

# *HOW TO GROW IN GOD*

*By Dave Roberson*

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture notations are taken from the *King James Version* of the Bible.

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By Dave Roberson

ISBN 1-929339-13-5

ISBN 978-1-929339-13-6

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## *Contents*

<b>Chapter 1</b>	
Sin Has No Dominion Over You	..... 4
<b>Chapter 2</b>	
The Incorruptible Seed	..... 6
<b>Chapter 3</b>	
Two Works of Grace	..... 9
<b>Chapter 4</b>	
Discovering God's Plan For Your Life	..... 12
Prayer to Be Filled With the Holy Spirit	..... 16

## *Chapter 1*

### *Sin Has No Dominion Over You*

Through the years, I've seen many people come to the Lord. But I've also noticed an interesting contrast of experiences among many new believers. One person might be instantly set free from certain strongholds, such as smoking, drinking, or drugs. On the other hand, another person seems to take years of going back and forth between God and the world until he finally catches hold and starts growing, or he turns loose and is lost.

We know that God is no respecter of persons. So what is the difference between these two types of new believers? If the same rebirth took place in both people, why does one person go on to serve God while the other struggles and sometimes falls away?

Pay very close attention to my answer to that question. God isn't the One who determines how quickly a believer will grow. He is **NOT** a respecter of persons; therefore, everyone has access to the same amount of power at their rebirth.

It's what you do in the hours, days, and years following your conversion concerning the Word you hear and the grace in which you establish yourself that determines how fast and how free you will become.

## **Understanding God's Grace**

Another factor that determines how fast you'll grow in the Lord is the kind of doctrine you place yourself under. You see, some preachers won't tell you that sin has no more dominion over you once you're born again. Instead of teaching that grace **FREES** you from sin, these preachers teach that grace **COVERS** you while you're living in sin. Many times they're afraid that if you find out God set you free from sin's dominion, but then later, you fall back into sinful habits, you might feel so condemned that you'll give up on God and go back into the world.

But, really, the opposite is true. You can only begin to be set free from sinful habits and strongholds when you understand that from day one of your new birth, the power of sin was broken over you just as Romans 6:14 declares: **For sin SHALL NOT have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.**

It doesn't matter how hopelessly overpowered you may feel or how powerful that stronghold may appear to be: Sin **CANNOT** make you do what you do not want to do! This is probably one of Satan's best-kept secrets—a secret that can rob you of the faith you need to finish coming out of the world and establish yourself in God.

Now, you may be tempted to say, "I couldn't help sinning"; "It was out of my control"; "The temptation was too great for me"; or the classic excuse, "The devil made me do it." But the truth is, God didn't let that sin

overpower you—YOU did. When you finally accept this fact, you'll have taken your first real step out of your problem and into freedom.

Actually, a great injustice has been done to the new convert because of incorrect teachings about God's grace. When new converts are taught that grace covers them even if they continue in their old, sinful habits, it's easy for the devil to deceive them out of the faith they need to break free from the world. Thus the world often draws them back in. *After all*, these new believers reason, *why bother to stop sinning if I'm going to Heaven anyway?*

### **The Key to Being Set Free**

This explains why one person is set free from sinful habits right away following his conversion and another is not. The first new believer allows the Holy Spirit to incorporate the law of the Spirit of life into every area of his life to set him free. The second believer struggles in his Christian walk because he is selective in the areas he yields to the Lord.

This second person wants to be set free from some sins while holding on to other sins. In his heart, he doesn't want to relinquish the control of certain sins to the Holy Spirit. So when a preacher stands up and teaches that God's grace covers this new believer even if he deliberately continues his old, sinful habits, it's easy for the devil to rob this person of the faith he needs to be set free.

This person's only avenue to freedom is to first get the revelation of Romans 6:14. He has no excuse, nor has he been given the option to keep on sinning because **SIN HAS NO MORE DOMINION OVER HIM!**

## *Chapter 2*

### *The Incorruptible Seed*

Most believers don't understand the nature of the change wrought in them at the new birth. Therefore, they tend to labor under their burdens and shortcomings until they become disgusted with themselves.

