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The Responsible Christian Woman

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Series: Living Lessons From Proverbs

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INTO HIS LIKENESS RADIO

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The Responsible Christian Woman

Ladies, you are our honored guests, and this lesson is primarily for you. It is entitled: The Responsible Christian Woman and its purpose is to graphically paint on the canvas of our minds, using the colors of the Scripture, a portrait of what a woman is like when Jesus Christ is in control of her life.

Our goal is not to inflict upon you a standard you cannot keep but rather to encourage you by showing you the woman you really already are in Jesus Christ!

Our Outline is simply this:

I- The Distinction

II- The Description

III- The Decision

THE DISTINCTION

Before we look at the Scriptural portrait of the Christ controlled woman, we must remind ourselves (and remind you ladies in particular) that there is a divine distinction that sets you apart as a unique and special creation with a unique and special purpose in God's plan.

The task of Satan through the ages (and the goal of Satan in particular in these latter days) is to intentionally blur those distinctives that separate men from women in appearance, in function, and in purpose. If he can reverse the roles, or eliminate those roles by convincing society that they do not exist he has successfully destroyed God's most powerful portrait of the relationship between His Son and His Church.

The unisex movement, for instance, is not simply a harmless trend in a contemporary society; it is a satanic ploy in an eternally significant spiritual struggle! There is a struggle to destroy the distinctives that make men, men and make women, women in God's plan.

Satan's design is to displace the home as the center of spiritual transformation, and dismantle the traditional roles of

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men and women, as they exist in scripture. It is the Church's job to see that this simply DOES NOT happen!

Now, some of this material I will be sharing with you in the first part of this lesson I shared with you about four years ago in a study on God's truth and Satan's lies but I believe it bears repeating.

So under Roman numeral I, (The Distinction) we will quickly take a look at how to earn a PHD in marriage.

In the mathematics department of GMU, (God's Matrimonial University) Professor Jehovah has developed an amazing formula, the application of which always leads to the bestowing of a PHD. Here's the formula. (Even if you're not a math major, give it a try.) It goes like this:

$$\frac{A}{E+D} X (S+S) = PHD$$

What it stands for is this: Equality plus Diversity under Authority multiplied by Submission and Sacrifice equals a PHD (Power, Harmony, and Direction!)

Factor 1: EQUALITY

The first ingredient is EQUALITY. By equality we mean this: "The absence of any classification in the heart of God which would separate men from women (relative to value, potential, or importance in the Kingdom of God)." It means that God has not divided the Kingdom into spheres and elevated some above others in worth.

There is neither male nor female bond nor free Jew nor Greek. There is total equality in Jesus Christ and our Lord came into a world where Jews, Romans, and Greeks alike had each in their own way relegated woman to third class citizenship.

But Jesus tore asunder the chains of inequity and set woman back into her rightful place of spiritual equality in the Kingdom. In God's sight, men and women are equal in value, equal in importance, and equal in potential in the Kingdom of God There is total equality in Jesus Christ. Period.

Don't ever let anyone tell you otherwise! The second ingredient is DIVERSITY.

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Factor 2: DIVERSITY

Diversity = the presence of divine distinctives in appearance, function, personality, and strength given to perfectly allow men and women to portray and fulfill their God-appointed roles.

Loosely put, it means though men and women are equal, they are different and that difference is by divine design.

First of all, they are different in appearance and because of the picture those differences portray, God has forbidden men and women from blurring those distinctives.

A woman must not wear men's clothing; nor a man wear woman's clothing; for the Lord your God detests anyone who does this.
(Deuteronomy 22:5 NIV)

The commandment seems clear enough, and in a society that has acclaimed one of the best motion pictures of the year a comedy about violating that principle, it's obvious we don't take it too seriously.

But while Satan is working from the world's perspective at the extremes by calling it "entertainment" he is more subtly making inroads at designer levels by making clothes that in particular encourage women to dress like men and in the process despise the creativity of femininity that is both modest, and yet decidedly not masculine.

