

# Radical Peace

## A Prayer Workshop

### radical

#### adjective

rad·i·cal | \ 'ra-di-kəl \

#### Definition of radical

1: of, relating to, or

proceeding from a root: such as

(2): growing from the base of a stem, from a root-like

3: of

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3a: very different from the usual or

traditional : EXTREME

b: favouring extreme changes in existing views, habits, conditions, or institutions

c: associated with views, practices, and policies of extreme change

d: advocating extreme measures to retain or restore

4slang : EXCELLENT, COOL



*Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

Philippians 4:6-7 (NIV)

*Be still and know that I am God. Psalm 46:10*

1 God is a safe place to hide, ready to help when we need him. 2 We stand fearless at the cliff-edge of doom, courageous in seastorm and earthquake, 3 Before the rush and roar of oceans, the tremors that shift mountains. Jacob-wrestling God fights for us, God of angel armies protects us. 4 River fountains splash joy, cooling God's city, this sacred haunt of the Most High. 5 God lives here, the streets are safe, God at your service from crack of dawn. 6 Godless nations rant and rave, kings and kingdoms threaten, but Earth does anything he says. 7 Jacob-wrestling God fights for us, God of angel armies protects us. 8 Attention, all! See the marvels of God! He plants flowers and trees all over the earth, 9 Bans war from pole to pole, breaks all the weapons across his knee. 10 "Step out of the traffic! Take a long, loving look at me, your High God, above politics, above everything." 11 Jacob-wrestling God fights for us, God of angel armies protects us. MSG

# RADICAL PEACE

# A Prayer Workshop

16 November 2016

....St. Saviour's Church, Iford ....

Laura L. Simpkins

*Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:6-7 New International Version (NIV)*

## **OBJECTIVE:**

*Today we aim to dispel any negativity, frustration and confusion we may have about prayer. We will feed on encouragement from some 'heroes' of prayer through the ages, from the Word and put in action some forms of prayer we may have not tried. Through this, we aim to grow in joy, freedom, peace and a desire to pray, in order to deepen our relationship with God.*

## *Group Prayer Exercises*

### **Prayer Exercise: Centring 'Yahweh Breath' Prayer' (after Richard Rohr)**

INSPIRATION means 'breathing into'. Scripture says God created and redeemed us by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. He wants an intimately personal relationship with us. He is the source of all we need, and we are his beloved children.

- 1) Sit comfortably. Take a slow, deep breath. Let it out. Do this a few times.
- 2) Do the same again, this time breathing the word YAHWEH, in two syllables. Inhale with YAH, and exhale with WEH. You should be able to hear yourself in a loud, breathy whisper.
- 3) Now breathe the name, 'as it should be' in Hebrew, without speaking the vowels. You will hear yourself in a similar loud, breathy whisper, but the vowels will almost disappear.
- 4) Reduce your inhaling and exhaling to a normal level, still without the vowels

(Allow some time...)

Can you hear it?! God's name is in our breathing! Allow His inspiration to fill you.

**God gave us our breath and sustains it, literally and symbolically.**

**Every day in our waking, our sleeping, our activity, our rest, aware of it or not, God is with us in every breath!! –It is literally the first and last thing you will ever say or do!**

**HALLELUJAH!! AMEN**

*(An alternative Prayer of Stillness: Psalm 131:1-2)*

## **Prayer Exercise: Praying Psalm 46, Msg**

- Psalms are perfect resources for authentic prayer of all types, including praise
- According to Rick Warren, 'No other habit can do more to transform your life and make you more like Jesus than daily reflections on Scripture.'
- we are going to pray individually now using **visualisation**
  - it's no more difficult than it sounds; imagine yourself in the scene and 'walk through it' in your imagination
  - turn to your copy now and have a quick glance
    - you might picture yourself in the scenes or as part of nature, or a character in the Psalm
    - you might try to imagine how God feels looking down on the scene
  - anything is fair game to help you let the words and images seep in
- focus on praise and adoration

