

COMMUNITY CONTENDER

I TIMOTHY 2:15

Edition 8

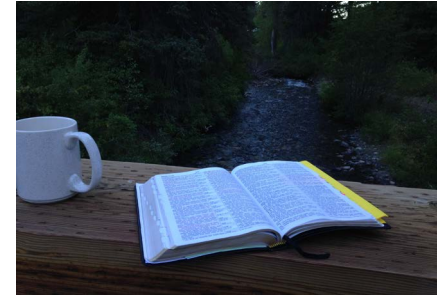
October 2016

CONSIDERATIONS ON WORSHIP

John 4:20-24; I Kings 10:4-5

Brethren, we have met to worship, And adore the Lord our God...!

To worship is to literally fall down before God; to humbly bow in heart, mind, soul and body in awe, reverence, and keen awareness of His holy presence. It is to praise and glorify Him for who He is and what He has done. Worship is to perform acts of devotion out of a heart of affection. It is to extol in song and prayer offering to almighty God that of which He is infinitely worthy. I Chronicles 16:29 says, "Give unto the LORD the glory [due] unto his name: bring an offering, and come before him: worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness." God seeks true worshipers to come before Him and His eye is upon them (John 4:23; James 4:7-8).



Worship must not be Self-focused. In today's culture, worship is a misunderstood concept. Blazing lights, loud bass-thumping music, adrenaline filled singing, waving hands, jumping up and down, and all out sensual dancing are all considered to be forms of worship. No doubt, there ought to be an out pouring of heart and soul in genuine expressions of praise; "David danced before the Lord." But we must be concerned about God's expectations in our worship. Much of today's worship has become man-centered, based upon feelings and experience, with little regard for the actual character of the worship or the required singular focus on the Being worshiped. It has been redefined according to man's thinking, and not evaluated according to the manner outlined in God's Word. The aim of worship is not merely to make us "feel good".

Worship must first be Scriptural. It must be offered according to the criteria which God sets forth in His Word. Jesus expounds the manner of worship to the Samaritan woman at Sychar's well. Samaritan's worshiped their "God" according to self-discovered, traditional and cultural ritual and there was controversy as to even the location of their worship. (II Kings 17:24-41) Jesus reminds this woman that worship is not relegated to a place, but rather it is a spiritual act from a true heart. All biblical worship must be practiced in spirit and in truth. It must never contradict the truth of the Word of God. How sad it is that this Samaritan woman worshiped, "...ye know not what."

Sincerity is not the first litmus test for worship, rather Spirituality.

Worship must also be Spiritual. God is a Spirit and worshipping Him can only be experienced by those who have the same Spirit. Our worship must not be done out of perfunctory duty, but rather the outflow of a Spirit-filled life. Colossians 3:16 "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." True worship can never truly emanate from a carnal heart nor is it acceptable to God when we are not sensitive to His Spirit or when we are grieving, resisting, or quenching the Holy Spirit. Unregenerate people cannot offer true worship to the Lord because they do not have the indwelling Spirit of God, the agent of worship.

Worship must be Sincere. Most people claim sincerity in their worship, but we know that God is not pleased by carnal, worldly worship even though it may be sincere. Spirituality, not sincerity is the first litmus test for our worship although genuine worship must be characterized by both. God is never honored by insincere worship. Saul the king fell into this trap of insincerity when he desired Samuel to honor him by offering a sacrifice to save face before the people. Consider Ephesians 5:18-19, "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord." Almighty God must be the scriptural focus of our worship while spirituality sets the character of our worship, and sincerity must be at the heart of our worship. Psalm 5:7 says, "But as for me, I will come [into] thy house in the multitude of thy mercy: [and] in thy fear will I worship toward thy holy temple."

Worship ought also be Spontaneous. The more one meditates upon the salvation of his soul, the goodness and faithfulness of his God and the Word of His God, it ought to stimulate deep joy in his soul and praise from his lips. Worship is not something planned only for Sundays, but it is a lifestyle of spontaneous expressions of thanksgiving and joy as well as acts of service before the Lord. As it flows from our souls in unconstrained praise directed to the Lord Jesus Christ, it ought also to provoke other believers around us to unite in declaring the great things God has done for us. Colossians 3 again describes how our personal

CHISEL THEN WHITTLE

As I sit here ready to write and unable to rest, I'm reminded of how great my God has been to me through all the years of my life.

