

"IT IS FINISHED"

"Bear...in His own body"
1 Peter 2:24



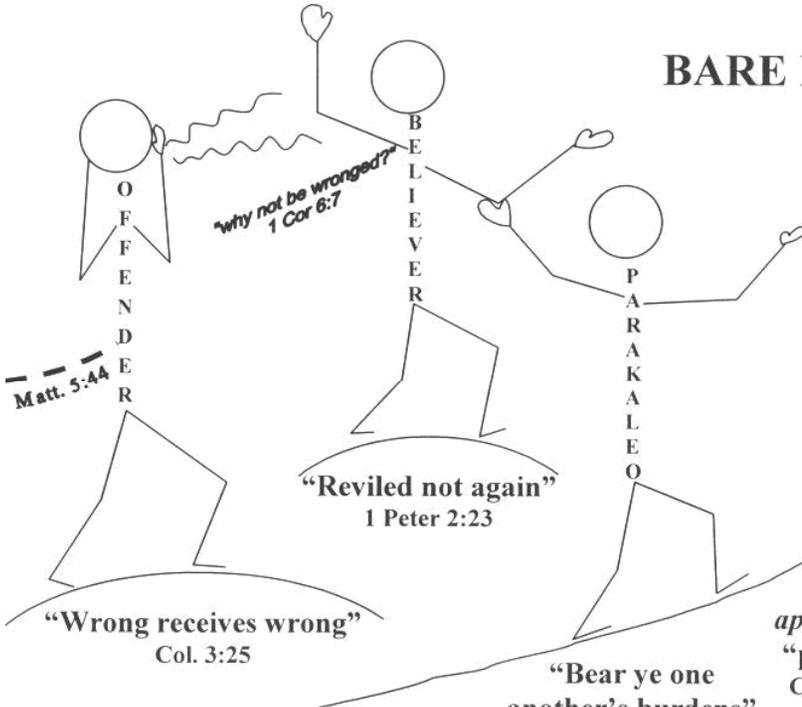
CHRISTIANITY
"Christ-in-you"-ity
Col. 1:27

"Think it not strange"
1 Peter 4:12-19

BEAR IT!

BARE IT!

BURY IT!



formerly
alienated...

JN
19:
30

paraclete
...holy,
blameless,
Col. 1:21,22

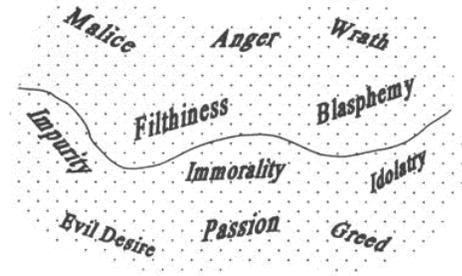
1 Pet. 4:14

enduo
"put on"
Col. 3:12-14



Col. 3:16
LOVE YOUR
Let the Word of Christ...

"In them you once walked...
when you were living in them"
Col. 3:7



"As you have received...
so walk in Him"
Col. 2:6

"Wrong receives wrong"
Col. 3:25

"Bear with one another"
"Forgiving one another"
Col. 3:13

"Bear ye one another's burdens"
Gal. 6:2

apotithemi
"put off"
Col. 3:5,8

"Has deep concern for you"
"That you may stand firm"
Col. 4:12,13

"THIS IS THE TRUE GRACE OF GOD, STAND FIRM IN IT" (1 PET. 5:12).

Bear, Bare, Bury It!

"Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you...If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye. If any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf" (1 Pet. 4:12,14,16 KJV).

"Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed (entrusted) himself to him that judgeth righteously" (1 Pet. 2:23 KJV).

Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? Why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?" (1 Cor 6:7 KJV).

"But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons" (Col. 3:25 KJV).

"_____, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God" (Col 4:12 KJV).

"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2 KJV).

"Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed. For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls" (1 Pet. 2:24-25 KJV).

How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God" (Heb. 9:14 KJV)

Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire and greed, which amounts to idolatry (Col. 3:5 NASB).

"But now ye also put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth" (Col. 3:8 KJV).

"...As those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience, bearing with one another, and forgiving one another...whoever has a complaint against anyone, just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you" (Col. 3:12-13 NASB).

GRACE for the Rest of Your Life

BEAR, BARE, BURY IT!