### **Psalm 46 *The Message***

**1** God is a safe place to hide, ready to help when we need him. **2** We stand fearless at the cliff-edge of doom, courageous in seastorm and earthquake, **3** Before the rush and roar of oceans, the tremors that shift mountains. Jacob-wrestling God fights for us, God of angel armies protects us. **4** River fountains splash joy, cooling God's city, this sacred haunt of the Most High. **5** God lives here, the streets are safe, God at your service from crack of dawn. **6** Godless nations rant and rave, kings and kingdoms threaten, but Earth does anything he says. **7** Jacob-wrestling God fights for us, God of angel armies protects us. **8** Attention, all! See the marvels of God! He plants flowers and trees all over the earth, **9** Bans war from pole to pole, breaks all the weapons across his knee. **10** "Step out of the traffic! Take a long, loving look at me, your High God, above politics, above everything." **11** Jacob-wrestling God fights for us, God of angel armies protects us.

## **Prayer Exercise: Praying Psalm 47, or Re-writing the Lord's Prayer**

- Now going to focus for 10.00 minutes on another way to pray
  - There are two options to choose from
  - You can try lectio divina, or 'divine reading', which is simply unrushed, meditative reading allowing the Holy Spirit to show you particular words, or ideas. For eg:
    - if something jumps out at you, stop, listen and look at again
    - you might look for a word or image which is repeated and has meaning for you
    - try this with Psalm 47 in either the NIV in the church Bibles, or the Msg version, which is in your folder
  - The other option is to rewrite the Lord's Prayer, using a similar approach to reading it. It is in your folder, and also in Matthew 6:9-14 in the church Bibles

This can be done individually or in two's or three's.

## **Psalm 47** *The Message*

**1** Applause, everyone. Bravo, bravissimo! Shout God-songs at the top of your lungs! **2** God Most High is stunning, astride land and ocean. **3** He crushes hostile people, puts nations at our feet. **4** He set us at the head of the line, prize-winning Jacob, his favorite. **5** Loud cheers as God climbs the mountain, a ram's horn blast at the summit. **6** Sing songs to God, sing out! Sing to our King, sing praise! **7** He's Lord over earth, so sing your best songs to God. **8** God is Lord of godless nations - sovereign, he's King of the mountain. **9** Princes from all over are gathered, people of Abraham's God. The powers of earth are God's - he soars over all.

## **The Lord's Prayer** (*Modern Version*)

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name,  
Your kingdom come, Your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours now and for ever.  
Amen.

## **Prayer Exercise: Silence**

-this is the simplest, maybe for some the most challenging area of prayer

-sit in silence for a few minutes listening to God; if your mind seems to wander, ask God if He is directing you towards something; otherwise, just ask Him to speak to you

-shake off any self-consciousness or awareness that anyone else is here

-bring to a close with thanks and commitment when a sense of 'in-filling' is achieved

# *Individual Exercises*

The following are the guide sheets that accompanied the stations available at the prayer workshop. They should work well in personal prayer time. The aim is not to cover vast *quantities* of material, but to meet with God for *quality* time together through contemplative prayer.

You might follow the guide sheets as written, or you may wish to use a sheet, or one element, merely as a general prompt, and follow the Spirit's leading from there!

You could perhaps find an object at home, or on a 'prayer walk' to use instead of the 'tokens' that were offered on the day.

# Past, Presence & Purpose

Based on: Hebrews 11: 1-40

Prayer themes: centring, yielding, encouragement

*Step-In:* Still yourself before God

*Read & Reflect:*

- Read this chapter outlining the history of God's people, considering the 'ups and downs' of their journey.
- Visualise or sketch a timeline of your own life; note your own 'ups and downs', and periods in which you felt you have been walking in God's presence.
- Reflect on Moses' longing to see God face-to-face (Exodus 33:12-23, 34:5-8):
  - What enabled him to hear God and fulfil His plans for him?
  - Have you seen God's presence come hand-in-hand with a sense of His purpose in your life (Psalm 32:8)?



The Ark of the Covenant:  
bible-history.com

*Respond:*

- In Philippians 3:7-11 Paul expresses how his purpose and desire is to come to *really* know God the Father and Jesus. You might ask God to either place in your heart, or to help grow more this same calling in yourself.
- In the intimacy of knowing God, we are able to see and hear His guidance. Ask God to show you more of Himself, and guide you in His purpose.
- Read Jeremiah 29:11-14a. Thank God for His incredible promises. You might like to memorise Jeremiah 29:12-13.
- You might like to look at *This I My Desire* by Rueben Morgan (S o F# 1561).