He did a work in my life 42 years ago this October, and He's been working on His project ever since. At age 14 I received Christ as my Saviour, then the real work began, for Him.

As I look back I can see how at a young age He began to "chisel" me from a block of rough, gnarly, bark-covered wood, into something almost recognizable-the form of a man. It was probably hard to see as a project worth continuing to those who saw it being formed, but praise God as He "knocked off" chunks of hardness and began to get into some of the layers that He knew were under there, the man started to take shape.



By the look of the "pile" of chunks which lay at the feet of His project, others looking on must have seen the endeavor as useless, but not in the mind of the Woodworker. Just like anyone who begins a work, the project is run through the mind and a plan is set forth, and depending on the task at hand, a strategy is put in place. The designer is the only one who can visualize the final product, or at least something that shows any resemblance of completion.

After the chisel comes the whittling. This still requires large portions to be removed that are undesirable to the originator. At this point, at times, many long days, months and even years have passed; but He toils on.

When coming to the "will" of his project, or maybe the heart would be a better word, the Master once again reaches for the chisel. After putting a fresh edge on the tool He then removes some of that stubbornness which comes off as if trying to "chew-off" a knot.

Back to the whittling He returns and the project begins to take shape. What once were sharp edges and jagged protrusions begin to level out. The pile at the base of the project seemingly is getting larger yet the pieces are much smaller. The work is still going on, yet with a lot less "noise" from the man.

By now for some, many years may have gone by. Now for some, not all, it's time to break out the raspy wood file. After numerous blows and many strokes of the razor the remaining edges are ready to come off. The pile beneath shows evidence of work still being done, yet the object being formed still looks and feels too rough. A few more strokes and a few more years and the final touches are being prepared to be made.

Years have passed and the work of art is beginning to show signs of its age and wear from being handled so many times by the Maker. The onlooker can observe many imperfections, not from the work of the Master, but from the wood's "willful choices". At times it may seem that the object may need to have more attention put to it than the wood is really worth.

Could it be that at this very time the Maker might remove it from view completely to protect what He's been working on for the last 50, 60, 70 years?

Not yet.

First a bit of sandpaper, for the piece of wood may no longer need a chisel or a knife, or even a rasp. Truth be known, the harshness of the tools would probably now destroy rather than shape.

Wait! After closer inspection of the "unfinished" project, the realization is that the object of the Originator was never designed to be completed, so that all the "witnesses of the work" would see a finished project.

It's back into the Designer's upper room into the very presence of the Maker to be finished so that the only onlookers of the finished object will be all of the completed projects that the Craftsman has worked on.

So what's the point of this thought?

I never will be finished or perfected for others to see! Nor will you! The work is never done!

So together lets allow the Master Carpenter to chisel, whittle, file, and sand. Then someday, soon, we will all be lifted out of the worthless debris at our feet to be finished up while in His hands, and then put on "His" shelf. Then will all the masterpieces glorify the Designer.

MEMORY CORNER:

And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding.
Daniel 2:21

While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.
Genesis 8:22

...WORSHIP CONTINUED

worship stirs and edifies God's people assembled together in unified adoration of God. Worship may be private, interpersonal with others, or public in the assembly. Perhaps we ought to cry out with David, *"O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our maker. O magnifies the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together"* (Psalm 95; 34). True, heartfelt, spontaneous worship will not be hidden or reserved to one's self. It will flow out in evidential manifestations. No song leader will have to squeeze worship out of our hearts and lips if we have been meditating all week on the Word of God. The assembled worship of God's people on the Lord's Day should be the climax of Christ focused fellowship and praise that's been on-going daily in our lives.