RECONCILING GRACE: Options to Anger; Put Off—Put On; Love Your Enemies; Reconciliation

This is the **Gracestoration** lesson, **Bear, Bare, Bury It!** or **Reconciling Grace**. We are all familiar with the proverbial “black cloud” surrounding a person. We hear, “Bad things often happen to good people.” Matthew 5:45 puts it this way, “*The rain falls on the just and on the unjust.*” The black cloud with the lightening bolt in the upper left hand corner of the card represents adverse circumstances that unexpectedly come into a person’s life. The Apostle Peter attests to this, “*Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you as though some strange thing happened to you*” (1 Pet. 4:12-19). The first figure on the left represents adversarial relationships—the **OFFENDER**. The **OFFENDER** is hurling insults, slander, and betrayal at the **BELIEVER** on the right. How is the **BELIEVER** to react to the one who is causing this grief? Second Corinthians 2:5-11 refers “*to those who cause grief.*” But how are we to react to adversarial relationships and adverse circumstances?

“The natural human responses to being insulted or spit upon are: anger, retaliation, self-justification and withdrawal.” (Chapman)

Options to Anger

Let’s consider what are the options for our anger? The world system gives only two options for reactions of anger. One is to internalize the anger. We are going to call that “**stuffing it**” which is detrimental to our health. The second would be “**spewing it**” which gives one license to “spew it” back to the other person or to someone else. However, as believers, we do have a third option--“**scrapping it**” at the cross. This is the only possible place of closure for our anger. But, praise God there is closure at the cross!

A paragraph from *Hinds Feet on High Places* by Hannah Hurnard reads as follows: “*As Christians we know, in theory at least, that in the life of a child of God there are no second causes, that even the most unjust and cruel things, as well as seemingly pointless and undeserved sufferings, have been permitted by God as a glorious opportunity for us to react to them in such a way that our Lord and Savior is able to produce in us, little by little, His own lovely character. . . To learn the secret of victorious living has been the heart’s desire of those who love the Lord in every generation. We feel we would give anything if only we could, in actual experience always react to evil, tribulation, sorrow, pain, and every wrong thing in such a way that they would be overcome and transformed into something to the praise and glory of God. The only way is by learning to accept, day by day, the actual conditions and tests permitted by God, by a continually repeated laying down of our own will and acceptance of His as it is presented to us in the form of the people with whom we have to live and work, and in the things which happen to us.*”

So the first action on our part is to bear (B-E-A-R) what comes our way as being permitted by God. The Apostle Paul says in 1 Corinthians 6:7, “*Why not be wronged?*”

That is a concept that the Lord has put in the Scriptures, “why not be wronged?” It’s okay! Let’s bear what comes our way, whether it’s from a circumstance or from a relationship. And then, we are presently to B-A-R-E (bare) our heart to the Lord—as we cry out to Him and offer Him our grief, our pain, sorrow, hurt and the evil that come our way. And third, we then let the Lord B-U-R-Y (bury) it all at the foot of the cross. Jesus is our ultimate example in this. First Peter 2:23 says, “*When he was reviled (or verbally abused), He reviled not again, but He kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously.*” That is how He handled everything that came into His life—He kept entrusting Himself to the righteous judge (which we can also do).

Let’s move on to the third stick figure now. We are calling him “**PARAKALEO**”—the person who “*comes alongside*” to help bear the burdens. “*Bear ye one another’s burdens*” (Gal. 6:2). He has a deep concern for you that you may stand firm. A “**PARAKALEO**” comes alongside the wronged person. Notice, they are both pointing to the cross. He comes along to help the believer continually look to the Lord Jesus. He is pointing the **BELIEVER** to the Lord Jesus who is the only one who can be the burden bearer. The Lord has already said that He is our daily burden bearer (Ps. 68:19). He wants to be able to bear it all for us (which is too much for us or another person to bear). In Colossians 3:13, we are also encouraged to “*bear with one another, forgiving one another.*” We can leave the person on the left—the **OFFENDER** or the one causing the grief—into the Lord’s hands for Him to work in that person’s life. “*For he who does wrong will receive the consequences of the wrong which he has done...*” (Col. 3:25). God is the ultimate judge—the righteous judge—to whom we are entrusting our whole situation.

Peter tells us in 1 Peter 2:19-25, “*For this finds favor, if ...a man bears up under sorrows while suffering unjustly, ...when you do what is right and suffer for it, you patiently endure it, this finds favor with God. For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps. Who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in his mouth, And while being reviled, he did not revile in return, while suffering, he uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously. And He Himself bore our sins in His own body on the cross, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness, for by His wounds ye were healed. For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls.*” This is where we find closure—at the cross!

