

TACTILE EXPERIENCE | *Tearing Down Other Gods*

As we respond to what we've heard, we want to consider the gods we've allowed to exist *alongside*, or even *ahead of* God. To do this, I invite you to grab something to write with, and something to write on. For this experience, you'll want to use real paper, not just a notes app on your phone. If you're watching with other people and want a little extra privacy, you could use some dark-coloured construction paper if, if you have it. **[If you need a moment to grab some paper and pencils, pause the video now to do that.]**

Good. Now, on that paper, I want you begin writing down as many words as you need to, to identify the kinds of things you've allowed to function like "other gods" in your life. It could be many of the things we've already mentioned, like sex, money, power, family, achievement, addiction, work, reputation, success, knowledge, or even religion. These categories are still fairly broad, so I invite you to get really specific, even using names of specific people, ideals, experiences or goals that compete for God's rightful place in your heart, things that hold your deepest passion and strongest affection, things that you just can't live without.

One word you might want to consider writing down is your own name, or just the word "me". For many of us, we have become our own gods, bowing only to our own wishes, feelings, preferences, and desires.

Now, if you want more time for this reflection, feel free to pause the video. But once you feel like you've written what you needed to, fold that piece of paper in half.

In a moment, we're going to sing a song that pledges our highest allegiance and devotion to God. As we sing that song, I invite you to practically demonstrate your desire to lay down all the other so-called gods that you wrote down, but ripping the paper you wrote on into several pieces. If possible, destroy the paper to the degree that you wouldn't be able to tape it back together. This is, of course, a symbolic gesture, but it represents exactly what God is inviting us to do. To tear down these other gods, and destroy our allegiance to them, so that we can give our full worship and devotion to God alone.

Now, as you rip up your piece of paper, it's going to make a bit of a mess, and that's actually part of the point. Because the real work of tearing down the false gods in our lives is messy, even painful work. It's uncomfortable and disruptive. But I invite you to embrace the mess and disruption, recognizing that this is how God purifies and refines us, liberating us from these false and worthless gods, so that we can be fully absorbed in the One True God who breathed us into existence, and loves us more than we could ever know.

[SONG: No Other Gods]

Prayer: *God, there is no one like You, no one above or beside You, no one else deserving of our highest love, worship and devotion. We've shredded these rivals to Your exclusive authority in our lives and, though we know they have no real power, we know they will rise again to compete for our focus and attention. Help us to shred them daily, as many times as it takes, until we are fully Yours and Yours alone. Amen.*