, in many ways, what Isaiah is about.”¹

2. The Difficulty of Patience.

- a. What circumstances consistently test your patience? How do you typically react to those circumstances? How may such circumstances help you cultivate patience?
- b. We don’t like to be interrupted.
- c. We are goal- or task-oriented.
- d. We want immediate results.
- e. We want instant gratification. The internet has fed this desire.
- f. We are a very impatient culture.
- g. The speed of life is getting faster and faster.
- h. Satan rushes people.
 - (1) “If the devil can’t make you sin, he’ll make you busy.”²
- i. “Why am I in such a rush to become somebody I don’t even like?”³
- j. “For many of us the great danger is not that we will renounce our faith. It is that we will become so distracted and rushed and preoccupied that we will settle for a mediocre version of it.”⁴
- k. Hurry is a “continuous struggle and unremitting attempt to accomplish or achieve more and more things or participate in more and more events in less and less time.”⁵
- l. “We live in a culture that wants to transgress all limitations, not accept them—to cheat time and space. To ‘be like God.’ To watch every new film, listen to every podcast, read every new book (and don’t forget the classics!), hear every record, go to every concert, drive every road trip, travel to every country (another stamp for the passport, please), eat at every new restaurant, party at every new bar opening,

¹ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah*, Chs. 40-66, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament, 623.

² Corrie ten Boom.

³ John Mark Comer, *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry*, 4.

⁴ John Ortberg, quoted in John Mark Comer, *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry*, 27.

⁵ Meyer Friedman, quoted in John Mark Comer, *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry*, 46.

- befriend every new face, fix every problem in society, rise to the top of every field, win every award, make every list of who's who— #YOLO. #FOMO.”⁶
- m. Often it seems like God is hiding his face.
- (1) **Is 8:17** 17 I will *wait* (חכה) for Yahweh, who is hiding his face from the house of Jacob, and I will hope in him.
- n. God seems slow.
- (1) **Hab 2:2-4** 2 And Yahweh answered me [Habakkuk]: Write the vision. Make it plain on tablets, so he may run who reads it. 3 For still the vision awaits its appointed time. It hastens to the end—it will not lie. If it seems slow, *wait* (חכה) for it. It will surely come. It will not delay. 4 Behold, his soul is puffed up. It is not upright within him, but the righteous shall live by his faith.⁷
- o. **2 Co 6:4-7** 4 ...But as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: by great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, 5 beatings, imprisonments, riots, labours, sleepless nights, hunger; 6 by purity, knowledge, *patience*, kindness, the Holy Spirit, genuine love; 7 by truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left....
- p. Examples of Impatience.
- (1) Saul.
- (a) **1 Sa 13:8-14** 8 [Saul] *waited* (יחל) seven days, the time appointed by Samuel. But Samuel did not come to Gilgal, and the people were scattering from him. 9 So Saul said, Bring the burnt offering here to me, and the peace offerings. And he offered the burnt offering. 10 As soon as he had finished offering the burnt offering, behold, Samuel came. And Saul went out to meet him and greet him. 11 Samuel said, What have you done? And Saul said, When I saw that the people were scattering from me, that you did not come within the days appointed, and that the Philistines had mustered at Michmash, 12 I said, Now the Philistines will come down against me at Gilgal, and I have not sought the grace of Yahweh. So I forced myself, and offered the burnt offering. 13 And Samuel said to Saul, You have done foolishly. You have not kept the command of Yahweh your God, with which he commanded you. For then Yahweh would have established your kingdom over Israel forever. 14 But now your kingdom shall not continue. Yahweh has sought out a man after his own heart, and Yahweh has commanded him to be prince over his people, because you have not kept what Yahweh commanded you.

3. The Source of Patience.

- a. See *God's Patience*.
- b. “God did not create hurry.”⁸
- c. “When God wants to make an oak, He takes a hundred years, but when He wants to make a squash, He takes six months.”⁹

⁶ John Mark Comer, *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry*, 64.

⁷ Faith and hope are the framework of patience.

⁸ Finnish proverb.

⁹ A. H. Strong, quoted in Robby Gallaty and Chris Swain, *Replicate*, 197.