When Jesus bore in His own body our sins on the cross He said, “*Tetelestai*” which means, “*It is finished!*” As Jesus died, He entrusted His spirit to God His Father (Jn. 19:30). Let’s go back to the Old Testament to see where this word “*tetelestai*” began. It means, “*the debt is paid in full.*” When the Old Testament priest offered the annual sacrifice for sin, he first had to confess his own sin, and then lay his hands on the animal to be slain. Next, he would go to the people, who would confess their sins, and then he would symbolically lay his hands on the scapegoat’s head, confessing the sins of the nation, while saying, “*Tetelestai.*” The debt of sin was paid! After that point, the scapegoat was sent out into the wilderness. The next year he would do the same thing. This went on for centuries.

After a while, though, the people started to wonder if perhaps the scapegoat would come back into the village. So, after a time, they would go as a group to the edge of a cliff where they (the priest and the people) could push the scapegoat off the cliff. When they saw the blood at the base of the cliff, they realized that this was final. Again they said “tetelestai.” They needed to have finality or closure for their sins.

This is what Jesus uttered on the cross when he bore the sins of the whole world. He said, “Tetelestai! It is finished!” Hebrews 9:14 explains how the Trinity was there taking part in the crucifixion, “*How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God.*” God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit were all together at that momentous time in history when “It was finished! Tetelestai!” Christ buried our sins. Below the cross, notice some of the sins listed that we once walked in when we were living in them: *malice, wrath, anger, filthiness, and blasphemy. Another level of sin: impurity, evil desire, immorality, idolatry, greed, and passion* (Col. 3:5, 8). All of these, He has buried because of His love for us. “*And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds, yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach*” (Col. 1:21-22).

Put Off—Put On!

He wants us to “put off” (*apotithemi*) all these sins and not dig them up again. Over to the right we see the pick axe. It was D. L. Moody who said, “Those who say they will forgive, but can’t forget, simply bury the hatchet, but leave the handle out for immediate use.” We do not have to dig those up once the Lord has buried them. So as the Lord has forgiven us, we can forgive others and go on, “*Laying aside every weight and the sin which so easily besets us*” (Heb. 12:1). And put off these old things—“*apotithemi*”—putting off or laying them aside. Then He encourages us to “put on” (*enduo*) the Lord Jesus Christ. It is “Christ in Us.” CHRISTIANITY (on the top right) is CHRIST-IN-YOURITY (Ian Thomas) --“*Christ in you the hope of glory*” (Col. 1:27). That is another way of saying CHRISTIANITY.

Notice the DOVE representing the Holy Spirit. First Peter 4:14 says, “*If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.*” Now we go forth, putting on the Lord Jesus Christ, God’s Spirit resting upon us and letting the Word of Christ dwell in us richly (Col. 3:16-17). We can go forth walking in the Spirit; walking with the Lord, and moving forward. Colossians 2:6 says, “*As you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him.*” We received Him by grace through faith. We will continue to walk with Him in His grace through our response of faith. We have closure! We can move forward.

Love Your Enemies

A quote from Henry Laubach (world literacy specialist) says,

“The way to stop hatred is to start a backfire of love.”

The Apostle Paul gives specifics as we move forward in Romans 12:14-21,

- *“Bless those who persecute you; bless and curse not.*
- *Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.*
- *Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly.*

- *Do not be wise in your own estimation.*
- *Never pay back evil for evil to anyone.*
- *Respect what is right in the sight of all men.*
- *If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.*
- *Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, 'VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY,' says the Lord.*
- *But if your enemy is hungry, feed him, and if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap burning coals upon his head.*
- *Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."*

The Apostle Paul also instructs us in 2 Corinthians 2:5-11 that for those who have caused grief, we should do three things: (1) *forgive them*, (2) *comfort them*, and (3) *affirm our love toward them*. And of course we cannot do this ourselves and that is why we have to go through this process of coming out on the other side of the cross and then moving forward to our **OFFENDER**. As we move off the card we have the words, **LOVE YOUR...** Where do we go now? Follow the short lines, go behind the card and back to where we started on the left and write the word **ENEMIES**. **"Love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you and despitefully use you"** (Matt. 5: 44). What are we supposed about those who despitefully use us? **Love them and pray for them!**

An interesting article from GUIDEPOSTS was written by author Fulton Oursler's son, *"I was only 19 when my father died, but I had worked closely with him in the last years of his life. At night, on weekends and through four summer vacations, I typed, did research or stood beside him at his desk while he wrote...I had also been responsible for my father's library, and I took perhaps too much pride in knowing the exact location of each one of the thousands of volumes and more than 200 personal notebooks. So after his death, when I went through the things in his bedside table drawer, I was astonished to find a small spiral notebook I had never seen before. As I flipped through it, I saw that the pages consisted of nothing but names, carefully handwritten in his favorite green ink. First there were family names. Next came friends...Then there was a blank page, followed by a list of perhaps 20 names, many of which I did not recognize. I showed the strange book to my mother. "Oh, that was his prayer book," she said, "Every night, before he turned out the light, he opened that book, put his finger on each name and prayed in silence." "But who are these?" I asked, pointing to the final list. "They were people who had hurt him," she said."*

