



## Gifted for Love (Part 2) – Unique in Design, United in Purpose

Trevor Joy – July 1, 2018

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Hey, if you just joined us, my name is Trevor Joy. I'm one of the pastors and elders here. It's my joy to dive into God's Word with you guys this morning. If you weren't able to be with us last week, we started our summer series on 1 Corinthians 12-14. We're taking a deep dive into those three chapters in Paul's letter to the church at Corinth. The driving reason behind this series is a lot of conversations our elders have had together and just in the life of our church.

We sensed what was going on in the life of our body here, that we just needed to take a deeper dive and draw some clarity. What is God speaking to his church *here*? Last week, Matt started that series in the first half of chapter 12. I get the pleasure of diving into the second half of chapter 12 this morning, and then chapter 13 next week, and then Matt will be back the last three weeks as we dive into 1 Corinthians 14.

We're going to read this together, so if you have your Bibles, turn to 1 Corinthians 12. Like I said, we're going to be in the second half of that chapter in verses 12-31. What's so fun for me is this kind of Paul's application of the points he's making in the first half of this chapter. So we'll read through this together, and then we'll dive in and break it up. Let's start in verse 12.

**"For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit. For the body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot should say, 'Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,' that would not make it any less a part of the body.**

**And if the ear should say, 'Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,' that would not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? But as it**

**is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, yet one body.**

**The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you,' nor again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you.' On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and on those parts of the body that we think less honorable we bestow the greater honor, and our unpresentable parts are treated with greater modesty, which our more presentable parts do not require.**

**But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it, that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together. Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.**

**And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? But earnestly desire the higher gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way." Let's pray.**

Father, I just ask simply this morning that your Spirit might do what your Spirit does and point us to the lordship of Christ as we study your Word and empower us to walk faithfully in what you reveal to us this morning. We ask that in Christ's name and for your sake, amen.

What I love about what Paul is saying here in this chapter is it's really simple. He's saying, "Be who you are." That's really the driving piece of what he's trying to draw attention to. I was thinking of a story to illustrate the statement. The week before last I had the joy of leading one of our Go Trips, which is one of our mission trips, and I led our men's team to Berlin. I took 12 guys, and we went to Berlin to do work with one of our missionary teams there, the Campbells, who do work with a lot of the Muslim refugees there. A lot of them are from Syria.

So we did a lot of work with them for a week. It was incredible being with those men, immersing ourselves in that neighborhood with those people, getting to know them, love on them, and share the love of Christ with them, and really proclaim the gospel of Christ to them. It was incredible. As we were preparing to go, a couple of weeks beforehand... One of the big joys of our group getting to

be together was we got to live in the house with the Campbell family and got to share meals together, which means we're showing up, we're bringing 12 guys, so we need to bring food and be ready to cook.

So I sent a text to all of the guys beforehand and said, "Hey, listen. We're going to be at least cooking every breakfast together. We're probably going to be cooking some dinners as well. Any of you guys up for helping me cook?" I like to cook. I didn't know if there were going to be any other guys who would be takers. I got two responses out of all 12. It was okay. I got two responses of guys who were really fired up and said, "I'd love to help cook." The two guys who responded were my two Latino guys on the trip, which was really fun.

I said, "We have a gathering the week before we go. We're going to meet together and pray and do any last bit of business, so let's talk about it there." So we meet up a little bit early, gather at one of the guys' houses, and I said, "Okay, let's start to think about what meals we're going to do." We weren't really that efficient. We didn't write anything down. We just kind of jawed about it, basically. I asked, "What do you all want to cook?" and they started getting fired up.

One guy was like, "I want to make fajitas. I want to make my own guacamole, and then maybe one morning make huevos rancheros." I was like, "I'll make hamburgers." They were bringing some really creative dishes to the table. We didn't nail anything down there, of course, because we're a bunch of guys, so we didn't write anything down or make a plan with it. I just felt pretty confident we're going to cook something when we get there.

