

# The Three Floors Of The Christian Building

by Zac Poonen

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*This sermon emphasizes the importance of foundational truths in the Christian life, such as God's perfect love, personal devotion to Jesus, and clear conscience. It also addresses the significance of family life over ministry, the role of elders in the church, and the caution against assuming the role of a teacher without being called to it.*

**Scripture:** 1 Timothy 3:16, Mark 7:10, James 3:1, Hebrews 10:29

**Topics:** "Foundational Truths", "Role of Elders"

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## Description

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## Transcript

You often heard me say that what we are building is like a three-story building where it's got a foundation, a first story, second story, third story. The foundation is God's perfect love for us. I never get tired of saying that because that is what brought my own life to security.

That's what freed me from discouragement completely, brought faith into my heart that even if I had weaknesses and limitations and failures, I was still accepted by God, my father. And that was 16 years after I was born again. So I know from my own experience that a lot of people who are born again do not have that security, perhaps a lot of people sitting here.

See I was not sinning in those 16 years, just that I was insecure and of course my thought life I failed and my tongue was not under control. But those are the common sins that almost all believers commit. But I knew that was not God's perfect will for me.

It wasn't God's will for me to let my thoughts be filthy. It wasn't God's will for me to let my tongue be controlled by the devil or my flesh. But I didn't know how and I discovered from my life that the secret of victory was to be founded in the fact that God loved me exactly like he loved Jesus and what he did for Jesus he would do for me.

That is the meaning of when it says great is the mystery of godliness that Christ came in our flesh. What does it mean? It means like the Living Bible paraphrase of 1 Timothy 3 16 it's true that the way to live a

godly life is not an easy matter but the answer lies in Christ who came to earth as a man. Beautiful paraphrase 1 Timothy 3 16 that the answer to live this godly life lives in is in the fact that Christ came to earth as a man just like us and was tempted and overcame and I'll tell you when I saw that clearly I found an example I could follow but all the previous 16 years I felt I could never follow him.

It's impossible. He may have been like that but I never saw him as a man. You know the Jehovah's Witnesses don't see him as God and we say that's a cult.

Correct. False teaching. What about Christians who only see him as God and don't see him as a man? To me that's another cult and there are a lot of Christians like that and those who don't see him as God don't worship him.

Those who don't see him as a man don't follow him. I want to do both. I see him as God and I see him as man so I worship him and I follow him.

So that's very very important and then from that foundation comes a personal devotion to Jesus Christ where Jesus becomes my friend, my bridegroom to whom I'm engaged. Think of a girl who is engaged to someone whom she loves very much and is looking forward to the day when she will get married to him. That's how I feel about Jesus Christ.

Every morning when I get up that's how I feel and that's become the foundation of my Christian life. It was not like that in the early days. That personal devotion to Christ where he is everything and where there is no complaint anymore but I can praise and thank him all the time.

This is when it says in everything give thanks and rejoice always. These are commands if you're serious about obeying it to always give thanks and praise to the Lord. See there are many people who are seeking for the gift of speaking in unknown tongues but unknown tongues is a way of praising God and if you are not praising and thanking God in your mother tongue English or Tamil or whatever is your language, why should God give you another tongue? You're not praising him in the one tongue you have.

In the one language you have you're not praising God. You're complaining most of the time and grumbling. God says you don't need.

Then you say how about all these other people who speak in tongues are also grumbling and complaining. I tell you 95% of it is fake. Just manufacture it, babble like some baby.

Don't be deceived by it. I've heard it in a lot of Pentecostal churches. It is absolute garbage.

It's an insult to stand before God and say all that. Genuine tongues is a language and you know when a man is speaking a language or when he is babbling. I praise God in unknown tongues and it's a language.

I don't babble to God. Like Paul said in the church I would rather speak in a known language but otherwise I thank God I speak in tongues more than all of you. So that comes if you if you're really longing and longing to praise God and you praise him in whatever language you have and say Lord that's not enough.

I want to really praise you from my heart. Then he'll give you the gift of tongues to speak to him not to show off to other people if your aim is to say I joined the club. No.

He'll give you an ability to praise him in private and you may never use it in public at all. I don't use it in public but it's a very precious love language between me and my bridegroom. My dear brothers and

sisters this is the foundation of the Christian life.