Reconciling Grace

Peter understood this. First Peter 5:12, *"This is the true grace of God, stand firm in it."* Also in First Peter 5:10, *"And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen, and establish you."* Paul talks of **reconciling grace**, *"For it was the Father's good pleasure for all fullness to dwell in Him and through Him to RECONCILE all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross"* (Col 1:19-20).

Let's quickly review the process. First of all when we are insulted or when adverse circumstances or adversarial relationships come into our lives, we are encouraged to **BEAR IT!**—not to react in anger, but to B-E-A-R IT! Next we are to **B-A-R-E IT!** to the Lord—BARE our hearts to Him, then He will **B-U-R-Y- IT!** So there is closure—at the Cross!

The Chinese language has a way of saying the same kind of thing. It is the Chinese word for **GRACE**. The breakdown of the word or ideograph is, “Something big within the window of the heart as a way of life.” This of course, we cannot do on our own. It is the work of the Holy Spirit, His power working in, through and with us to be able to go back and LOVE OUR ENEMIES, because our normal reaction would want to avenge ourselves. This is calling us to a whole new way of life—THE GRACE WAY OF LIFE—the GRACE RESPONSE. Grace is something we do not deserve to begin with and also something we cannot display in our own power. We need the Lord Jesus in us as we come to Him with our inability, our overwhelmedness, our helplessness, our dependence, saying, ‘Lord, I cannot do this. There is no way that I can respond in my nature correctly to this person. I do need your LOVE. You work through me to pull this off.’ This is stated succinctly in Romans 5:5, *“For the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which has been given unto us.”*

Going back a few centuries we have a unique story from the book *Forever Triumphant* by F. J. Hugel. “Henry Suso, the great German mystic, once heard a knock at his door. A strange woman stood there with a baby, which she thrust into his arms saying, ‘Here you have the fruit of your sin.’ Suso had never before seen the woman. He was innocent as a dove. The woman hastened away leaving him with the baby. The news of what had happened went through the town like a flash. So this is the man we had revered as holy! What a hypocrite, what a fraud. Suso was crushed. He groaned like a dying man. What was he to do? He withdrew to a desert place and called upon the Lord saying it was more than he could bear. “What shall I do, Lord?’ he cried in his pain and shame. ‘Thou knowest that I am innocent.’ The answer came to him with perfect clearness and finality. ‘What shall you do? Do as I did; suffer for the sins of others and say nothing.’ Suso saw the Cross [Jesus]. Peace came to his troubled soul. He returned to his home; took the child and sweetly, humbly cared for him as if it were his very own, never saying a word in self-defense. Years later, the unknown woman returned to publish abroad Suso’s innocence. But the work was done. Suso had been conformed to the image of God’s Son...Here you have victory’s essence, its deepest nature—“Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Col. 1:27). CHRIST-IN-YOU-ITY! “THIS IS THE TRUE GRACE OF GOD, LET’S STAND FIRM IN IT!” (1 Pet. 5:12).

NOW FOR A 1990’S STORY. A dear friend of mine was just hired on at a company. Her woman boss was piling lot of work on her as a new employee and was very condescending, very belittling, with no affirmation, no praise. My friend is a very creative person, very well trained, and well educated. Her first reaction was, “Hey, quit shoving me around like this, I have more degrees than you. I have more skills than you; I’m just here part-time, I don’t need this.” Of course she did not say these things, but she did not know where to go with her anger that was building up.

As we talked through the situation, we put this lesson into “shoe leather”. Instead of retaliating, she decided to BEAR it. She realized that this woman was not a believer and had no place to go with her frustrations and anger. So my friend took her employer’s frustration and anger on herself, and then she BAREd her heart to the Lord every night. She said, “Lord, this is more than I can take. What is happening to me at work is beyond my natural capability to keep my mouth shut in the midst of it.” He took over and calmed her heart.

Over a period of time she was able to LOVE this person, help her out and offer her an occasional cup of coffee. By not reacting negatively she was gaining the respect of her boss.