*Step Aside:* Yield to God's voice through listening and contemplation

*Step Out In Faith:*

- Sometimes God commanded His people to make altars to worship and memorialise His provision and presence throughout the stages of their journey (eg. Deut. 27:4-7, Exod. 30:1). How could you regularly do the same?

*Take a Token:*

- Take a piece of slate; God's heart is to meet us intimately as He did with Moses!

# Who I Am

**Based on:** 2 Corinthians 5:17; Colossians 3:10-11

**Prayer themes:** renewal, healing, encouragement

**Step-In:** Still yourself before God

**Read & Reflect:**



Images.knowing-jesus.com

- Look in the mirror. Find some words to describe who you are (appearance, heritage, preferences, values, skills, etc.). What defines you?
- Pick up the tape measure. How big is your wrist, or arm, for eg. Do you evaluate yourself to see how you measure up? Against what, or who's standards?

**Respond:**

- How does God see you? Do you recognise yourself as His special creation? Ask him to show you how He sees you.
- Look at the abbreviated list below of attributes that define your spiritual identity as a Christian. Read the list, putting '*I am*' in front of each. Do any of these speak to you personally in particular? Pray about these.

a new creation	accepted	forgiven
free	redeemed	a saint
significant	God's temple	Christ's friend
complete	secure	God's co-worker
chosen	salt & light	seated with Christ
God's heir	God's child	a minister

- You might like to look up the words or music to *Amazing Love (I'm Forgiven)* by the Chris Tomlin (Songs of Fellowship # 1170).

**Step Aside:** Yield to God's voice through listening and contemplation

**Step Out In Faith:**

- Ask God to renew you in your identity. Decide which aspects for your identity in Christ you would like to meditate on regularly for praise or help. Thank Him that even though you are a 'work in progress,' you are a beautiful new creation in Christ!

# Woolly Wonders

**Based on:** *Psalm 139:13-18*

**Prayer themes:** praise, adoration, healing

*Step-In:* Still yourself before God

*Read & Reflect:*

- Pause as you read, paying special attention to words that jump out at you
- Read this response to the passage written by Liz Babbs (Celtic Heart, p. 32)

*Thank you, Lord, for the cutting and weaving  
for that first umbilical knot you were shaping  
and forming all that I was to become*

*Thank you, Lord, for the ups and downs  
the unders and overs you were weaving  
beauty and purpose into my life.*

*Respond:*

- Write your own response in a poem, or collection of words, or picture; or
- Write a list of ways God has shown His love to you by continuing to work His hand in your life (over periods of days, months, Years, decades, etc.)
- Looking at the passage as an expression of love in creating you uniquely, list five or so things you like and/or value about yourself.
- Thank God for these wonderful things!

*Step Aside:* Yield to God's voice through listening and contemplation

*Step Out In Faith:*

- Commit yourself afresh to God's unique plan for you; *and/or*
- Ask Him for healing in areas of your life you are finding difficult, committing them to Father God your Creator and Healer

*Take a Token:*

- Take a piece of wool yarn to remind you where you came from, and who you belong to!



here: pxhere.com; below: Peakpx





# Bread under the Broom

Based on: 1 Kings 19:1-12

Prayer themes: renewal, commitment

*Step-In:* Still yourself before God.



[knitpurlpraypreach.blogspot.com](http://knitpurlpraypreach.blogspot.com)

## *Read & Reflect:*

- Writer Gigi Graham Tchividjian calls Elijah's predicament 'the Devil's calling card.' He was exhausted, discouraged and disheartened and cried out to God to end his life! Think about times when you have felt like Elijah.
- God did not scold Elijah in his pit of despair, but provided him with his immediate physical needs for nourishment and rest, then fed his spirit with direction and encouragement. Can you recall how God has ministered to you in your times of 'burn-out'?