Now, God isn't particularly trying to take over the fashion industry. He is Spirit and His objectives are Spiritual! and the roles men and women are to play are to demonstrate the difference that exists between Christ and His Church so how we dress to that degree is vital to God.

Secondly, in I Corinthians 11, men and women are commanded by God not to reverse or imitate even the length of hair of the opposite sex because, "man is the image and glory of God, but woman the glory of man." God is painting a picture, and even the distinctives of hair length is a part of that picture. Equal, but different!

Secondly, men and women are different in function! We obviously have a different function in childbirth. If you think there are no differences, you let your husband have the next baby. You say, "You'd like to"? Never mind.

In Deuteronomy 3:18 and Joshua 1:4 you can see that there is obviously a difference in their roles nationally. Throughout

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the scripture, it is made plain that there is a difference not only biologically, not only nationally, but there is a difference vocationally, and religiously, and obviously a difference in the home functionally. In no area of life, does God not make a distinction between the design of men and women.

Thirdly, there is an obvious difference in personality. Men are more objective less sensitive less attentive to detail more dogmatic and clinical men are by design, aggressors. Women, meanwhile, are more: subjective, sensitive, attentive to detail, abstract, experiential women are by design, responders. There is an obvious difference in personality! And there is an obvious difference in strength, too. Physically, men are by design, stronger. But I believe, emotionally, women are stronger.

Strength is by definition is the maximum capacity for accomplishment.

And women by and large, have a far greater emotional capacity than men. They are emotionally stronger! So, physically, men seem stronger (not necessarily in endurance, but in capacity; often women are stronger in endurance.) and emotionally, women seem stronger (again, not always in endurance, for their sheer capacity emotionally makes them more vulnerable). But spiritually, neither is stronger they are equal. Again, equal, but different!

For instance, men are usually better equipped: to teach to preach to witness to debate doctrine to understand prophecy to exercise spiritual leadership. Ah, but women are usually FAR better equipped in areas of discernment and worship and prayer and meditation and application and service!

Men get the limelight, but God has placed women in the trenches of the spiritual battlefield where the REAL victories are won areas where men are often ill-equipped to be effective. Equality YES! But diversity, DEFINITELY!

Factor 3: AUTHORITY

Authority is the divine progression of responsibility created by God to:

- a) Portray His message and
- b) Maintain order in the church and in the home (thus utilizing men's and women's distinctives without compromising their equality).

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The issue of authority in the home is once again, an issue of portraying a spiritual truth. I Corinthians explains it this way,

Now I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.
(I Corinthians 11:3 NIV)

The progression is just as Christ is subject in all things to the Father, so is the woman subject to the man. Now is Christ any less God than the Father? Are they any less than totally equal? Then if Jesus was not offended to be ranked under the Father, ought women be offended by being ranked under their husbands, from a perspective of authority?

Let's look again at the Trinity, God's D I P (Divine Illustration of the Principle). The Holy Trinity

In essence, equal (John 1:2; 3:35; 14:9; 17:21; Philippians 2:6; Colossians 2:9,10; Matthew 28:18)

In design, distinctive (John 14:26, 14:16, 5:22, Romans 5:5, Acts 16:6, Mark 13:32)

In authority, ranked under but equal (John 5:19; 5:30; 7:16; 16:13.)

The Father, the Son, and the Spirit are our perfect examples!

Such passages as John 1:2, John 3:35, and John 14:9 tell us that in essence they are equal: They are the same!

But John 14:16, 14:26, and 5:22 tell us that in design they are distinctive decidedly different!

For example, like a perfect government, the Father serves as the Executive Branch. He is responsible for plan and design (just as the husband is in the marriage).

The Spirit is the Legislative branch. He is responsible for execution and detail (just as the wife is in the marriage).

And the Son is the judicial branch. He is responsible for judgment and deliverance, just as God is in the Christian Marriage.

Equal, yes but by design, all three members of the Godhead are decidedly different.