We didn't do anything else. That conversation ended. We didn't pick it up again until we were in Berlin. We land. We drop off our suitcases. I'm like, "Hey, guys, we have to go to the grocery store, because everybody is about to get hungry, and we have to cook dinner tonight, and then we have to cook all week, so let's go take care of that." So I grab those two guys and a few others who wanted to go to the store.

We still hadn't really nailed down what we were going to cook or who was responsible for what. I just assumed we were going to get to the store, and that was just going to work itself out. Or at least I was hoping. So we're driving to the store, and the whole huevos rancheros thing comes up again. The guy is like, "Yeah, I could do that." Both of them were saying they wanted to cook huevos rancheros.

I was like, "Well, okay, are you both going to do it or is one of you going to do it? Because we have other meals we have to do too." I'm trying not to be the controlling person in the midst of this. We go to the store. I told them, "Hey, you guys just go get what you need to cook the meals you're going to cook this week." I thought, "Maybe this will just work itself out as we're here."

I just said go, and they just went. One of the guys knew exactly what he was doing. He went to the produce aisle and started grabbing everything and looking for stuff. It's kind of random what you can find there and what you can't. Cilantro was like finding gold. It was impossible to get there. He was really upset about that, because that was throwing everything else off.

The other guy started going, and he disappeared for about five to seven minutes. I go and I'm getting toilet paper and water and then just going to kind of wade myself into something else. I don't know. Maybe get some bread. They like bread there. I was like, "I'll just get some bread and doughnuts or something. I have the morning covered."

One of the other guys who was going to help me cook wandered back over to me and said, "Hey, man, I have a question for you." I said, "What's up, man?" He goes, "What do you put in your huevos rancheros recipe?" I said, "Man, I don't have a huevos rancheros recipe." I said, "I've never had huevos rancheros." He goes, "Oh, okay. Cool, cool." He starts to turn to walk away, and I go, "Hey, man. Quick question for you. Do you have a huevos rancheros recipe?"

He turned around and looked at me for a second, and he looked down and went, "I don't." There was a lot of empathy welling up in me. I felt led by the Lord to ask him a question. "Hey, man, did you kind of feel pressure with the whole Latino conversation and fajitas and guacamole thing, like you had to have a huevos rancheros recipe?"

He looked at me and he was like, "I did." I said, "Okay, man." He goes, "But I can make amazing French toast." I said, "You be you. Make French toast. It's going to be incredible. Go get it." He goes, "Great. I'm going to do it. I'm going to go get it." He got all the stuff, and it was so great we had him cook it twice. It was awesome.

That's kind of what Paul is saying. That idea, that statement, "Be who you are" on the outside sounds like a really freeing statement, doesn't it? Yeah, be who you are. That's a really freeing statement...if you know who you are. If you don't know who you are, that's a terrifying statement. The central theme of the passage we're going to be focusing on today is how crucial it is for the

body of Christ to be filled with members who know who they are, who God created them to be, and are doing what God created them to do.

What I love about this passage is it doesn't take long for us to get to the bottom of what Paul is trying to communicate here. The use of the body imagery is meant to be a practical application of the main theme of the first half to chapter 12 last week. That can be found in verses 4-7. We'll read them together. This is from last week.

**"Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone."** Let me give you some background on what's going on here at the church at Corinth. There seems to be a lot of inferiority and insecurity that's beginning to permeate the church.

Here's what's happening, as you can probably imagine. There are people who are walking in gifts of prophecy and tongues and healing and are up front with those giftings, so people in the church who either don't know what giftings they have or don't have *those* giftings are beginning to feel less important or maybe like what they have to contribute isn't as valuable, so they're beginning to deal with a lot of insecurity and inferiority and beginning to not do *anything*.

What Paul is saying here, what he's exhorting the people in this passage is to be and do what God has uniquely created you to be and do. The use of the body imagery in 1 Corinthians is to draw at both the individual and the corporate nature of what it means to be a follower of Christ in relation to the church. Every member is a needed and necessary part of the church to fulfill a mission, and the church has one mission: to make disciples, as Paul stated earlier in the first half of the chapter, and that happens through a variety of activities.