Using their own natural willpower, these believers vow to change—only to find out that an invisible “magnet” keeps pulling them back into the same sinful mold they came out of. This struggle can cause overwhelming feelings of uselessness and despair in a person, often destroying his will to pursue the dreams God has placed in his heart.

#### **The Eternal Seed Planted**

As believers, we need to know how the Holy Spirit works in our own human spirit to bring forth the change that transforms our whole being. So let's begin by taking a look at what happens in the new birth.

When you were born again, something incredible took place within your spirit. First Peter 1:23 explains, **Being born again, NOT OF CORRUPTIBLE SEED, BUT OF INCORRUPTIBLE, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.**

At the moment of your new birth, the Holy Spirit literally placed eternal life into your spirit in the form of incorruptible seed. When this seed began to release its program into your spirit, the same process occurred that takes place when you drop a seed into

a glass of water. First the seed will sprout; then it begins to grow.

This is why Jesus said in John 7:38: **He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.** He was talking about the Holy Spirit, for it is the Holy Spirit who “waters” the incorruptible seed and supplies the power to bring forth the fullness of everything contained within it.

All the power needed to transform your life into everything Jesus said you are in Him is contained within that divine seed. God's will for your personal life is also contained within the program of the seed, continually releasing itself into your spirit to provide the direction and leadership of the Holy Spirit for your personal life.

#### **The Conflict Between the Old and the New**

You may ask, “If I'm a new creature, born of the incorruptible seed, why am I still being tempted at times to commit the sins I used to commit in the world?”

To answer that question, you have to first understand the operation of your spirit—the part of you that received eternal life when you were born again. You see, the human spirit is your inner man, the hidden man of the heart. All permanent change must come from within the inner man before it can truly take place in the outer man.

Even scientists know there is something besides the natural mind

inside a man. They have labeled it “the subconscious mind.” Scientists are the first to tell you that the ability of the subconscious mind far exceeds the operation of the conscious or natural mind. In fact, after years and years of study, psychologists will tell you it is your subconscious mind, not your natural mind, that controls your life. Your subconscious mind—your spirit man—is the real you!

Throughout your entire life, everything you have seen, heard, or felt has been fed into your spirit, creating an inner image of how you really see yourself. And no matter how much outer discipline you may use to change that inner image, you’ll eventually find yourself reverting back to the same old set of habits or characteristics.

After you’re born again, your newly created spirit man is like a power plant that keeps exerting pressure against your natural mind until it agrees to concede and go along with what is really working in the inner man. The conflict comes when this brand-new image of who you are in Christ Jesus begins to come forth and clash with the old image—sinful habits, negative ways of thinking, and so on—from which you were set free.

The resistance believers sometimes feel to making changes in their lives is a result of the negative programs that are still running because of a lifetime of hurts, disappointments, and bad habits. For instance, have you ever seen people at the altar begging God to deliver them from habits like smoking? The new

programming inside their spirits lets them know they should give up those habits, but a very powerful compulsion won’t let them. That compulsion is their old program!

Thank God, this is where the Holy Spirit comes in! He is the One who has the power to do what no other person can do. He can literally transform your life by destroying all the old programs and replacing them with the new programs of the incorruptible seed—the programs of who you are as a new creation in Christ Jesus.

### **Walk in the Spirit**

The Holy Spirit’s powerful work of grace in your life takes place as you obey God’s command to continually “walk in the Spirit” (Galatians 5:16). However, to walk in the spirit (your new nature) to such a degree that you experience a genuine, God-kind of victory, let me recommend what I have found successful in my own walk. Doing these four things faithfully will help you grow in God:

1. **Pray in the Spirit.** Of all the things you could do to affect change in your inner man, this is one of the most powerful. But to operate in this precious revelation gift, you must first be filled with the Holy Spirit. We’ll talk about this absolutely crucial key to growing in God in the next chapter.
2. **Confess the Word.** You should never agree with the problem. Instead, continually confess

what **GOD HAS SAID** about your problem.