Yet in authority, they are ranked under John 5:19, and 5:30, and 7:16 are just a few of the passages that confirm the principle.

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Factor 4: SUBMISSION + SACRIFICE

So God's divine formula is:

$$\frac{A}{E+D} X (S+S)$$

(Equality plus diversity under authority)

But to be complete it must be *multiplied by the S+S factor.*

By S+S we mean that the great equalizing factor in any marriage and in the church and in society is this: Men and women have been called on each to possess one dominant quality in their relationship as husbands or wives. Those two qualities, when in balance, provide the perfect base on which equality, diversity, and authority rest. For the woman that mystical, but practical word is submission.

Submission defined = to yield to the authority of another and to give oneself totally to the success of another while under their authority.

Ephesians 5:22-24; Titus 3:1; Colossians 3:18; and I Peter 3:1,5 tell the story.

The woman is under the man's authority—instructed “IN CHRIST” to submit not because the husband is “worthy” but because he holds an office ordained by God. The wife demonstrates the church's relationship to Christ by submitting carefully designing HER life to make HIM successful and the world, under the influence of Satan's attack on God's plan loathes the idea. But women, that's your role!

Ah, but the other “S” in the formula, balances the picture! For just as the wife is to “submit” to her husband, so the husband is to “sacrifice” for the wife and give himself for her if need be, give his LIFE for her.

To sacrifice means = to voluntarily overlook rank for the purpose of giving up pleasures or rights for the sake of another. It is the “act of giving your life for another.

So, the godly husband gives himself sacrificially to meet his wife's needs and although he has the final authority and responsibility he does not use that authority as a club to lord it over her, but rather as a platform from which to serve her. The man is to sacrifice, and the woman is to submit; each thinking

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more highly of the other than of themselves.

Factor 5: Equals POWER, HARMONY & DIRECTION

If she submits and he sacrifices then they multiply the effectiveness of a balanced marriage and equality with diversity under authority leads to a PHD: Power, Harmony and Direction but even if she does not submit, he is to sacrifice the more demonstrating the more, the Saviors love for us “in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died.” And even if he does not sacrifice, she is to submit the more demonstrating the more Christ’s submission to the Father on our behalf.

Those are the roles and that is the relationship as it has been divinely instituted and an understanding of that is essential to our grasping in perspective Proverb’s portrait of the Responsible Christian Woman.

THE DESCRIPTION

One last thought before we turn to Proverbs 31. The most beautiful portrait of all of a woman’s three basic strengths can possibly best be found by looking at her counterpart in the Trinity the Holy Spirit!

For while the Holy Spirit in the Trinity is equal to the Father, and to the Son, three basic characteristics make His functions significantly different.

1- The characteristic of deference. The Holy Spirit’s role is never to compete, only to complete the work of the Son. He never calls attention to Himself; He always seeks rather to glorify the one He represents.

2- The characteristic of serving. The Holy Spirit’s role is to minister to the needs of the Body, often without recognition, but rather quietly meeting our needs invisibly (as far as the world is concerned), and

3- The Characteristic of sensitivity. The Holy Spirit is the sensing agent in the Trinity sending signals to the body of Christ verifying truth or error, separating holiness from impurity, validating honestly while exposing hypocrisy. If you examine the Godly woman, the responsible Christian woman as outlined in Scripture, you will see that her three basic qualities are a spirit of deference a servant spirit and a sensitive heart. And that’s no accident!

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Women, if you carefully examine the work of the Holy Spirit and ask God to magnify those three qualities in your life, as you do, Christ in you will demonstrate His presence with power in a variety of ways and God has graciously captured that power in its entirety on the videotape of Scripture in Proverbs 31:10-31. Let's quickly replay it now, against the backdrop of God's EDA plan, and in the light of the three basic qualities the Holy Spirit has so beautifully demonstrated in the Godhead. Please turn to Proverbs chapter 31. We will use it as our base, and the other Proverbial passages on womanhood, we'll simply add in as they apply. Let's divide the passage into parts.