## *Respond:*

- The enemy loves 'burnt-out' believers because they then can't hear God. Ask God to show you seasons or areas of your life in which you are or have been operating in 'burn-out mode.' Ask God to show you what the consequences were or could be for forging ahead in your own strength rather than asking God to intercede.
- What are the 'whirlwinds of activity', the 'fires of over-commitment', and the 'shaking of resolve' that creep up on you to draw you from trust in God's plan?

*Step Aside:* Yield to God's voice through listening and contemplation.

## *Step Out In Faith:*

- In what ways might you need to change your spiritual life and practical commitments in order to hear 'that still small voice' on a regular basis, living and working from a place of rest and renewal?

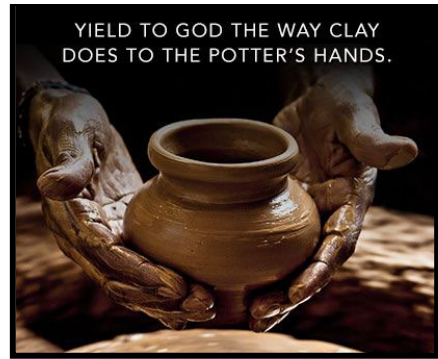
## *Take a Token:*

- Take a bite of bread to help remind yourself that God understands the demands on you, and knows how much you can stand. He will bolster your strength and help budget your time and energy if you ask Him to!

# Jars of Clay

Based on: *Jeremiah 18:1-6 & Isaiah 64:8*

Prayer themes: yielding, contemplation, healing



fpclyer.com

*Step-In:* Still yourself before God

## *Read & Reflect:*

- Visualise a potter making a clay pot, unique, even if similar, not exactly like any other
- If you were a pot what might you look like? What would be your purpose?
- Imagine that you (as your pot) were broken. What might have caused the damage, reflecting on your own journey. How might this affect the ability of 'your pot' to function?

## *Respond:*

- Consider if there is anything in your past or present life that may have contributed to the damage that needs to be let go of. Talk to God about this.
- Accepting that sometimes God allows breakage in this broken world, how might He want us to use the chips and cracks to reform you and use you?
- Read and consider Romans 8:28.

*Step Aside:* Yield to God's voice through listening and contemplation

## *Step Out In Faith:*

- Ask God to help you humble yourself to this process and to God's specific direction for you, remembering that Christ humbled himself to God (Philippians 2:6-9).
- You may like to pray through the words of the song *The Potter's Hand* by Darlene Zschech (Songs of Fellowship # 1184 for complete lyrics).

## *Take a Token:*

- Carefully take a piece of broken crockery to remind you of God's promise to 'keep working on you' (see Phillipians 1:6 and 2:6-9)!

# Major from a Minor

Based on: *Habakkuk 3:17-19*

Prayer themes: petition, praise, adoration, healing

*Step-In:* Still yourself before God

*Read & Reflect:*



Matt Reinbold on Flickr

- Habakkuk was a 'minor' prophet; this book is a compilation of laments, neither an accusation against Israel for its sin, nor a message from God like other prophetic books. He comes round in the end to remember God's faithfulness.
- Think of times when you have been frustrated, and perhaps felt God wasn't listening, or in which circumstances were difficult and not improving. Are you, or someone you love in this place now?

*Respond:*

- Elisa Morgan writes that from this minor prophet we can learn some major principles about prayer.

We do well to pray:

- with a willingness to wait
  - with honesty, not piety
  - with perseverance
  - with readiness
  - with confidence & expectancy
- What are the areas in your life that could be represented by the barren land in this passage? What are the areas in which you could invite the Lord to strengthen you so you can climb the heights like the deer?

*Step Aside:* Yield to God's voice through listening and contemplation

*Step Out In Faith:*

- Draft a list of some passages, images, songs or similar to have in a spiritual 'tool kit', to remind you of God's faithfulness when you are struggling to see it. You might like to post it somewhere visible at home.