After about five months the woman said, "Do you suppose we could have lunch together sometime?" My friend was shocked that this would even be a possibility, but said, "Sure, that would be great!" So they went to lunch; the woman poured out her heart--how her husband had left her, a recent surgery, including a lot of personal struggles. So if my friend had not borne them and taken them to the Lord, the woman would have had that many more things to deal with. So, following 2 Corinthians 2:5-11, my friend *"(1) forgave her; (2) she comforted her, and (3) she confirmed her love toward her so that she would not be overcome with overmuch sorrow."* Through that they established a wonderful relationship. This woman was on her way to understanding Christianity by seeing it in action through one yielded life.

The Lord can do the same for each one of us. The world has no place to go with their sin; they do not know of a place. Believers are the ones to show them where that place is, but we need to go to the cross first for Jesus to take care of our sins and our reactions. Then we can go back to our offenders, our enemies, with the love of God in our hearts, and see them come to know Him also. **LOVE OUR ENEMIES! PRAY FOR THEM!**

Let's let Peter sum this all up for us in 1 Peter 3:8-12a, *"To sum up, let all be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted and humble in spirit, not returning evil for evil, or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead. For you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing. For let him who means to love life and see good days refrain his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking guile. And let him turn away from evil and do good, let him seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous and his ears attend to their prayer."*

Review and reinforce this lesson by incorporating the following notes and quotes pages and by reading the Scriptures.

TETELESTAI – The greatest note of triumph that ever sounded in the ears of a startled universe was that sounded on the cross of Christ, “It is finished”. That is the last word in the redemption of man.

Oswald Chambers

“Never once... is the Christian life regarded as something in any way naturally easy. The way of the Cross leads to the cross.”

Amy Carmichael

“Incline my heart to take men’s wrongs as thou takest mine.” anon

Love grows stronger when assailed;
Love conquers where all else has failed.
Love ever blesses those who curse,
Love gives the better for the worse,
Love unbinds others by its bonds;
Love pours forgiveness from its wounds.
V. Raymond Edman

*Love makes everything lovely;
Hate concentrates itself on the one thing hated.*
George MacDonald

Story

A sergeant of the British forces over in Egypt, manifesting a fine Christian spirit in his dealings with the men, was called before his chaplain who said, “Sergeant, tell me how you were converted.” “It is very simple,” replied the sergeant, “we were back at camp where we were having great sport with a Christian soldier, the only Christian in the regiment. He was the butt of jokes, jeered and mocked, and at night when he would kneel beside his cot to pray, boots would fly from every quarter aimed at his head. One night I took my boots and cracked him on the head as he knelt beside me in prayer. He said nothing. In the morning, Chaplain, I found my boots beside my bed all shined up and ready for me to get into. In this way I was paid by the one I had so cruelly wronged. Chaplain, it was too much. It broke my heart. I couldn’t resist such a testimony. I surrendered to Christ.”

Victory in its sublimest manifestation is nothing more nor less than the Spirit of Christ, which is love and a willingness to die for others, revealing itself under circumstances which ordinarily call forth anger, impatience, hatred and revenge. We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us.

“Love suffereth long, and is kind... is not easily provoked... beareth all things... endureth all things... Love never faileth.”

F. J. Hugel
Forever Triumphant



He had no Rights

By Mabel Williamson



He had no rights:

No right to a soft bed, and a well-laid table;
No right to a home of His own, a place where
 His own pleasure might be sought;
No right to choose pleasant, congenial companions,
 Those who could understand Him and sympathize with Him;
No right to shrink away from filth and sin, to pull
 His garments closer around Him and turn aside to walk in cleaner paths;
No right to be understood and appreciated; no, not by those upon whom
 He had poured out a double portion of His love;
No right even never to be forsaken by His father,
 The One who meant more than all to Him.

His only right was silently to endure shame, spitting, blows; to take his place as a sinner at the dock; to bear my sins in anguish on the cross.

He had no rights. And I?

A right to the “comforts” of life? No, but a right
 to the love of God for my pillow.
A right to physical safety: No, but a right to the
 security of being in His will.
A right to love and sympathy from those around me?
 No, but a right to the friendship of the One
 Who understands me better than I do myself.
A right to be a leader among men? No, but the right to be led by
 the One to whom I have given my all, led as is a little child,
 with its hand in the hand of its father.
A right to a home, and dear ones? No, not necessarily;
 But a right to dwell in the heart of God.
A right to myself? No, but, Oh, *I have a right to Christ.*



*All that He takes I will give;
All that He gives I will take;
He, my only right!
He, the one right before which all other rights
 fade into nothingness.
I have full right to Him;
Oh, may He have full right to me!*