3. **Meditate on the Word.** Find verses that deal with your problem and meditate on them day and night. Meditation is the key to understanding the verses the Holy Spirit is using to replace the bad program that has controlled your life with His program of freedom and victory.
  
4. **Spend time praising and worshiping the Lord.** Tell Him you love Him using words that come out of the sanctuary of your own heart. Enter into His Presence, for it is His Presence that sustains you in the emotional realm of your soul. As you spend much time in God's Presence worshiping Him, He will be free to work the change of character that praying in the Spirit and meditating on the Word produces in you.

## *Chapter 3* *Two Works of Grace*

Imagine a clear drinking glass full of filthy, contaminated water. That's what your spirit looked like to God before you were born again. The Holy Spirit couldn't have come to live in your spirit before you became a new creation any more than you could stay clean while being submerged in a tank of decomposing waste material.

But when you accepted Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, an incredible thing took place in your spirit. Without a doubt, it is the most impossible, powerful miracle of all! God reached down and took out your old nature and then put in a new one!

Instantly, your spirit became completely free from the contamination of sin. It was as if someone dumped out that glassful of filthy, contaminated water, washed the glass sparkling clean, and then filled it with pure, distilled, pollutant-free water. This is what the Apostle Paul meant when he said, **Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new** (Second Corinthians 5:17).

### **Born Again vs. Filled With the Spirit**

But there's a vast difference between being born again and being filled with the Holy Spirit. When we were born again, the Holy Spirit performed His first work of grace in our lives: He gave us a new nature

that freed us from sin and enabled us to serve God.

But as soon as we are freed from sin, the Holy Spirit is ready to perform His second work of grace: He wants to pour Himself into our spirit and give us the revelation gift of speaking with other tongues.

Being born again is still something you experienced as a human being. One moment you were lost and headed for hell, and the next you were born again and headed for Heaven! You're still a human being, but you possess a new nature that fully qualifies you for the Holy Spirit's second work of grace as He baptizes you with Himself and with power.

You see, it's the Holy Spirit who brings God's power into your life. When you are filled with the Holy Spirit, you are no longer just another human being; you're a person with the resident power of God's Spirit living on the inside of you!

This explains why Jesus told His disciples after His resurrection:

**And, behold, I send the  
promise of my Father upon you:  
but tarry ye in the city of  
Jerusalem, UNTIL YE BE ENDUED  
WITH POWER FROM ON HIGH.**

**Luke 24:49**

**But ye shall receive power,  
after that the Holy Ghost is  
come upon you: and ye shall be  
witnesses unto me both in  
Jerusalem, and in all Judaea,**

**and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.**

**Acts 1:8**

Jesus knew that when the Holy Spirit came, so would His power!

### **Why Is the Devil Afraid Of a Spirit-Filled Believer?**

When you are born again, you are literally born into God's family. You become a citizen of the Kingdom of God. This is why Ephesians 2:19 says, **Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God.**

Like any natural citizen, you have certain rights given to you by the kingdom or country you belong to. But in both a natural and a spiritual kingdom, those rights are only as secure as the ability of the designated authority to enforce them.

The authority that enforces your rights as a citizen of God's Kingdom is the power of the Holy Spirit. This is why God sends His Spirit to baptize you. When you are filled with the Holy Spirit, you receive the power and might of Heaven itself. Now the devil is no longer dealing with you as just another human being; he's confronting the corporate structure of Heaven! You have all the power and might of Heaven right there with you to enforce your rights as a believer.

Can you see why the devil is so afraid of the baptism of the Holy Spirit? He will do anything to stop a

believer from getting filled with the Holy Ghost.

Satan is well aware that it's a lot easier for him to stop a believer from receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit than it is to deal with that person after he has already received this gift. Unfortunately, the devil is quite good at what he does, using doctrinal differences to convince baby Christians that speaking with tongues and miracles passed away with the early apostles.