Let me tell you. On that we build first story which is our clear conscience, our walk with Jesus. We must always keep a clear conscience.

I want to keep my conscience clear 24 hours a day. I may slip up accidentally then I get up immediately just like you slip on the road. That doesn't mean you don't have victory.

When you don't have victory you're like a child who's falling. When a nine-month-old child falls it gets up, falls, gets up, falls, gets up maybe a hundred times a day. That's the picture of one who doesn't have victory.

But when we have learned to walk that's the picture of a person who's got victory but that person who's learned to walk can still fall. You may trip on a stone and fall today but you won't lie there. You'll get up.

That's how it must be. I've learned to do that. As soon as I slip up.

I mean you don't lie on that ground for five seconds. You get up immediately. That's how we must walk.

That is the first story. A clear conscience and gradually more and more victory over sin. Because a lot of people ask this question.

Why am I not getting victory over sin? Well it comes gradually. It's like going from first standard, second standard, third standard, fourth standard, all the way to PhD. It takes years.

Don't think that you can get the PhD in one year. And don't get discouraged if somebody is ahead of you. I mean a little brother, a younger brother is not as scared that his older brother is three standards ahead of him or he's not ashamed of it.

Yeah he says I'll also get there one day. So this is and in order to come to this there are only two conditions. Jesus said that in John 7 37 and 38, thirst and faith.

That means you have a great longing, thirst. You know how when your mouth is dry and you long for water. When you have that type of thirst for victory over sin, God will fill you with the spirit and give you that victory.

And the second is faith. Faith means you believe that God will give it to you. And you've heard my definition of faith.

To believe that God is more interested in giving his promises to you than you are interested in receiving them. Very often we think we are more eager to receive the promises of God than God is eager to give them to us. That is unbelief.

I've heard people say oh brother I prayed and I prayed and I prayed and prayed God didn't give it to me. You'll never get it. I guarantee you won't get it in a hundred years because you think you are more eager.

God is not eager. That is unbelief. The day you come to the place where you say God is so eager to give me this but I'm not eager enough.

Then you'll come to faith. But the more major complaint I've heard from people brother I've sought for it so much so much for so long I've done everything I fasted and prayed still God hasn't given it to me. That

language itself is the language of unbelief.

I guarantee you'll never get victory over anything. You won't even get filled with the Holy Spirit. I know when God filled me with the Holy Spirit.

He's done that many times but I think of the times when I was so thirsty but I said I don't deserve it. I don't believe it. But I believe God's a good God and he will give to one who is undeserving the power of his spirit.

God gives us. If you think you can get something from God by fasting and praying or some other work that you do, it's the same mistake as other people think they can get forgiveness of sins by dipping in some river or burning a candle or going on some pilgrimage. It's the same type of mistake.

If I do this I'll get victory. No. Everything God gives is a gift.

You cannot earn it. You cannot earn forgiveness of sins. You cannot earn heaven.

You cannot earn victory over sin. But you have to thirst for it. And you must believe.

Believe God is a good God and he will give me what I don't deserve. And he's more eager to give me than I am eager to receive. Please remember this definition of faith.

God is more eager to give me than I am eager to receive. If you being evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more your Heavenly Father will give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him. The second story is our family life.

I mentioned these because there are questions related to this in this question paper and so I'm trying to cover some of them generally. So the first story is our personal walk with God. The second story is our family life.

Very very important. More important than ministry. If you have a choice between spending time with your family and spending time on ministry, I say spend time with your family.

I believe that. I want to encourage you, my brother, spend time with your wife and some of your parents need to spend time with your children. Many children feel lonely because their fathers and mothers don't spend time with them.

My wife used to spend time with my children every single day when they came back from school and ask them what happened. That's why she gave up her job to spend time with the children. And we don't regret it today.

Spend time with your children. Fathers, go on a date. Do you know what a date is? It's a good Western word.

You know, boys and girls go on a date together before they get married to find out if they are suited for each other. They just go out alone somewhere. So I want to encourage fathers to go with each of your children alone out somewhere.