- d. The reason for patience.
- (1) God has a plan.
 - (2) There is a time for everything.
 - (a) **Ec 3:1-11** 1 For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven: 2 a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted; 3 a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; 4 a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; 5 a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; 6 a time to seek, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away; 7 a time to tear, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; 8 a time to love, and a time to hate; a time for war, and a time for peace. ... 11 He has made everything beautiful in its time.¹⁰

4. The Framework of Patience.

- a. Faith.
- (1) “To choose to live an unhurried life in our day is somewhat like taking a vow of poverty in earlier centuries; it is scary. It is an act of faith. But there are deeper riches on the other side.”¹¹
 - (2) **Ps 33:20** 20 Our soul *waits* for Yahweh. He is our help and our shield.
 - (3) **Ps 62:1-2** 1 For God alone my soul *waits* in silence. From him comes my salvation. 2 He alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress. I shall not be greatly shaken.
 - (4) **Hab 2:2-4** 2 And Yahweh answered me [Habakkuk]: Write the vision. Make it plain on tablets, so he may run who reads it. 3 For still the vision awaits its appointed time. It hastens to the end—it will not lie. If it seems slow, *wait* (חכה) for it. It will surely come. It will not delay. 4 Behold, his soul is puffed up. It is not upright within him, but the righteous shall live by his faith.¹²
 - (5) **He 6:12** 12 ... So that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and *patience* (μακροθυμία) inherit the promises.
- b. Hope.
- (1) While we wait, we must make sure we don't wait in bitterness.
 - (2) **Ps 38:15** 15 But for you, Yahweh, do I *wait* (יחל). It is you, Lord my God, who will answer.
 - (3) **Ps 39:7** 7 And now, Yahweh, for what do I *wait* (קוה)? My hope is in you.¹³
 - (4) **Ps 62:5** 5 For God alone, O my soul, *wait* in silence, for my hope is from him.
 - (5) **Is 8:17** 17 I will *wait* (חכה) for Yahweh, who is hiding his face from the house of Jacob, and I will hope in him.

5. The Importance of Patience.

¹⁰ “Everything beautiful in its time.” What a great title for a book on patience.

¹¹ John Ortberg, in John Mark Comer, *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry*, ix.

¹² Faith and hope are the framework of patience.

¹³ David is a great example of patience.

- a. "Hurry and love are incompatible."¹⁴
- b. "I cannot live in the kingdom of God with a hurried soul."¹⁵
- c. "To walk with Jesus is to walk with a slow, unhurried pace. Hurry is the death of prayer and only impedes and spoils our work. It never advances it."¹⁶
- d. "It seems that most believers have difficulty in realizing and facing up to the inexorable fact that God does not hurry in His development of our Christian life."¹⁷

6. The Command to Be Patient.

- a. **Ps 27:14** 14 *Wait* (קה) for Yahweh. Be strong and let your heart take courage. *Wait* for Yahweh!
- b. **Eph 4:1-2** 1 I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, 2 with all humility and gentleness, with *patience* (μακροθυμία), bearing with one another in love....
- c. **Col 3:12** 12 Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and *patience* (μακροθυμία).
- d. **1 Th 5:14** 14 And we urge you, brothers and sisters, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be *patient* (μακροθυμέω, pres.) with them all.
- e. **2 Ti 2:24** 24 Yahweh's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil (ἀνεξίκακος).¹⁸
- f. **2 Ti 4:2** 2 ...Preach the word. Be ready in season and out of season. Reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete *patience* (μακροθυμία) and teaching.

7. Examples of Patience.

- a. **He 6:12** 12 ...So that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and *patience* (μακροθυμία) inherit the promises.
- b. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
 - (1) **Ge 49:18** 18 I [Jacob] *wait* (קה) for your salvation, Yahweh.
 - (2) **He 6:15** 15 And thus Abraham, having *patiently waited* (μακροθυμέω), obtained the promise.¹⁹
 - (3) **He 11:9-10** 9 By faith [Abraham] went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. 10 For he was *waiting* (ἐκδέχομαι, imperf.) for the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God.
- c. David.
- d. Jesus.

¹⁴ John Mark Comer, *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry*, 23.

¹⁵ John Mark Comer, *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry*, 25.

¹⁶ Walter Adams, the spiritual director to C. S. Lewis, quoted in John Mark Comer, *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry*, 25.

¹⁷ Miles Stanford, *The Complete Green Letters*, quoted in Robby Gallaty and Chris Swain, *Replicate*, 196.

¹⁸ "[P]ert. to bearing evil without resentment, *patient*, *tolerant* of Christians" (BDAG, 77).