But what if you do get filled with the Holy Spirit and start speaking with other tongues? Well, Satan knows that if he can stop you in the beginning of this experience, before the fullness of what really happened settles in, he will have a lot less trouble from you. On the other hand, if he waits until you're flowing in the power of the Holy Spirit, he'll have a big problem on his hands trying to stop you!

The devil is afraid that after you are filled with the Holy Spirit, you'll establish yourself in a prayer life consumed with the supernatural language of tongues. Therefore, his best chance after you've been baptized in the Holy Spirit is to convince you that the experience wasn't real.

You see, something marvelous happens as you pray in other tongues. The Holy Spirit answers your prayers by replacing your old, sinful programs with His program of freedom and victory. That supernatural work begins first in your spirit, eventually

works its way into your character, and finally dawns on your intellect that something has changed. You begin the process of becoming a new person from the inside out!

Satan doesn't want that, so he will literally charge the atmosphere around you with such thoughts as, *What are you doing? This isn't real! You're making up these tongues. They're not from God!* He is an expert at using feelings and emotions to try to convince you that what you received wasn't really from God.

Satan is afraid you'll discover the incredible source of edification that praying in tongues offers you. He doesn't want you to find out **HE** is the source of your resistance and then expose him for what he really is. He knows that if you order him out of your presence in Jesus' Name, he has to go and leave you alone. He has no choice!

But just remember, the devil is a liar. If he wasn't able to stop you from getting born again so you could go straight to Heaven when you die, how is he going to stop you from receiving all the benefits that come with the baptism of the Holy Spirit?

The fact is, he isn't! He has already lost the most important part of the battle. He couldn't stop you from hearing about and believing in Jesus, and he isn't going to stop you from being filled with the Holy Ghost or receiving the blessings of praying in tongues!

So I encourage you to act on what we've just talked about. If you have

never been filled with the Holy Spirit, take care of that right now (*see* "Prayer to Be Filled With the Holy Spirit" on page 16). Once you've received the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues, write down the areas of your life that most need to be transformed and made new by the power of God.

Next, systematically go through the four steps to walking in the Spirit that I outlined in the last chapter: 1) Pray in the Spirit throughout the day. 2) Find God's promises that pertain to your need. Write them down and begin to continually confess what God's Word says about your problem. 3) Meditate on those verses day and night. 4) Worship the Lord for being your Savior, Deliverer, Healer, Provider—for being the Answer to what you need to be transformed into.

Begin today and you'll set yourself in high gear to grow in God!

## ***Chapter 4*** ***Discovering God's Plan*** ***For Your Life***

I want to tell you how bright the future is for you once you receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the precious gift of speaking with tongues.

But, first, let me say that I've often wished a "Book of Roberson," nestled somewhere in the Word of God, had suddenly appeared when I was born again and filled with the Holy Ghost. This "Book of Roberson" would have all the instructions and directions for God's call on my life. I could open it up and find out if I'm called to be a pastor, an administrator, a businessman, or so on. This book would be written in such detail that I could find out what I'm supposed to be doing every year of my life.

Well, no "Book of Roberson" suddenly appeared when I was saved. But God gives you and me the equivalent when He baptizes us with the Holy Ghost and gives us the gift of speaking with other tongues!

You see, before the foundations of the earth, God laid out a plan for the life of every believer—including you. In that plan, He called you to fulfill a particular position in the Body of Christ. Contained within the mind of the Holy Spirit is that divine plan for your life. And when you pray in tongues, the Holy Spirit orders that plan, causing it to pour out of Heaven on you with power—and the only thing the devil can do to try to stop it is talk you out of speaking in tongues.

## **Cultivating Your 'Measure Of Faith'**

But you don't ever have to let the devil succeed in preventing you from praying out the mysteries of God's plan for your life. You can allow the Holy Spirit inside you to empower the faith you've already been given so you can stay on track and keep on growing.

You see, Romans 12:3 declares that God has given you "the measure of faith": **For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.**

God gave you that measure of faith for a specific purpose—to enable you to fulfill His call on your life. In that measure, He placed the diagramming and programming for the entire plan He has laid out for you.