Worship as well must be Separated. Beware when our worship is mirrored after the world, raucous not reverent, entertaining and not Christ extolling. We do not look to the worship of the world for our model. Godly worship must be separated in manner. King Ahaz made a grave mistake in seeking to imitate pagan patterns when implementing worship of Jehovah God in Judah, *"And king Ahaz went to Damascus to meet Tiglathpileser king of Assyria, and saw an altar that was at Damascus: and king Ahaz sent to Urijah the priest the fashion of the altar, and the pattern of it, according to all the workmanship thereof"* (II Kings 16:10). When God's people borrow from the culture of the world to form acceptable worship, they are in trouble. God is not pleased when our worship resembles the sounds, styles, sights and spirit of this lost world. People of God offer a "distinct", "different" form of worship because it is directed toward the one true and holy God of the Bible. We cannot bow before the secular gods of this world and the sovereign God of the universe (I Cor. 10:21). We cannot bow before the god of materialism and pleasure and think we are honoring the God of the Bible. King Nebuchadnezzar testified of the three young men who made a choice to remain separated in their worship and not bow with the crowd. *"[Then] Nebuchadnezzar spake, and said, Blessed [be] the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him, and have changed the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God."*

Consider Solomon's worship. His careful ascent in the temple was not defined by the physical set of stairs or the other resplendent adornments in the House of the Lord, but rather the manner in which he approached God's presence. He carried himself with honor, reverence, humility and with intense excitement. It must have been an "awesome" sight to observe this man worship his God. It left the Queen of Sheba without spirit. Oh that our worship life before the Lord would be of the same caliber.

*"And when the queen of Sheba had seen....the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel, and his cupbearers, **and his ascent by which he went up unto the house of the LORD**; there was no more spirit in her."*

Sadly, contemporary worship has become misinterpreted, misunderstood, and misguided in this generation. It is neglected, falsified and replaced with cheap substitutes. How far we have come from daily lifestyles of true worship. Let us seek the Lord that our worship might not be sensual and self-focused, but rather be scriptural, spiritual, sincere, spontaneous, and separated.

Never Deemphasize Worship—Worship is not to be relegated as unnecessary, rejected or downplayed by any means. Some choose to minimize it for fear of man, or fear of compromise with the world, or for lack of obedience, while some neglect it because of a shallow relationship with and small view of their God.

Never Overemphasize Worship—At first glance this might seem impossible. How can we have too much worship? The point is that God desires "worthy" worship and therefore an eccentric, singular worship focus offered while compromising other areas of obedience to God's Word is obnoxious to the Lord. When worship becomes our only focal point or an end unto itself even while disregarding clear, God – given directives it is vain. Worship alone is not the answer, just as the Gospel alone is not our measure of unity.

Never Underestimate Worship—Biblical worship is not a back-burner for the Believer, but ought to consume every minute of his walk with the Lord. It is that which the Lord expects and deserves. It should be the normal and continual practice of each day of our lives. *"Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing."*

Never Overcomplicate Worship—Worship is made up of all of the heartfelt acts of devotion. It ought not to be ritualized, formalized, mechanized or overly organized. It must be spontaneous, sincere and flow with praise, giving, testimony, prayer, and obedient, willing service.

Never "Replicate" Worship— Let us refuse to pattern worship after the design and methods of the world. We cannot worship God according to our own ideas but must conform to Scripture and be offered in spirit and in truth. Jeroboam the son of Nebat got himself in trouble when he made golden calves and designed a feast which he thought up in his own heart (I Kings 12:33).

Never Relegate Worship—How sad if we limit praise, reverence and devotion to Sunday mornings. Real worship flows out of a lifestyle of passionate love for Christ. Our entire week should be one flowing worship service.

Never Separate Worship—Worship can never be separated from conformity to the Word of God. It is not an island unto itself, for without the Word we worship in ignorance. We can't worship and wear long hair, smoke cigarettes, defile our minds, embrace tattoos, listen to rock music, or entertain the flesh. Behold to obey is better than sacrifice. We can't worship and neglect separation from sin unto Christ.