There are theological and practical reasons for why Paul chose this body imagery by way of application. The practical imagery is that when you think of the body it takes you first to the body and then to the members. Let me give you an example. If you have some pain somewhere in your body...one of your organs is misfiring...you're going to feel that pain in your body, and unless you're a doctor or really intelligent, you're not going to know, "Oh, that's my pancreas hurting." You're just going to know, "There's pain in my body." You're not going to know what organ is misfiring.

Likewise, if you were to take that organ out of your body, if somebody were to extract that out of you, then your body wouldn't function how it's intended to function. It might even die. Take your arm. If you were to cut your arm off, it wouldn't cease to be an arm, but it would cease to do what an arm does. Paul is drawing our attention to the importance of both the individual and the whole in this.

Theologically, the reason for the use of body imagery here in 1 Corinthians is followers of Christ share a unique yet common, supernatural yet similar, phenomenal yet believable, individual yet corporate, singular and collective experience of being saved by grace through faith in Christ. That is what we all experience for those who follow Christ.

The Bible says in Ephesians 2 all of us share the same reality before Christ, and it says we are dead in our sins and trespasses. We're far from God. We're alienated from the household of faith, but in Christ we're made alive. We're brought near. We're sons and daughters in the household of God. Paul is saying here that we've been saved by the same gospel, are indwelt by the same Spirit, and sent on the same mission.

The driving theme of our passage today is we've been uniquely designed but uniformly purposed. The body is both individual and whole. This is the needed and necessary paradox to the family of God. What's interesting for us, church, is we've talked about the church of Corinth and them dealing with this rampant inferiority and insecurity. I don't think what we're dealing with is that far removed from that. I think it's just an evolution of that.

They were looking at these giftings of healing and prophecy and saying, "I don't have that gifting. I don't know the gifting I do have... Maybe I just like to serve or administrate. That just doesn't feel as important, so I don't feel like I have anything of value to contribute, so I'm not going to do anything." We've experienced the same thing here, only our overwhelming feeling in the life of the church is not insecurity; it's atrophy.

*Atrophy* is a condition where parts of the body become ineffective or unusable because of underuse or neglect. What I see happening in the life of the church is we have such a limited view of what it means to be the church corporately that much of the important or crucial aspects of the body of Christ become ineffective because of underuse or neglect.

Just like the people at the church of Corinth thought, "If I can't heal or prophesy or speak in tongues, then what I have to add isn't valuable," our version of that is, "If I can't preach or sing, then what I have to contribute to the kingdom of God isn't as valuable as that," or maybe "I know I can't do *that*," or "That scares the mess out of me, but I don't know what I *can* do. It's not *that*, so I don't have anything as valuable."

So we don't do anything, because we've overemphasized certain gifts to the point where our framework for what it means to be the body of Christ has become so minimized. So if we've said, "We can't preach or sing; we must not have anything to contribute," Paul is saying here that the church has one mission, and it's not limited to preaching and singing. It's ultimately to make disciples, and it's going to take all of us for that to happen.

The mission of the church is an "every member" mission, but we have a lot of atrophied muscles it's time to wake up. How do we know if we're experiencing atrophy? I wrote a list of four signs. It's not meant to be an exhaustive list but just a starting point for us to see where the overemphasis of certain people's gifts in the life of the church has atrophied us as disciple-makers.

1. *We don't have to study God's words for ourselves, just podcast.* Somehow along the way we've stopped believing the Bible is for everyone, and we've relegated that discipline to a list of professionals who put together 30-minute sermons for us that fill databases for us to consume at our leisure. We can learn about God without ever even having to open the Bible for ourselves. Our iPhone memories get bigger while our Bibles get dustier.