I used to do that with my boys. I had to go for a date with one of them at a time, say once a month or something, just to spend time alone with them. We were not rich but we could just go out sit on a park or

just go and have an ice cream or something and spend time together and like that bring a bond between father and each child.

It's very very important especially in these days and I believe that a lot of children are lonely because they're looking and when they are lonely they look for love elsewhere. Your little girl, it's not a little girl, your young daughter, if she doesn't get love at home, I'll tell you she'll look for love on Facebook, on WhatsApp and all these other places and there are plenty of opportunities now which there were not in the olden days and you will lose your daughter one day and the reason will be because you were so busy that you didn't have time for the children God gave you. Take time with your children no matter how old you are, spend time with your children.

Do that is very very important especially in our time, much more than it was important when my kids were small 30 or 40 years ago. Much more important today because we are living in a very evil world. Family is very important.

That is the second story. Ministry and church come third. Always remember that and when you bring up your children it's not just spending time with them, we need to take time to teach them the Word of God.

Don't leave that to Sunday school. Get a picture story Bible or something for your children to read and ask them questions when you sit around the dining table. We never had time for morning family prayer like other people.

It's a good habit to have if you can do it, do it but we never managed it in our home. I'll tell you honestly because I didn't want to wake up my children at 5.30 sleepy and they sit there sleepy and I read the Bible to them. I didn't want to do that.

I didn't want to make the Bible like a burden but we would talk about the Bible. It doesn't say you have to read it in the morning. We at the dining table, we would be talking about Scripture.

I'd ask them questions. I mean I asked them my grandchildren questions like that now from the Bible and I got a picture story Bible for them to read and I would ask them questions from that and got them an interest to know the Bible so that by the time my children were 18 years old and left home they really knew the Bible and I believe all of your children must know the Bible by the time they leave home when they're 18 years old and don't leave that to the church. You must do it at home, the father especially and if the father is too lazy then the mother must do it.

You know Timothy got his knowledge of God from his mother. So very very important to teach them the God's Word and to discipline them. That means from earliest childhood from the time they are one year old they must understand what the meaning of the word know and they must obey it.

They must learn to obey. There are only two things I used to discipline my children for. Disobedience or disrespect to parents and secondly telling lies.

All children tell lies. The Bible says that we have to teach them not to tell lies. All children will be disobedient and disrespectful to parents.

Not only your children, all children. We have to teach them to be respectful and obedient. So don't think your children are particularly bad because they tell lies or because they are disobedient.

They are like normal children, children of Adam. I remember somebody came when my children are all very small and asked me, brothers, do your children ever fight with each other? I said of course, they are children of Adam. They're not born again.

They were small. What do little four five-year-old children brothers do at home? They fight. But the difference between their fight and older people's fight is, their fight is over in 15 minutes.

They are good friends. Older people even after 15 years they may not forgive each other. So it's a different type of fight these children have.

But we must love them. Discipline them when they don't obey you. Discipline them when they don't, when they tell lies.

Very important. Other things are unimportant. Don't value material things so much that if they break something you'll get upset.

I decided I would never get upset with my children unless they deliberately broke something. If they accidentally broke something, even something very expensive, I said forget it. I'm not interested.

Material things have no value for me. So if your children see that, they'll grow up and see what are the true values in God's kingdom. Another thing about home life, which I've written here, is interference from parents.

It's very important, particularly in India, for all husbands to obey the first commandment given to man in the Bible. I don't mean to Adam, that was only for him. We don't have the tree of knowledge of good and evil today.

Leave that aside. What is the first commandment written in the Bible? The only commandment given for man before sin came. Do you know what it is? It's not don't commit murder.

It's not don't commit adultery. It's in Genesis 2 verse 24 before chapter 3. When you get married, man, leave your father and your mother and cling, cleave to your wife. I wish I could go all over India and preach that.

You husbands, you must leave your attachment to your father and mother and cleave to your wife. And your cleaving will not be strong if your leaving is not strong. If your leaving is weak, your cleaving will be weak.

And some of you have already experienced that. It's very very important. You say, well, I shouldn't care for them.

Of course you must care for them, but you don't, your attachment is not to them now. And this is what Indian parents cannot understand. Oh, I brought up my child for 28 years and now some girl has taken him away and then she doesn't care for me.