CHRISTIAN ETIQUETTE FROM 1945

Clothes: In keeping with the desire to avoid attracting attention to oneself in public, the well-bred person will wear clothes in harmony with the time and place, and a Christian will dress according to good taste and consonant with moral righteousness. For women of the present day this raises the question of scant dress. Beyond dispute, the scandal of our time is nudity, and even though it be the common style, the Scriptures are clear, "Be ye not conformed to this world." Shorts, no stockings, excessive paint applied to the lips and nails are nothing else than world conformity; and when it is remembered that the amazement of the day is youth delinquency, it should be seen that there is a logical relationship between clothing and character. Heathenism divests clothing. Since the day Christ dispossessed the Gadarene of devils, Christianity has clothed its subjects as well as given to them right minds.

For Drivers: The psychological effect of driving a car often results in strange and inexplicable conduct. For instance some men, otherwise amiable, become chronic growlers when they get behind the wheel! They seem to feel that the entire street or roadway becomes a personal possession. They are equally mad with the pedestrian who passes in front of them, or with another driver who passes by them. So far does this spirit control that the most serious accidents are the result. *"I have right-of-way" looms so large that other peoples' rights are ignored.* The effect is often such as is expressed by the once popular ditty: "Here lies the body of James Gay who died defending his right-of-way; Jim was right, dead right as he sped along but he is just as dead, as if he had been dead wrong." On the other hand, oftentimes the attendant in a car makes himself or herself a nuisance by attempting to handle the wheel from the side or back seat. Nervous women are particularly guilty at this point.

For the Table: Hospitality is confessedly in decline. It still remains the sweetest expression of genuine hospitality comes in inviting a guest to dine in your own home. No luxurious appointments are necessary. The simplest environment, coupled with a warmth of genuine friendship and a true welcome, creates an atmosphere for a delightful, never-to-be-forgotten occasion. Eating is not merely an act of appeasing the appetite by "shoveling-in" food; it is both a social and intellectual occasion, and may be made one of spiritual profit.

For Friendships: What are some hindrances to forming friendships? First, and above all else--selfishness. Arnold Bennett says, "You will make more friends in a week by getting yourself genuinely interested in other people than you can in a year by trying to get other people interested in you." An introvert makes few friends; his interests are turned in on himself. Second, irritability Who craves the companionship of one who is perpetually quarrelsome, gruff, sour in outlook, or approach? Sugar draws more flies than vinegar. Our own families, poor souls, have to put up with grouchiness--but the outsider will leave us alone. Third, touchiness, that is the awful state of becoming easily offended--hurt over trifles--peevish when others are praised or perhaps preferred. The thin-skinned are shunned. And fourthly, constant gloom. That dispels friends. There is plenty of distress abroad; the world wants your cheer. The adage is still true: "Laugh and the world laughs with you, weep and you weep alone." Not forgetting however, that when once true friendships are made, joys and sorrows are alike shared. And conversely, how can one win and make friends? First, by showing oneself friendly--not boisterous hilarity, but by a sincere approach accompanied by a gracious smile. A very intimate friend of mine--one who has proved herself the real friend we have been writing about--was won to a certain church because of the winsome smile and gracious approach of another her age. She had not thought of continual attendance on that church, but she craved fellowship with her new acquaintance. As a result church membership followed, and a David and Jonathan friendship ensued. Secondly, by unselfishness, the desire "to give" of one's self, one's means, one's talents. Third, by pleasing manners, by cheerful consideration for the other person. It is impossible to enumerate all helps to friendships--but in passing may we suggest a few others: respect for another's opinion; careful grooming; listening to another's conversation without indicating impatience.

Taken from *Handbook of Christian Etiquette* by Mrs. W. B. Riley

REMEMBER OUR FOUNDATIONS

"To the distinguished character of Patriot, it should be our highest Glory to laud the more distinguished Character of Christian."

"Whereas it is the duty of all nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey His will, to be grateful for his benefits, and humbly to implore His protection and favor..."

"It is impossible to rightly govern the world without God and the Bible."

George Washington

"I have lived, Sir, a long time and the longer I live, the more convincing proofs I see of this truth—that God Governs the affairs of men. And if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without His notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without His aid?"