Here's where that's wrong. The best way I can explain this is I have four kids. My oldest and my youngest are both daughters; a 10-year-old and a toddler. In the morning in the Joy house we have a consistent thing. We get up. Everybody wants to eat, and waffles are a regular staple in our home. They're not the organic or multigrain kind. They're pretty much home-style "L'Eggo my Eggo" waffles. We get up in the morning to make those. The syrup is not high-fructose corn syrup; it's real maple syrup. We do have *some* standards.

So we make waffles in the morning, partially because it's really simple. It takes the same amount of time to make a waffle as it does for my coffee to brew, so it kind of is perfect magic. I can set the coffee to brew and make the waffles. When I'm setting that out for the kids, I'll set it out for my oldest, my 10-year-old. I'll set the waffle out for her on a plate, and she'll put the butter and syrup on. She'll do all that herself, and then she'll go sit down and eat it.

My toddler...I do all that *for* her. I put the butter and syrup on and cut it for her, because her little muscles can't do that yet. Then she'll sit down and make a mess and eat it. That's fine. Right? It's perfectly acceptable for me to cut my toddler's food up for her, but if I was still doing that for my 10-year-old, I think we'd all recognize something developmentally has probably gone off here. We approach the Word of God the same way. We have an abundance of resources at our disposal at all times, and those things are a common grace and a beautiful thing.

You can find a study on everything just on our website alone without having even to venture out into the vast array of resources...sermons, teachings, articles, books...where people have done studying for you and cut it up. It's a really beautiful thing, but if you've done that to the point where you don't know how to open and study the Bible for yourself, at some point you have to move away from people cutting up your food for you and learn to feed yourself.

2. *We don't have to share our faith, just invite somebody to church.* C.S. Lewis says, "The church exists for nothing else but to draw men into Christ, to make them little Christs. If they are not doing that, all the cathedrals, clergy, missions, sermons, even the Bible itself, are simply a waste of time. God became man for no other purpose." One of the most crucial aspects to being a disciple is being a disciple maker. Performances and programs are not God's method for reaching the world; it's people.

Romans 1:1 says we are set apart for the gospel of God. This is an essential aspect of being a follower of Christ that we cannot pass on to anybody else. Let me say this: It is never wrong to invite somebody to church. *Ever.* Don't ever hear me say that. You just can't confuse an invitation to church with evangelism. Evangelism is the proclamation of the gospel and the power of the Holy Spirit with the aim of persuading people to repent, believe, and follow Jesus.

Later in Romans 1 Paul says, "**I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish. So I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome. For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.**" Paul is saying, "I have an obligation. I owe a debt to those who don't know Christ."

I love how a preacher put it. "Every Christian on this side of heaven owes the gospel to every lost person on this side of hell." The gospel was never intended to stop *with* us; it was intended to spread *through* us.

3. *We don't have to give our lives, just write a check.* God doesn't need angel investors; he wants kingdom builders. I think I can stop there.

4. *We don't have to get serious about the things of God, just go to a church that does.* For some reason, we've gotten our relationship with the church really confused. Let me kind of use this as a way to explain that. There are really two ends of the spectrum when it comes to how you relationally connect. There are *relationships of association* and *relationships of interdependence*.

Let me give you some examples of relationships of association. You could have a political party or maybe a less hot topic, a Cowboys fan, depending on who you are. Let's just take a Cowboys fan. I'm relating in an associative way as I go to the Cowboys stadium to the people in that space. They are not going to miss me if I'm not there. Dak is not going to play better because I'm more tuned in to the game.

The only thing we share in common is that we're maybe going to be wearing the same star symbol, and we're cheering for the same team, hoping for the same outcome. It really doesn't have to go a lot deeper than that. A relationship is a luxury. That's association. You take the other side, relationships of interdependence... Examples of that would be your spouse, your family, your kids, or even friends.

I am a necessary part of their lives. If you were to take me out or take them out of my life, there would be something significantly missing. As a parent, if you were to leave your kids at home, that could have really serious, maybe even potentially grave consequences. We are mutually reliant on one another. Your relationship is a relationship of necessity.