But there is one stipulation to the unfolding of that plan and your fulfillment of that divine call. **YOU HAVE TO LEARN HOW TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.**

Let me give you an illustration to show you how important this one stipulation is. In Luke 13:19, Jesus likened the Kingdom of God to: **A grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and cast into his garden; and it grew, and waxed a great tree; and the fowls of the air lodged in the branches of it.** Contained within a mustard seed is the diagramming and programming

for the entire mustard tree and its step-by-step process to maturity.

All that seed has to do to produce a mature, fruit-bearing tree is to take in plenty of water and the right amount of nutrients from the soil. Water is not only necessary in itself; it's also the necessary means by which nutrients from the soil can be absorbed into the plant. Without water, the seed lies dormant. With water, growth becomes automatic.

Well, throughout the Bible, the Holy Spirit is likened to water. Just like the mustard seed in the ground, the measure of faith in your spirit requires water. The Holy Spirit is the Water that pours into your measure of faith, not only to begin the growth process, but to carry that process through to maturity.

When the Holy Spirit enters your heart to water and nourish your faith, He goes in knowing the plan God laid out for your life from beginning to end. Immediately the Holy Spirit begins to work that plan toward the fulfillment of your calling.

In the same way that the water carries nourishment to the growing mustard tree, the Holy Spirit makes sure your faith obtains the knowledge that is vital to its growth.

You see, it wouldn't make sense for God to expect you to fulfill His call without giving you the necessary equipment to overcome all the obstacles that might try to stop you along the way—obstacles like sickness, poverty, incorrect doctrine,

and temptation. So God included in that measure of faith the **ABILITY** to appropriate all the provisions in His Word. Then the Holy Spirit **ACTIVATES** and **EMPOWERS** your faith to receive your inheritance in Christ.

### **Releasing the Holy Spirit Through Praying in Tongues**

You may ask, "But how do I, on purpose, give the Holy Spirit access to my heart to water, activate, and empower my faith?" **THROUGH A SUPERNATURAL LANGUAGE CALLED TONGUES!**

When you begin to pray in tongues, you automatically release the Holy Spirit to work in the part of you with which you believe God—your spirit man. He immediately begins to build your faith into everything that God has declared you to be through Christ Jesus.

You don't even have to know where you fit or what your call is when you start praying. All you have to do is let the Holy Spirit water your faith through praying in tongues. Then the growth of your faith toward fulfilling God's plan is as automatic as the sprouting of that mustard seed.

And it's important that you understand this: If for some reason you start to veer off course in your life, your measure of faith contains enough power to put you back on track and restore all that the "cankerworm"—the enemy's strategy against you—has eaten. This is God's promise to you in Joel 2:25: **And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten,**

**the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm, my great army which I sent among you.**

So if you run into a problem and you don't know its cause; if you know something is missing in your life, but you don't know what it is; or if you just want more of God—the Holy Spirit is the One to turn to. He knows if you're off course. He knows the root of your problems, and He knows every answer. And if you're just plain hungry for more of God, He knows how to satisfy that hunger!

### **The Ministry of the Holy Spirit**

Your life is very special before God. He has a special plan for you in His mind—something He wants you to do for Him. And although the written Word of God can guide and instruct you along the way, it can't reveal that divine plan. That's why the ministry of the Holy Spirit is so important.

God wants to show you how much you are worth and how important your life and calling is to the rest of the Body of Christ. So God sent the Holy Spirit to you, charging Him with the responsibility to protect the plan of God for your life.

The Holy Spirit does this by continually searching your heart and checking what He finds there against what He knows God has called you to do. Then as you pray in the supernatural language of tongues, He makes intercession for the difference between the two until everything begins to line up with the plan God has for you.

Look at what Romans 8:27,28 says:

**And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.**

**And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.**

Why could Paul boldly say in verse 28 that all things would begin to work together for your good? Because verse 27 comes first—the Holy Spirit is able to pray the plan of God through you to be fulfilled in your life!