"A Bible and a newspaper in every house, a good school in every district—all studied and appreciated as they merit—are the principal support of virtue, morality, and civil liberty."

Ben Franklin

MAPLE NUT PIE

*From Country Living

Makes 8 servings

Working Time: 20 minutes

Total Time 2 hours, 15 minutes

(not including pie crust)

All-purpose flour, for work surface

1 All-purpose Piecrust

4 cups coarsely chopped raw nuts

1 large egg

2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract

1/4 cup plus 1 1/2 tablespoons whipping cream, divided

1/2 cup packed light brown sugar

1/2 cup pure maple syrup

1/2 cup unsalted butter

1 teaspoon flaked sea salt (such as Maldon), divided

2 ounces bittersweet chocolate, chopped

1. Preheat oven to 375°F with the rack in the lowest position. On a floured surface, roll dough to a 13-inch circle. Transfer to a 9-inch pie plate; fold edges under to align with the rim of the plate; crimp. Chill at least 15 minutes.

2. Toast nuts, in a single layer, on a baking sheet, stirring once, until lightly toasted, 5 to 7 minutes. Cool completely.

3. Whisk together egg, vanilla, and 1/4 cup cream in a bowl. Bring brown sugar, and 1/2 teaspoon salt to a boil in a medium saucepan over medium-high heat. Stir in toasted nuts. Quickly pour hot filling into crust.

4. Bake until filling is bubbling in the center, 25-30 minutes. Cool on a wire rack at least 1 hour.

5. Microwave chocolate and remaining 1 1/2 tablespoons cream, stirring at 20-second intervals, until melted and smooth, about 1 minute. Drizzle over pie, and sprinkle with remaining 1/2 teaspoon salt.

Savor!



OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES:

Andrew Love-1

Bob and Lillian Johnson-3

Mark and Heidi Jacobs-5

Wayne Harley-11

Christine Rosario-12

Mikayla Dunn-13

Pastor Jon-15

Abigail Prue-16

Bill Cressman-18

Dave McGahey-19

Eddie and Sandy Gonzales-20

Davina Oman-22

Rick and Ginger Jacobs-23

Dominic Palermo-28

Wade Wamsley-30

FOUNDATIONS CONTINUED...

"The only foundation for a useful education in a republic is to be laid in religion. Without this there can be no virtue, and without virtue there can be no liberty; and liberty is the object and life of all republican governments...We waste so much time and money in punishing crimes, and take so little pains to prevent them. We profess to be republicans, and yet we neglect the only means of establishing and perpetuating our republican forms of government, that is, the universal education of our youth in the principles of Christianity, by means of the Bible; for this divine book, above all others favors that equality among mankind, that respect for just laws."

"By removing the Bible from school we would be wasting so much time and money in punishing criminals and so little pains to prevent crime. Take the Bible out of our school and there would be an explosion of crime." Dr. Benjamin Rush

"Education is useless without the Bible. The Bible was America's basic text book in all fields. God's Word, contained in the Bible, has furnished all necessary rules to direct our conduct."

"In my view, the Christian religion is the most important and one of the first things in which all children, under a free government ought to be instructed...No truth is more evident to mind than that the Christian religion must be the basis of any government intended to secure the rights and privileges of a free people."

Noah Webster

"If there is anything in my thoughts or style to commend, the credit is due to my parents for instilling in me an early love of the Scriptures. If we abide by the principles taught in the Bible, our country will go on prospering and to prosper, but if we and our posterity neglect its instruction and authority, no man can tell how sudden a catastrophe may overwhelm us and bury all our glory in profound obscurity."

"If religious books are not widely circulated among the masses in this country, I do not know what is going to become of us as a nation. If truth be not diffused, error will be. If God and His Word are not known and received, the devil and his works will gain the ascendancy."

Daniel Webster

"God who gave us life, gave us liberty. And can the liberties of a nation be thought secure when we have removed their only firm basis, a conviction in the minds of the people that these liberties are the Gift of God? That they are not to be violated but with His wrath? Indeed, I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just, that His justice cannot sleep forever."