Paul here is making the argument that our relationship to the body is more of one of interdependence, not of association. It's not a luxury to be a part of the body of Christ; it's a necessity, because you are needed and necessary for us to move this thing forward. Without you it doesn't work. In this chapter, Paul gives us one statement with three points as the antidote for the atrophied church: *we are united in one Spirit into one body and given one mission*.

We're united in one Spirit. He says in chapter 12, **"For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit."** I love how *The Message* translates this. **"By means of his one Spirit, we all said good-bye to our partial and piecemeal lives. We each used to independently call our own shots, but then we entered into a large and integrated life in which he has the final say in everything."**

**(This is what we proclaimed in word and action when we were baptized.) Each of us is now a part of his resurrection body, refreshed and sustained at one fountain—his Spirit—where we all come to drink. The old labels we once used to identify ourselves—labels like Jew or Greek, slave or free—are no longer useful. We need something larger, more comprehensive."**

There's a vertical and horizontal work of the Spirit here. The Spirit of God is what unites us as a body and empowers us on mission. Vertically, Paul says in Romans 8 that anyone who does not have the Spirit does not belong to Christ. People who lack the Spirit do not belong to Christ. To belong to the body of Christ you have to be a follower of Christ.

To be a follower of Christ you're indwelt with the Holy Spirit. The Spirit points you to the lordship of Christ. Horizontally, we see this play out in Acts 1:8, where it says, **"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."**

The Spirit empowers you for the work of the church to be a witness. One of the greatest ways to know if the Holy Spirit is at work *in* you is if the Holy Spirit is at work *through* you. The Spirit of God is what unites us as a body and empowers us on mission. First, we are united in one Spirit into: *one body*. Verses 25-27 (again from *The Message*) says it this way:

**"The way God designed our bodies is a model for understanding our lives together as a church: every part dependent on every other part, the parts we mention and the parts we don't, the parts we see and the parts we don't. If one part hurts, every other part is involved in the hurt, and in the healing. If one part flourishes, every other part enters into the exuberance. You are Christ's body—that's who you are! You must never forget this. Only as you accept your part of that body does your 'part' mean anything."**

Church, if our view of being the church continues to be the hour and a half we spend together once a week, if our view of disciple-making continues to just be what people do on the stage or on staff,

then everyone here gets a pass on giving your life away. When you carry such a narrow view of what it means to be the body of Christ and don't see yourself as needed and necessary, you rob yourself and the body of Christ from true flourishing.

There is such a rich diversity of gifting and passions in this body waiting to be unleashed. I think there's no greater example of that than what we saw last week in VBS. It's a beautiful thing that we had 900 kids show up, but to me it's just as beautiful that we had over 500 volunteers sign up and say, "I want to be a part of making disciples there." You got to see a rich diversity of giftings and passions. All you had to do was walk in the building.

You can see as you walk through Little Village and Kids Village even now... All you have to do is look at the beautiful decorations that were everywhere in the life of the church. This is how I know. That's a gift to do that. You look at those things... That takes gifting to do something that beautiful. The last thing anybody wants me to touch is papier-mâché, I promise you. You don't give me scissors, glue, and a marker and expect something beautiful to happen.

You're going to expect something that scares the children. It's just reality. It's not going to be beautiful. It's not going to be crafty. That's it. I had one brief period where I could do crafty stuff at home. It was the brief period of rough and rugged and things that were off and unmatched. Now everything is back to being clean and neat and has to be measured, and I'm out. I can't help my wife with anything.

You walked through the hallway and saw just *that*, just that alone, the myriad of people who have such a gifting there. They got to serve and didn't just get to serve for the sake of something being made out of paper; they got to serve for the sake of disciples being made. That's the whole point. They're telling the story of God, telling the story of creation out there in the hallway and the foyers.

You saw people getting to sit with kids, pray with them, share the gospel. You saw people preparing curriculum. You saw people playing games. It was discipleship happening in a variety of ways, and it was beautiful. It took 500 people for it to happen. Let's watch a short video. I just want to do that and celebrate what God did last week.