# Suitably Dressed

Based on: *Ephesians 6:10-17 & Daniel 7:25*

Prayer themes: centring, protection, encouragement



[lifetruthandhope.com](http://lifetruthandhope.com)

*Step-In:* Still yourself before God

## *Read & Reflect:*

- In any battle, literal or figurative, a plan of action is needed to be effective. The Enemy is an effective strategist, whose goal is to drive a wedge between us and God. Simply put, he likes to: wear down our stamina & confuse our priorities; attack our minds with lies about ourselves and God; and, challenge our faith in God's promises by affecting our mental and physical health.
- Specifically, the Enemy often shoots 'fiery arrows' at us attempting to:
  - Draw us away from the Word, prayer or fellowship
  - Tell us our worth is from what we do, rather than from belonging to Christ
  - Convince us that what God gives and has in store for us is not good enough, and that our timing is better than His
- Have a look at the illustration of the Armour of God and think about vulnerable places where you may be susceptible to attack personally.

## *Respond:*

- Thank God that *not all* struggles are direct spiritual warfare, but come from the brokenness of the world, and that God is ultimately in control!
- Ask God to show you now if there are any ways in which the Enemy is trying to wheedle his way into your life.

*Step Aside:* Yield to God's voice through listening and contemplation

## *Step Out In Faith:*

- Now, and regularly, rebuke the Enemy, and pray through this passage with confidence, through the name of Jesus and by his blood shed on the cross!

## *Take a Token:*

- Take a miniature sword to remember that Jesus is protecting you by his Spirit!



# Additional Notes:

Here are just a few things we can keep in mind to help ourselves pray and steer clear of pitfalls and grow in our prayer life:

## TIPS & TEMPLATES:

- 1) Prayer *is* a discipline-but it is helpful try to make it easy, enjoyable

Jesus left us a model by withdrawing to pray regularly in an undisturbed place. Choose a space that is comfortable, where you can feel safe and open with God.

Keep helpful items along with a Bible gathered in your sanctuary so you can just get stuck in rather than get distracted looking for them. They might include Bible notes, prayer schemes, pictures, prayer prompts, a notebook, perhaps music, poetry, craft items, things with texture and colour to stimulate your mind, and maybe some candles. I carry mine in a bag so I can move around. If you are bored, try something different.

If you are particularly busy or struggle with time-management, it might be worth prioritising an appointment with God in your diary.

These may sound obvious or even simplistic, but they could be the difference between it happening and not!

- 2) It's Scriptural and very helpful to have a daily pattern to follow, so that you are in touch with God often enough, and so that it becomes automatic to pray. We sometimes get thrown off, for any number of unusual circumstances. We repent if needed, dust ourselves off, get back in touch with God as soon as we can, and return to our habit. .

You are welcome to ask about my daily routine, because it is achievable and it works for me, and is similar to that of many others, including Pete Grieg.

I can recommend specifically, before bed, to pray using a basic version the Examen, a rule of Ignatius of Loyola, which may be new to many. This can be easily found online.

- 3) The Lord's Prayer, the exemplar of prayer, given to the disciples by Jesus himself. (Mathew 6:5-13). It is also gives us a simple structure for our own prayers.

- 4) 'Prayer Guru' Pete Grieg offers this set of three 'rules' to keep prayers on track:

Keep it Simple, Keep it Real, Keep it Up

Put another way, our prayers are best when they show: Simplicity, Honesty, and Perseverence

-not flowery words 'like the pagans', but easy chat like God had with Adam and Eve may be prayer at its best

-not what we think we should say to God, but what we really mean

-like David in the Psalms, or Job or any of the prophets, share with God warts and all; depression, joy, sin, searching, they are all there in the prayers of God's people in Scripture

-not just a diet of arrow prayers when we are in trouble, but regular dialogue, and persistence with intercessions

-if we imagine our prayers are pebbles we drop in a bowl of water, on at a time, one day, the prayers will push the water to overflow, running out of its container, bringing refreshment in God's answer

5) Grieg also, gives us this helpful one: P.R.A.Y.

-Pause, Rejoice, Ask and Yield

There is so much scope for creative prayer!

Liturgy, other translations of Bible

Music-listen, make

Write, or rewrite a Psalm, or poem

Art-look at, make

## WHAT TO DO WHEN IT'S ESPECIALLY HARD TO PRAY:

Have any of us every experienced really, really not being able to pray? There can be any number of reasons for this, and we can look at these times as an opportunity to experience prayer in a different way. It's important not to beat ourselves up over it, because *that* is the work of the Enemy trying to get at us!