¹⁹ Those who wait will not be disappointed.

- (1) “Jesus’ schedule was full. To the brim at times. In a good way. Yet he never came off hurried.”²⁰
- (2) “...[Jesus] put on display an unhurried life, where space for God and love for people were the top priorities, and because he said yes to the Father and his kingdom, he constantly said no to countless other invitations.”²¹
- e. Paul.
 - (1) **2 Co 6:4-7** 4 ...But as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: by great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, 5 beatings, imprisonments, riots, labours, sleepless nights, hunger; 6 by purity, knowledge, *patience*, kindness, the Holy Spirit, genuine love; 7 by truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left....
 - (2) **2 Ti 3:10** 10 You, however, have followed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my *patience*, my love, my endurance....

8. The Power of Patience.

- a. **Ps 25:4-5** 4 Make me to know your ways, Yahweh. Teach me your paths. 5 Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation. For you I *wait* all the day long.
- b. **1 Co 13:4** 4 Love is *patient* (μακροθυμέω)²² and kind.
- c. **2 Co 6:4-7** 4 ...But as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: by great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, 5 beatings, imprisonments, riots, labours, sleepless nights, hunger; 6 by purity, knowledge, *patience*, kindness, the Holy Spirit, genuine love; 7 by truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left....
- d. **Ga 5:22** 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, *patience* (μακροθυμία)....
- e. **Col 1:11** 11 ...Being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance (ὑπομονή) and *patience* (μακροθυμία) with joy....

9. The Attitude of Patience.

- a. Who is the most patient person you know? How is it they can be so patient?
- b. Slow and steady matters. Be the tortoise, not the hare. Slow and steady wins in life.
- c. Sanctification is “a long obedience in the same direction.”²³
- d. “Patience requires a willingness to lay aside our to-do lists and our incessant demands for quantifiable results for the sake of others’ needs, our own spiritual development, and the worship of God. A patient person does not hoard time. Another aspect of patience is restraint from taking matters into our own hands. Patient people, when circumstances necessitate, are willing to wait.”²⁴

²⁰ John Mark Comer, *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry*, 91.

²¹ John Mark Comer, *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry*, 93.

²² Patience is the first characteristic of love Paul mentions. An impatient person is rarely a loving person.

²³ Eugene Peterson.

²⁴ Dallas Theological Seminary, Spiritual Formation curriculum.

- e. “Do not panic when things go wrong. Do not rush to defend yourself. that will only get you in God’s way. Keep your poise and dignity and let God work out the details.”²⁵
- f. Expect God to interrupt things.
 - (1) The good Samaritan is an example of a patient person.
 - (2) “The Acts of the Apostles is a book of interruptions.”²⁶
- g. “Take a deep breath. Put your cell phone away. Let your heart slow down. Let God take care of the world.”²⁷
- h. Waiting on the Lord is not passive but active. It is to do *righteousness* (cf. 56:1) with joy, which is, in effect, to *remember* God’s ways. Thus to wait for the Lord is to live the covenant life, to commit the future into God’s hands by means of living a daily life that shows that we know his ways of integrity, honesty, faithfulness, simplicity, mercy, generosity, and self-denial. The person who does not do these things may be waiting for something, but he or she is not waiting for the Lord.
- i. **Ps 37:7-9** 7 Rest (דָּמַם) in Yahweh and writhe with fear (חִיל) for him. Do not get excited (חָרָה) because of him who prospers in his way, because of the man who carries out wicked schemes. 8 Cease from anger and forsake wrath. Do not get excited (חָרָה). It leads only to evildoing. 9 For evildoers will be cut off, but those who wait (קָוָה) for Yahweh, they will inherit the land.
- j. **Ps 37:34** 34 Wait (קָוָה) for Yahweh and keep his way, and he will exalt you to inherit the land. When the wicked are cut off, you will see it.²⁸
- k. **Ps 62:1-2** 1 For God alone my soul waits in silence. From him comes my salvation. 2 He alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress. I shall not be greatly shaken.
- l. **Ps 130:5-6** 5 I wait for Yahweh. My soul waits, and in his word I hope. 6 My soul waits for Yahweh more than watchmen for the morning, more than watchmen for the morning.
- m. **Is 25:9-10** 9 It will be said on that day, Behold, this is our God. We have waited (קָוָה) for him, that he might save us. This is Yahweh. We have waited for him. Let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.
- n. **Is 26:8** 8 In the path of your judgments, Yahweh, we wait for you. Your name and remembrance are the desire of our soul.
- o. **La 3:25-26** 25 Yahweh is good to those who wait for him, to the soul who seeks him. 26 It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of Yahweh.
- p. **Hos 12:6** 6 So you [Israel], by the help of your God, return, hold fast to love and justice, and wait continually for your God.
- q. **Hab 3:16** 16 I hear, and my body trembles. My lips quiver at the sound. Rottenness enters into my bones. My legs tremble beneath me. Yet I will quietly wait for the day of trouble to come upon people who invade us.