Of course he'll care for you, but he's not gonna listen to you. His attachment is more to his wife now than to you. Many people can't understand that and if you don't follow that, I can tell you something.

Your cleaving to your wife will not be the way God wants it to be. You'll have endless problems in your cleaving to your wife because you have not left your father and mother. Should we love them? Yes, love

them.

Should we care for them? Yes. Should we provide for them financially? Yes, as much as possible. Help them.

If they are sick, take care of them. It may be a need for them to come and live with you when they are old and helpless, that you take care of them. Definitely, they took care of you when you were a helpless baby.

You should take care of them when they're old. There are many wives sometimes who don't want their husband's parents ever to come and live with them. Even if they come for a few days, they get upset.

Those are terrible wives. They have not understood. They have not known God at all.

What did Jesus do when he was hanging on the cross? When he left his home, that was the equivalent of you're getting married. He was now connected to his father. The first thing he told his mother was, woman what have I got to do with you? Mary got the shock of her life because for 30 years he always said, yes mama, yes mama, yes mom, yes mom, yes mom, and all of a sudden he says, woman what have I got to do with you? At the marriage in Cana when she said something.

There we learned from Jesus how we must separate once we get married. Our relationship with our father and mother is not the same. But see, when he was hanging on the cross, when he was suffering, he thought of his mother.

He had four younger brothers and two sisters. Can't they take care of him? Why did he have to think about it on the cross? He's got a million other things to think of on the cross. He thought of his mother because he was the eldest son.

And he said, I have a responsibility for my mother. Imagine hanging on the cross. He's thinking of his responsibility to his mother, to care for her.

Great example. He once told her what have I got to do with you? But he also cared for her. That's the balance.

In other words, dad, mom, I'm not gonna let you interfere in my life now now that I'm married. I love you. I'll accept your advice.

I respect you, honor you. That's another thing I want to say. See, we must honor our parents.

Even if they are idol worshippers, drunkards, if that is your father, you must honor him till the end of his life. You don't have to obey him. No.

You'll come out of his home and you'll obey him when you're at home. You still don't have to disobey God because God is above your father. You don't have to disobey God and obey your dad.

But there are times when you have to say firmly, dad, I respect you, love you, and be very gracious when you say that. But I cannot bow down to that idol. And I will not do something which is, you asked me to tell a lie.

I'm sorry, I can't tell a lie. So, but we must respect them, no matter who they are, no matter, they're different, they're not in your church, they're non-christians. You must respect your father and mother till the

end of their lives.

But you don't have to obey them once you're married. You must live, you must have a detachment from them, but you must care for them. If they're needy, if they're in need financially, what if a woman is working and earning money, should she support her parents? Of course.

Why should the husband grab that money? He's earning himself. If a husband can care for his parents financially, why shouldn't the wife who's earning money care for her parents? What's wrong with that? But there are selfish men, they should be ashamed to call themselves Christians, who are so covetous and money-loving. I'll tell you something, you husbands who prevent your wives from giving money to their parents, you don't have any faith.

God will honor you, if you care to obey. The Bible says, we must care for our parents when they're old. Let me show you a verse in Mark chapter 7, where Jesus spoke about that.

In Mark's Gospel chapter 7, he said about some people who don't care for their aged parents. They were super spiritual. He said in Mark 7 verse 10, Moses said, honor your father and mother and if you speak evil of your father and mother, you should be put to death.

Can you believe that? Mark 7 10, that if you speak evil of your father and mother, you should be killed. This is a loving God in heaven saying, teaching people to respect their parents. But you say, the Pharisees, no, if you've given your money in the offering box, you've given it to God and you tell your dad, sorry dad, I don't have any money to give you, you're starving, I know, but I can't help you, because I'm a holy man, I gave that money to God.

Jesus said, rubbish, that's not Christianity. Verse 13, you're cancelling the Word of God by this tradition, wretched tradition that you have and you don't allow him, verse 12, to do anything for his father and mother. Those are the words of Jesus rebuking and I would say that, Mark 7 verse 12, some husbands must hear Jesus saying to you, you don't allow your wife to do anything for her father and mother.