The Responsible Christian Woman: (Proverbs 31)

- A- Her Role (vs. 10-12)
- B- Her Responsibilities (vs. 13-28)
- C- Her Readiness (vs. 19-21)
- D- Her Resources (vs. 22-27)
- E- Her Reputation (vs. 28-31)

Her Role (verses 10-12)

The wife of noble character, who can find? She is worth more than rubies.

Her husband has full confidence in her, and lacks nothing of value.

She brings him good, not harm, all the days of her life.

(Proverbs 31:10-12 NIV)

Let me remind you at the outset, that while most of the scriptural portraits of woman are as a wife, the qualities God designed in woman to maximize her ability to glorify HIM are the same.

If you are single, and have never been married, if you are the victim of a divorce, a single parent a working mother the principles will not change. God has placed in you certain characteristics which when allowed to be freed by His Spirit, demonstrate how his Spirit works in the Godhead. And if you set free those three basic qualities - deference, service, and sensitivity – you will find fulfillment. If you are frustrated you may well have stifled one of those three basic expressions of Christian womanhood.

Now in verse 10 we are told that a wife or a woman whose character is Godly is a rare and priceless gem far more valuable than the most expensive of jewels. You women who think you

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have nothing to offer in life, because you don't look like a movie star or you don't sing like an angel or you're not talented or you're not an administrator or noted for your wittiness?

Dear friend, those things are value-less compared to the priceless treasure of a woman who is ALL GOD'S. You're a gift from God!

Houses and wealth are inherited from parents, but a prudent wife is from the Lord (Proverbs 19:14 NIV)

she is a blessing to him from the Lord.
(Proverbs 18:22b TLB)

You single girls: forget about what the world says and concentrate on being the kind of woman God describes in this passage and you will be a treasure of unlimited value and the man of discretion will know it.

And you single guys Here's what you look for in a mate! Physical beauty will fade but spiritual beauty will blossom like the unfolding of a precious flower and the longer she walks with God the more beautiful she will become.

Her husband has full confidence in her, and lacks nothing of value.

She brings him good, not harm, all the days of her life.
(Proverbs 31:11,12 NIV)

Her husband can trust her and she will richly satisfy his needs.

She will not hinder him, but help him all her life. (TLB)

She has developed the quality of deference. Like the Holy Spirit, she is active, involved, and productive! But she is never a hindrance, never a competitor, never an independent agent trying to build a life apart from the one to whom she is accountable. She is a "help-mate." Every wife is either a "help-mate or a "hindrance-mate."

Just as Jesus said, "He that is not with me is against me", so the wife who is not fitting into her husband's life is hindering her husband's life, and is lacking the quality of learning to defer to the glory of another.

Her Responsibilities (verses 13-18)

She selects wool and flax and works with eager hands.

She is like the merchant ships bringing her food from afar.

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She gets up while it is still dark. She provides food for her family and portions for her servant girls.

She considers a field and buys it out of her earnings, she plants a vineyard.

She sets about her work vigorously; her arms are strong for her tasks.

She sees that her trading is profitable and her lamp does not go out at night. (Proverbs 31:13-18 NIV)

Now I know, this appears to be an ad for “Superwoman.” But let’s look beyond the individual tasks mentioned, and look to the attitudes that permeate her life.

Verse 13, she works *eagerly*

Verse 15, she works *tirelessly*

Verse 15, she works *unselfishly*

Verse 17, she works *vigorously*

Verse 18, she works *profitably*

God’s woman, like the Holy Spirit, is characterized not only by a spirit of deference, but by a life of service. What God is saying, I believe, in this passage, is that housework or home management is in essence, a form of WORSHIP (if it is done God’s way)! Hard work is a major part of the plan of God for man (we learned that just a few weeks ago) and hard work is a major part of the plan of God for women. Her days are long days. They are characterized by diligence, unselfishness, but by enthusiasm. And though her tasks may seem to be (in the light of this world’s systems) of less than paramount importance, to God, they are of international import, for they fulfill his plan and demonstrate His portrait and typify His Spirit.