10. The Practicalities of Patience.

²⁵ William Yeager, *Who’s Holding the Umbrella?*, 132.

²⁶ Oswald J. Smith, *The Passion for Souls* (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1962), 107.

²⁷ John Ortberg, in John Mark Comer, *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry*, xv.

²⁸ God is worth the wait.

- a. John Mark Comer:²⁹
 - (1) “You must ruthlessly eliminate hurry from your life.”³⁰
 - (2) Drive the speed limit.
 - (3) Get in the slow lane.
 - (4) Come to a full stop at stop signs.
 - (5) Don’t text and drive.
 - (6) Show up ten minutes early for appointments, sans phone.
 - (7) Get in the longest checkout at the grocery store.
 - (8) Turn your smartphone into a dumbphone.
 - (9) Take email off your phone.
 - (10) Take all social media off your phone.
 - (11) Delete all notifications.
 - (12) Ditch news apps.
 - (13) Delete every app you don’t need.
 - (14) Keep your home screen free and clear.
 - (15) Set your phone to grayscale mode.
 - (16) Put your phone to bed.
 - (17) Keep your phone off until after your morning quiet time.
 - (18) Set times for email. Check it at 9am and 4pm.
 - (19) Set a time limit for social media.
 - (20) Kill your TV.
 - (21) Walk slowly.
 - (22) Take a regular (monthly) day alone for silence and solitude.
 - (23) Journal.
 - (24) Take long vacations.
 - (25) Take one week off every quarter.
 - (26) Cook your own food.
- b. There is one thing we are not to be patient about: sharing the good news of Jesus. Patience is usually a virtue, but not in this case.
 - (1) **2 Ki 7:9** 9 Then [the lepers] said to one another, We are not doing right. This day is a day of good news. If we are silent and *wait* until the morning light, punishment will overtake us. Now therefore come. Let us go and tell the king’s household.

11. The Benefits of Patience.

- a. “The Lord usually trains his servants to waiting, and to much conflict in their way to his immediate service.”³¹
- b. Our waiting on God develops our absolute dependence on him. It assures that we will act on his timing and not our own.³²
- c. The Bible says “walk with God,” not “run with God.”

²⁹ John Mark Comer, *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry*, 31.

³⁰ Dallas Willard, quoted in John Mark Comer, *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry*, 19.

³¹ Charles Bridges, *The Christian Ministry*, Kindle Locations 1479-1481.

³² H. T. Blackaby and C. V. King, *Experiencing God*, 242.

- d. “Patience is the pastor’s super-power.”
- e. **Lk 10:38-42** 38 Now as they went on their way, Jesus entered a village. And a woman named Martha welcomed him into her house. 39 And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord’s feet and listened to his teaching. 40 But Martha was distracted with much serving. And she went up to him and said, Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me. 41 But the Lord answered her, Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, 42 but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her.
- f. “We find God’s will for our lives in our limitations.”³³
- g. “I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived.”³⁴
- h. “Waiting is not about what you get at the end of the wait; it’s about what you become as you wait.”³⁵
 - (1) **Ps 25:21** 21 May integrity and uprightness preserve me, for I wait for you.
- i. Honour.
 - (1) **Ps 25:3-5** 3 Indeed, none who wait for you [Yahweh] shall be put to shame. They shall be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous. 4 Make me to know your ways, Yahweh. Teach me your paths. 5 Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation. For you I wait all the day long.
 - (2) **Is 49:23** 23 Kings shall be your foster fathers, and their queens your nursing mothers. With their faces to the ground they shall bow down to you [Israel] and lick the dust of your feet. Then you will know that I am Yahweh. Those who wait for me shall not be put to shame.
- j. Strength.
 - (1) **Is 40:31** 31 Those who wait (קוה) for Yahweh will gain new strength. They will mount up with wings like eagles. They will run and not get tired. They will walk and not become weary.
- k. **2 Co 6:4-7** 4 ...But as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: by great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, 5 beatings, imprisonments, riots, labours, sleepless nights, hunger; 6 by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, the Holy Spirit, genuine love; 7 by truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left....