Dear husbands, read Mark 7 verse 12, or your wife, your husband wants to help his parents who are in need and I'd say to you, wife, the Lord is saying to you, you don't permit him to help his father and mother. That's the balance. Once you get married, you and your wife must take all your decisions.

By all means, your parents got a lot of wisdom, seek their advice, but decision must finally be taken by husband and wife. I'm just telling you things for a very happy married life, if you want to live happily, if you want to follow God's principles, because I found, I preached this for 40 years, but there are still people in CFC who are not following it. That's why you don't follow God's law.

It's like, you know, I call the Bible manufacturer's instructions, God manufactured man. So, you get a washing machine and you don't follow the instructions. No, no, no, I don't have to read the instructions.

I just press whatever button I like and the thing blows up and you take it to the repair, to the company that sold it. The first thing they will ask you is, did you follow the instructions? No, no, no, I know all that. Well, no wonder it packed up.

Sorry, your guarantee is not valid. You've got to pay for it now or buy another one. But we, none of us do that, because we are humble.

We say, the manufacturer knows more about the washing machine than me. I'm not so proud to think I know more about it. If they tell me to press this button first and then that button, I'll do that.

But when we come to our own life and our married life, we say, oh, I know more than the manufacturer. No wonder your life is so messed up or your marriage is so messed up. It shouldn't be.

Your marriage should be more glorious than all the other marriages in the world. Follow the manufacturer's instructions. Then the third, that third story is our church life, where, that's where, you know, you must get a copy of this book, which teaches the distinction between a congregation and a club and a church.

It's there in the back, and I want to mention this, that it'll be good if all of us have a little burden, a little burden to evangelize others. We can be so self-centered that we never think of other people. Jesus said, go into the world and preach the gospel.

Gospel means good news, and the good news is not just the good news of forgiveness of sins. It's the good news of victory over sin. It's the good news of a good family life.

It's the good news of how we can be a part of a church which can be built as the body of Christ, and that's what this book is about, good news. Is there one Christian person you know, one, who is not a member of this church? Will you be willing to spend ten rupees to give this book to that person? We'll sell it for ten rupees. We don't mind suffering a loss in this church, because we've got a passion for evangelism.

Get as many copies as you like, ten rupees, and give it lovingly with prayer, and help them to see whether they are sitting in a club, where they don't know about the church. Born-again people, I'm sure many of you know people in other churches, don't go thrusting it on them if they don't want it, but tell them, here's it, but don't give it if you haven't read it yourself. I remember asking somebody in another CFC church, who got this long ago, I said, have you read it? No, I haven't read it.

Why do you buy it if you don't want to read it? Don't give it before you read it, but it takes only one day to read it, I'll tell you that. Read it and pass it on to at least one. It'll be a way of witnessing, and you never know how that person's eyes may be opened, and you would have helped them to see the body of Jesus Christ.

You can't explain it to him, but you can do this. Get as many copies as you like, to as many friends as you like, but at least one. It'll be a very good form of witnessing.

So do that today. I want to say a word about eldership in the church. See, elders are like fathers and mothers, but they don't have the authority of fathers and mothers over their children.

Like for example, a father and mother, when your children are at home, they've got complete authority over the child. If they tell the child, no, you're not to go out today, you don't go out when they're at home. Once they've left home, it's different.

So elders are not like that. But there's another aspect of fathers and mothers, which is they protect their children. Why do they tell their little daughter, no, I don't want you to stay out late at night, you must come home by a certain time, whether six or seven or whatever it is, because it's dangerous for you as a young girl to be out too late.

That's to protect them. Why does the father hold that two-year-old's hand or the three-year-old's hand when they cross the road? The three-year-old says, no, no, no, I can cross the road myself. You say, no, I'm going to hold your hand.

Why? Is it to control the child? No, it is to protect the child. Why do they hold the hand when they take the child to school? Hold the hand and take it, because there's traffic all over. So the purpose of elders is that aspect of a father, protection, not control.

No elder here is here to control your life. Remember that. And no elder, a true elder, will never tell you anything about your personal life, whom you are to marry, where you are to go, which house you must rent, or which job you must take, or whether you should accept that transfer.