There are a number of things to look for in this situation:

- 1) There could be unconfessed sin blocking our channel to God. We can wallow around for ages with a blockage like this. All we need to do is to ask God to point it out, confess it, and receive Jesus's forgiveness. If there is a repetitive sin cycle we are in, it is worth asking someone else for help in this.
- 2) Sometimes we are physically and emotionally upset and/or exhausted, and our spiritual speaking and hearing abilities are also muddled up. We can be mourning, or stretched by circumstances or relationship breakdown, or by demands of others on us.

We can be so physically or emotionally exhausted that words are literally just not there. But we don't have to fear or strive in this frustrating place! If we are able, we just ask God to allow us to feel His presence, relax into it. And we trust that He will come. And we trust that according to Romans 8:26-27, the Holy Spirit will intercede for us with supernaturally deep prayers, on our behalf.

### 3) Mental health challenges

Many great Christians; John Bunyan, Martin Luther and Charles Spurgeon to name but a few, struggled with anxieties. (Will van der Hart & Rob Waller, Mind and Soul Foundation, *The Worry Book*). Psalms, Job, Lamentations, the prophets for example, describe people at the end of their tether.

On this, I would like to make an important note. We can all be a bit down or edgy for any number of reasons in the ups and downs of life. And good old-fashioned self-pity, Scripture tells us is something we need to sort out with God through repentance and thanksgiving. However, medical depression and anxiety are a different matter. As someone who has dealt with a complex chronic medical condition which has encompassed both depression and anxiety in varying degrees since my teens, I can say I have had times when I felt prayer was no help. I have been in many a deep, dark, sad or fragile place, often feeling as if I was about to crumble or explode, and I could see no real reason for it.

God of course was there, but these were times of proper illness. And for that God has given us medical professionals. If you can relate to being in this place, I encourage you to come chat to me, or someone else you trust, and see your GP as soon as you can. Mental health concerns need prayer of course, but also proper medical attention.

This is the brokenness of our world oozing over us. God wants us to use the tools he has given us to see us well!

Practically speaking, Psalm 131:1-2 also works as a simple Centring prayer or 'Prayer of Stillness'. Christy Wimber, author, speaker, and Vineyard Church pastor recommends a simple prayer when we are struggling to find right words, are getting emotionally overinvolved, or just don't know details. She says wholeheartedly, 'God, bless so-and-so!' and trusts Him for the rest. Additionally, relaxation is a God given-process/mechanism for healthy physiological and emotional response. Modern psychology has observed and named it, but not invented it!



## FURTHER NOTES for TALK: 'Ask'

This workshop did not cover the question of petition and intercession; or on the problem of unanswered prayer.

I will say though, as a reminder that the Lord's Prayer, as well as a multitude of verses throughout Scripture show us that we need to pray in accordance with God's will. Simply put:

- 1) Our petitions need to be in line with Scripture. So obviously, praying for an opportunity to steal our neighbour's prized aloe plant or motorbike is out!
- 2) We need to pray with the understanding that God has the ultimate say on what is the best for us and for others
- 3) Lastly, God is neither capricious nor facetious; He **will** answer our prayers as Scripture promises He will. We need to accept that God's timing is not ours, and His ways are not ours.

Pete Greig has a lot to say about Spiritual Warfare. We will leave it at this for today.

Spiritual Warfare can seem a bit overwhelming and abstract. It may be we need some help and support to learn more, or to cope in a particular situation. That is wise and in no way a show of weakness. However, we don't need to be deer caught in the headlights! Can I just remind us all that we can pray powerfully on our own, using the **name** of Jesus and praying **in the power of the blood** he shed. We can also use the spiritual protection given us in Ephesians 6! James 4:7 says 'Resist the devil, and he will flee.' He is afraid of doing battle with us because he knows Jesus has already won!

C.S. Lewis said, "Enemy-occupied territory, that is what this world is. Christianity is the story of how the rightful king has landed, you might say landed in disguise, and is calling us to take part in a great campaign of sabotage."

## **SOURCES AND SUGGESTED READING:**

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