[Video]

It's incredible. There were 900 kids who got to learn stuff about God I didn't learn until college because 500 people showed up and decided to make disciples. Isn't that beautiful? That's what waits for us, church. One body.

Lastly, I'll close with this: *one mission*. The mission of the church, the body of Christ, is to make disciples. That means the mission of every member who makes up part of the body of Christ is no different. It's to make disciples. Second Corinthians 5:16 says it this way, and we'll talk about it more next week. It says we've been reconciled to God and been made messengers of reconciliation. Our purpose for existing, both individually and corporately, is to take the message of reconciliation to the world.

So how are we doing? There was a recent study done as a collaborative effort between several pretty large entities. I only say that to say the data is trustworthy. Their findings revealed that the next 30 years represent the largest mission opportunity in North American history. Between now and the year 2050 it is estimated there will be upwards of 35 million younger men and women who claimed Christ and were associated with the church who leave the faith over the next 30 years. I'm going to quote the study directly.

"It is the largest and fastest numerical shift in religious affiliation in the history of this country. Even in the most optimistic scenarios, Christian affiliation in the US shrinks dramatically, and in our base case, over one million youth at least nominally in the church today will choose to leave each year for the next three decades. Thirty five million youth raised in families that call themselves Christian will say that they are not by 2050."

These numbers don't even take into consideration the growing population of newer generations that are estranged from the church and don't want to have anything to do with religion. Another piece of data I'll quote from the study here... "Church planting in the US will need to double to triple from current rates to address population growth and anticipated church closures from older congregations. The American church needs to plant more than 215,000 churches the next 30 years to maintain status quo, and to meet the needs of the unaffiliated an additional 60,000 churches."

How are we doing with that? Currently, there are 4,000 evangelical churches planted every year in the US. That may sound really awesome. Currently, we also close 3,700 evangelical churches every year for a net positive of 300. So to keep pace with these statistics listed above, we need to be planting a net positive of 8,000 churches every year.

Why am I putting these statistics in front of you? It's really simple. We do not have the luxury, as followers of Christ, to sit in the stands any longer. The days of copping out and leaving ministry to the professionals has to die, and we need to rise up and be the people of God and get loud with the gospel. To turn this tide is going to take all of us.

I'll close with a quote I love from David Platt. He says, "I'm convinced that the greatest need in the church today is not more money. It's not more power. It's not more prestige. It's not even more people. It's not more education. It's not more political influence.

I believe the greatest need in the church today is more men, women, and students who believe in Jesus Christ and have embraced him to rise up and be the disciples that the Scripture teaches us to be." Here it is, church, a really simple assignment. If you walk away with one thing, one question to ask, one piece of assignment, it's this...*Who has God created you to be, and what has he gifted you to do?*

If all of us will commit to answering that one question and by the power of the Spirit and courage walk that out, we don't even know how loud the gospel can be in this church. The problem is the answer to that question won't be found sitting in the stands; it'll only be found getting on the field. Let's pray.

Father in heaven, we recognize the task in front of us is so great, but we also stand here and confess every week how great our God is. We know how this ends, so we ask right now, God, that you might wake us up. There are men, women, and students in this room today you have uniquely created, gifted, and called for your kingdom. God, wake them up. Wake us all up.

There are a variety of expressions that are waiting to happen coming out of just this room, a variety of ways disciples are going to be made, a variety of ways that your kingdom is going to grow, and you can just sense that if everybody in this room would say, "God, who have you created me to be? Help me to do it." That simple question, step of faith... Trust, and I know you stand ready to answer that.

The cruelest thing in the world would be a God who has given us something so great and left us alone to figure it out, but you say you don't do that. You say you don't leave us alone. You give us the Spirit that points us to the lordship of Christ, that illuminates your Word, that empowers us to walk

in faith and courage and be and do who you've created us to be and do. So won't you do it? First, help us to ask. I ask that in Christ's name and for his sake, amen.

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