Who is more powerful than the Holy Spirit? Who has the power to stop Him? What set of circumstances could possibly escape being overtaken by the power of the Holy Spirit and escape being forced to line up with God's plan for your life? The answer is **NO ONE** and **NOTHING!** You are beating your negative circumstances into submission by praying out God's plan in the supernatural language of tongues!

That's why in the conclusion of Romans 8, Paul is able to make this declaration:

**Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? . . .**

**Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.**

**For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor**

**angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,**

**Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

**Romans 8:35,37-39**

So allow the Holy Spirit to bring forth God's will in your life. Lean heavily on Him. Trust Him to work out God's plan for you.

Commit yourself to a certain amount of praying in tongues each day. When you pray, try to put yourself in an atmosphere that's free from noise and activity so your mind can learn to get quiet and you can begin to receive from the Holy Spirit. In addition, spend time praying in the Spirit as you go about your day—driving the car, cleaning the house, working at your job, and so on.

Be faithful to your commitment. Then in three months, look back and see what kind of progress you've made. Many years ago, I made that same commitment to pray much in other tongues, and it changed my life. I know it will change yours as well.

It takes time and commitment to develop a powerful prayer life and a close relationship with the Holy Spirit. But I guarantee you that it's worth it all. An inner peace and joy will take hold of you and cause you to become as immovable as the Rock Himself, no matter what storm may come your way!

You are a child of God and a citizen of His Kingdom. You are born

of incorruptible seed. You have the power of the Holy Spirit resident within your own spirit. Sin no longer has any dominion over you.

So don't let the devil keep you spinning your spiritual wheels, going nowhere in God. Don't let him talk you out of releasing God's plan into your life by praying in other tongues. Within that supernatural language is the Holy Spirit's program of freedom from every stronghold and sinful habit that has kept you bound for so long. Hidden in the mysteries of that language is the mind of God for your life and your divine calling.

Your part is to tap into the ministry of the Holy Spirit in your life. Never let up on your commitment to **PRAY MUCH IN OTHER TONGUES!** Continually confess what God says about the situations you face. Meditate on His promises of victory and success. And enter into His Presence with praise and worship. That's how you grow in God!

## ***Prayer to Be Filled With the Holy Spirit***

If you've never been baptized in the Holy Spirit, it's a simple matter to receive this precious gift. All you have to do is ask in faith for the Lord to fill you with the Holy Spirit and give you the gift of speaking in other tongues.

When you do that, the Holy Spirit will come upon you, and you'll sense His Presence. Immediately the Holy Spirit will move into your new nature and begin to create the language on the inside of your spirit. When He does, your tongue and mouth will begin to shape the same words He is creating on the inside of your spirit.

Now pray this prayer from your heart:

**Heavenly Father,  
Your Word says that You are faithful to give the Holy Spirit to those who ask You (Luke 11:13). So in the Name of Jesus, I ask You to please fill me with the Holy Spirit. I thank You for giving me a new language. I believe I receive it now. Amen.**

After you have prayed this prayer, stop speaking in your native language. Yield yourself to the Presence of the Holy Spirit and begin to speak out those words you don't understand with your mind.

It may sound a little like baby talk in the beginning. But as you continue to yield yourself to speaking the words the Holy Spirit gives you, you will begin to pull more of a flow out of your

spirit. Soon you'll be speaking fluently in your new, supernatural language.

Continue to pray in your new language for at least fifteen minutes to establish yourself in this gift you have just received. Then make a commitment to pray a certain amount in other tongues every single day.

You have just begun a new supernatural adventure! It's time to grow in God!

## **You're Born Again— But Now What?**

Do you have a desire to grow in your walk with God? Would you like to be set free from those negative ways of thinking and old, sinful habits that have kept you bound for years? If your answer is yes, then *How to Grow in God* is just what you need!

In this book, Dave Roberson gives you vital keys that will help you walk free of sin's dominion, empower your faith to receive your inheritance in Christ, and lead you straight into God's wonderful plan for your life!

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