He'll give you no advice unless you ask him. If you ask him, brother, what do you think of this? Then he'll give you advice, but he's not going to tell you, don't go there, don't take this house, don't marry that girl, unless he feels you're marrying an unbeliever. So they're not here to control.

So whom shall you go for advice? You know, we can go for advice only to someone you have confidence in. You may respect your father and your mother. Take a home, for example.

You respect your father and your mother, but supposing you feel that your mother is way more spiritual than your father, maybe ten times more spiritual than your father, knows the Lord so deeply, who will you go for spiritual advice? To your mom, not to your dad. So why do you go to your mom and not your dad if you're a ten-year-old at home and wants to follow Jesus? Because your mom knows the Lord and your dad doesn't. So you have confidence in your mom.

The same principle applies in eldership. In other things, your dad tells you to do something at home, you got to do it. So elders are those in church matters and matters concerning the church.

You must obey them. Outside the church, your personal family life, it's your own business. To which of the elders do you go for advice? To the ones you have confidence in.

You don't have to go to every elder. If you don't have confidence in an elder, don't ever go to him. But if he tells you to do something in relation to church matters, you must obey.

In your little fellowship meetings, if the leader says, you must speak only for five minutes. You know, I've seen in the olden days, some arrogant CFC brothers in the conferences. Sometimes I'd say, in the olden days we'd allow a lot of people to speak in conferences.

But I'd say, take five minutes. I remember one brother saying, I know I've been asked to speak for five minutes, I've got something very important to say. And he went on and on and on till I had to make him sit down.

That brother is still in a CFC church today. He's absolutely useless. He's got gifts.

God cannot bless him because he's never learned to be submitted to authority. And I remember seeing this in him 25 years ago. And I see the result of it today.

You may think it's a small thing. But it's not a small thing to think that you know more in church matters. No.

You go outside, you do what you like. But in the church, even if it's a junior most elder, in church matters, you must obey him. But you don't have to have confidence in him.

Confidence can only come through observing that the man is godly, that he's got wisdom, that he's brought up his children properly, or many things like that. That I leave it entirely to you. You can go to whichever.

In fact, in some churches where the local elder may not have much wisdom, I tell them, you can contact another elder in some other place. Okay, those are some general things. One last thing, and that is in relation to the church, and that is, the Bible says in James chapter 3, don't be many teachers.

It's a very, very important word. All of us can share the word of God. But why does it say James chapter 3 and verse 1, brethren, don't be many teachers.

Because you will get a greater judgment. It's a dangerous thing to teach when you're not called to be a teacher. You can't take a job, if you're not qualified.

Even in the school, they'll say, what degree have you got? So, if God appoints you to be a teacher, you can be a teacher. Now, we have had examples of people who think they are teachers, who are not teachers, and who create confusion. For example, I heard one brother, who's not with us now, who went around saying, brother Zack says, has taught that you must not treat the blood of Christ like tap water.

And he went around saying, where does it say in the Bible that you should not treat the blood of Christ like tap water. He was assuming that he was a teacher. I have no doubt that God appointed me to be a teacher.

I'm very clear about that. That's why I don't hesitate to teach. But that was a brother, good brother, but he didn't have the gift of teaching.

But he thought he did. Arrogant, really arrogant, and questioning what we were teaching in the church. And not only in this area, he was questioning many other areas.

He was teaching, one saved, always saved. The book of Hebrews is not for believers. Crazy things like that.

It says in Hebrews chapter 10, verse 29, How much severer punishment do you think a man will deserve, who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, and is regarded as common. The word in the original Greek is common. Unclean or common, or cheap.

And regarded as cheap and common, the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified. Treating the blood of Christ as something cheap and common. The blood of Christ is a liquid.

Which is the cheapest and commonest liquid on earth? Water. So that's where I get that, treating the blood of Christ like tap water. Right there.

Treating the blood of Christ like something cheap and common, which is tap water. It's there in scripture. A lot of people don't know the scriptures, and so they question.

I would encourage you, my brothers and sisters, don't ever get into the realm of teaching, if God has not called you to that. Preach as much as you like. Exhort as much as you like.

But when it comes to teaching, submit to the teaching of the church, or listen to someone who is called to be a teacher.

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Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/i7Z5jiFHXBw.mp4>

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