Her Readiness (verses 19-21)

In her hand she holds the distaff and grasps the spindle with her fingers.

She opens her arms to the poor and extends her hands to the needy.

When it snows, she has no fear for her household; for all of them are clothed in scarlet. (Proverbs 31:19-21 NIV)

Like the Holy Spirit, God’s woman not only is characterized by deference, and by a servant heart, but by sensitivity to the needs of others. She sews as diligently for the poor as she does

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for her own. And she labors and she saves so she'll have the more to give away. Life's surprises do not catch her unawares so sensitive is she to her family's needs, that even the sudden storms of life do not find her unprepared.

You say does such a woman really exist? I know she does! I'm married to her. I don't deserve her, but I praise God for her. And many of you men are saying the same thing in your hearts about your wife right now. (Incidentally, when you get home, tell her!) So because of her readiness her family is never found wanting, because she has never failed to be aware of their needs.

Her Resources (verses 22-27)

She makes coverings for her bed. She is clothed in fine linen and purple.

Her husband is respected in the city gate, where he takes his seat among the elders of the land.

She makes linen garments and sells them, and supplies the merchants with sashes.

She is clothed with strength and dignity

She can laugh at the days to come.

She speaks with wisdom, and faithful instruction is on her tongue.

She watches over the affairs of her household, and does not eat the bread of idleness. (Proverbs 31:22-27 NIV)

Do you see the work of the Holy Spirit characterized again in this passage?

Clothing us in verse 22

Calling attention to the Son who is seated in the heavenlies in verse 23

Making garments of fine linen for the church in verse 24

Giving us both strength and dignity in verse 25

Giving us wisdom and instruction in verse 26

Overseeing the son's household in verse 27

Women! What a beautiful portrait God has painted of your role as he etched out in detail the marvelous work of His Precious Holy Spirit, deferring, ministering, yet always being sensitive to the needs of others. And what a practical portrait as well! God's woman is always dressed as a lady, with distinction, and with femininity.

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Yet I Peter 3 reminds us that she is never calling attention to her physical attributes or her physical beauty. But her clothing and her hairstyle are to blend together in such a way as to allow the beauty of her inner life to be seen and thus to glorify God. God's woman possesses an inner strength the whole family feeds on "She laughs at days to come," Scripture adds, she has a faith that evaporates the fears of what might lie ahead. But her strength is clothed with dignity! There is refinement, courtesy, quality in her demeanor. She is not crude, nor coarse in her mannerisms. Such a woman would be a disgrace.

Like a gold ring in a pig's snout is a beautiful woman who shows no discretion (or modesty). (Proverbs 11:22 NIV)

She's repulsive out of place unbecoming. And you can tell it best by what she says (and how she says it).

She speaks with wisdom, and faithful instruction is on her tongue. (Proverbs 31:26 NIV)

She is quiet and encouraging, and her words build up.

The wise woman builds her house, but with her own hands the foolish one tears hers down. (Proverbs 14:1 NIV)

Her tongue is her greatest weapon! She is not argumentative, nor quarrelsome, nor nagging. Proverbs 21:9 and 19 both give us perspective about how God feels about contentious wives.

It is better to live on a corner of the roof than share a house with a quarrelsome wife. (Proverbs 21:9 NIV)

It's better to live in the DESERT than with a quarrelsome and ill-tempered woman, (Proverbs 21:19 NIV)

Better to live in the desert than with a quarrelsome, complaining woman. (Proverbs 21:19 TLB)

A quarrelsome wife is like a constant dripping on a rainy day.

Restraining her is like restraining the wind, or grasping oil with the hands. (Proverbs 27:15,16)

You can no more stop her complaints than you can stop the wind. (TLB)

Ah, the tongue of God's woman heals and soothes. It does not grate like chalk on a chalkboard; it is kind, not quarrelsome. She is a peacemaker.

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Her Reputation (verses 28-31)

Her children arise and call her blessed; her husband also
and he praises her.