Thomas Jefferson

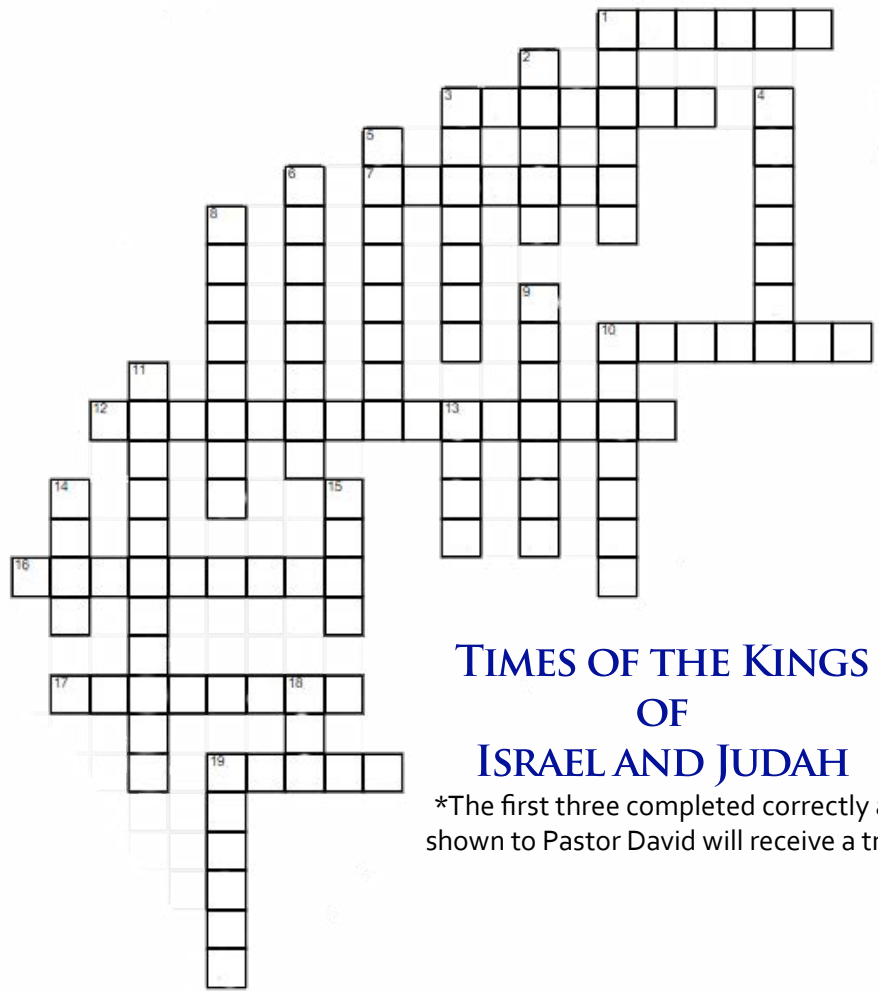
Across

- 1. Did not die
- 3. Smote by God with leprosy
- 7. Fell down through a lattice
- 10. Heart stolen by 700
- 12. Pagan king who sent a present to Hezekiah
- 16. Assassinated before the people
- 17. Traded in gold shields for brass
- 19. Stolen from the king's sons

Down

- 1. Someone rose from the dead when they fell on his bones
- 2. Sweet Psalmist of Israel
- 3. Slew 10,000 in the valley of salt
- 4. Had his name

- changed to Jehoiakim by Pharaoh
- 5. Dealt with familiar spirits and wizards
- 6. He really does not have a book named after him
- 8. Originator of two calves of gold
- 9. Exacted taxes from the mighty men to give to Pul
- 10. Reigned for only one month
- 11. Had his ships broken
- 13. Took the silver and gold out of the Lord's treasuries and gave them to the king of Assyria
- 14. Pouted over grapes
- 15. Known for his chariot driving
- 18. Perfect heart all his days
- 19. 8 year old godly king who defied the ungodliness of his father and grandfather



**TIMES OF THE KINGS
OF
ISRAEL AND JUDAH**

*The first three completed correctly and shown to Pastor David will receive a treat!

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