12. The Object of Patience.

- a. God’s promises.
 - (1) **He 6:15** 15 And thus Abraham, having patiently waited (μακροθυμέω), obtained the promise.³⁶
- b. Salvation.

³³ Peter Scazzero, quoted in John Mark Comer, *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry*, 64.

³⁴ Henry David Thoreau.

³⁵ Paul Tripp.

³⁶ Those who wait will not be disappointed.

- (1) **Ge 49:18** 18 I [Jacob] wait (קוה) for your salvation, Yahweh.
- (2) **Ps 40:1-3** 1 I waited patiently (קוה) for Yahweh. He inclined to me and heard my cry. 2 He drew me up from the pit of destruction, out of the miry bog, and set my feet upon a rock, making my steps secure. 3 He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God.
- (3) **Pr 20:22** 22 Do not say, I will repay evil. Wait for Yahweh, and he will deliver you.
- (4) **Hab 3:16** 16 I hear, and my body trembles. My lips quiver at the sound. Rottenness enters into my bones. My legs tremble beneath me. Yet I will quietly wait for the day of trouble to come upon people who invade us.
- (5) Example: taken hostage by terrorists.
- c. God's grace, mercy, and justice.
 - (1) **2 Sa 16:12** 12 It may be that Yahweh will look on the wrong done to me, and that Yahweh will repay me with good for his cursing today.
 - (2) **Is 30:18** 18 Therefore Yahweh waits to be gracious to you, and therefore he exalts himself to show mercy to you. For Yahweh is a God of justice.³⁷ Blessed are all those who wait for him.
- d. Jesus' second coming.
 - (1) **Jas 5:7-8** 7 Be patient (μακροθυμέω), therefore, brothers and sisters, until the coming of the Lord [Jesus]. See how the farmer waits (ἐκδέχομαι, pres.)³⁸ for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient (μακροθυμέω) about it, until it receives the early and the late rains. 8 You also, be patient (μακροθυμέω). Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.
- e. God's day of judgement.
 - (1) **Zep 3:8** 8 Therefore wait for me, declares Yahweh, for the day when I rise up to seize the prey. For my decision is to gather nations, to assemble kingdoms, to pour out upon them my indignation, all my burning anger. For in the fire of my jealousy all the earth shall be consumed.
- f. Inheritance in the messianic kingdom.
 - (1) **Ps 37:9** 9 For evildoers will be cut off, but those who wait (קוה) for Yahweh, they will inherit the land.
 - (2) **Ps 37:34** 34 Wait (קוה) for Yahweh and keep his way, and he will exalt you to inherit the land. When the wicked are cut off, you will see it.³⁹
 - (3) **He 6:12** 12 ...So that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience (μακροθυμία) inherit the promises.
 - (4) **He 11:9-10** 9 By faith [Abraham] went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. 10 For he was waiting (ἐκδέχομαι, imperf.) for the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God.
- g. God's activity.

³⁷ One reason we can wait for God is because we know he is just. It all goes back to his character.

³⁸ “[I]n our lit. to remain in a place or state and await an event or the arrival of someone, *expect, wait*” (BDAG, 300).

³⁹ God is worth the wait.

- (1) **Is 64:4** 4 From of old no one has heard or perceived by the ear, no eye has seen a God besides you, who acts for those who wait for him.
- h. God's goodness.
- (1) **La 3:25-26** 25 Yahweh is good to those who wait for him, to the soul who seeks him. 26 It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of Yahweh.

13. Application.

- a. **Mic 7:7** 7 But as for me, I will look to Yahweh. I will wait for the God of my salvation. My God will hear me.

14. A Hymn of Patience.

Be Still My Soul

Be still, my soul: the Lord is on thy side.
Bear patiently the cross of grief or pain.
Leave to thy God to order and provide;
In every change, He faithful will remain.
Be still, my soul: thy best, thy heavenly Friend
Through thorny ways leads to a joyful end.

Katherina A. von Schlegel

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