Many women do noble things, but you surpass them all.
(Proverbs 31:28,29 NIV)

A wife of noble character is her husband's crown, but a
disgraceful wife is like decay in his bones.
(Proverbs 12:4 NIV)

Listen to this husband's praise (and may I share with you
that I can honestly this morning say this to MY wife.) Many
women do noble things, but YOU surpass them all!

Give her the reward she has earned, and let her works bring
her praise at the city gate. (Proverbs 31:31 NIV)

Honor goes to kind and gracious women...
(Proverbs 11:16a TLB)

Honor because she has successfully competed? No, honor
because she has successfully completed her husband's life and
thus fulfilled God's plan for hers.

Like God's Precious Holy Spirit, hers has been a ministry of
deference, of service, and of sensitivity. And like the Holy Spirit,
she has brought honor to the one whose life she was called to
make successful.

She has chosen the BETTER way and has chosen to become
the responsible Christian woman!

THE DECISION

Charm is deceptive and beauty is fleeting, but a woman
who fears the Lord is to be praised. (Proverbs 31:30 NIV)

You see, every woman has a choice: to compete or to
complete. She can focus on the world's charm, seek the world's
possessions, and search for the world's acclaim, or simply fear
the Lord instead. She can make Jesus Christ the desire of her
heart and, serving Him the one and only purpose of her life.

If she determines to do that, God has a perfect role model for
her to follow. For like His Precious Spirit, she is called upon to
quietly defer to graciously serve all the while remaining intensely
sensitive to the needs of those about her. Hers is a unique
calling. Though she is often omitted from the limelight of acclaim
still hers is a calling so priceless her value is beyond measure.
The most valuable of gems are worthless when compared to her.

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Though the proponents of a new age of womanhood may scorn her values; loathe her submissiveness, and predict that she will never find true fulfillment as a woman, it is to her that they turn in times of trouble. It is still her strength they secretly desire. It is still her dignity they secretly admire. It is still her loyalty at which they marvel.

Still her humility that calls attention to a quality of life they have lost. She may not measure up to the “success” standards of the world indeed she will not but in their heart of hearts, even the women of the world, admire the Godly Woman.

She is the essence of God’s Holy Spirit

She is the Illuminator of God the Son

She is the Joy of God the Father.

And ladies, she is IN YOU (If Christ is in you) waiting to transform you to transform you into. The Responsible Christian woman God designed you to be. Now, you may not be a wife or a homemaker. You may be laboring in the marketplace, or in the classroom, or in the office. Does that mean you are to mimic the world’s concept of womanhood: aggressive, independent, assertive? Does that mean God’s qualities in you are any different? Or does that rather not mean that God in His special grace has allowed you to demonstrate in perhaps an even more difficult environment the qualities of deference, and service, and sensitivity.

WHERE you are is not the issue. WHO you are is the issue. And you are the Responsible Christian Woman. That’s who you are! Wherever you are, she is not someone for you to imitate. She IS Christ in you! SHE IS THE WOMAN YOU ALREADY ARE!

If you do not see those qualities emerging in your life, the need is not for depression but for decision. A decision to pray morning, noon, and night, “Father, release the qualities of the Holy Spirit in my life.”

The Spirit is already in your life. Thus, these qualities are already in your life. And so God is just waiting to make you the woman you already are!

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THE WOMAN YOU ALREADY ARE

God is just waiting to make you
The woman you already are;
Waiting to free from within you,
Qualities...greater by far.

Than ever you had dared to dream
Or believe you would ever see
For the rarest of gems that sparkles
Is the jewel God wants you to be

A life that, like His Spirit,
Is willing to ever defer
Allowing another the glory
Just the way God would prefer

A life that is marked with service
Quietly laboring on
Knowing that through her labors
Honor accrues to the Son

A life that is sensitive always
A life that constantly heeds
The call to quietly sense life's hurts
Thus tenderly meeting life's needs

Yes, God is waiting to make you
A shining, heavenly star
And all He needs do is release her
This woman you already are!

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