

## TACTILE REFLECTION | *Knots*

In order to do this reflection, you will need a 12"-18" piece of simple rope or thick string (a shoestring would work well) in your hands.

We're going to call this rope your soul, for a moment.

There's a tiny little book in the Old Testament part of the Bible – *that's the story of the people of God before Jesus* – called "Lamentations". Lamentations, as you might guess by the title, is a book of complaints because of the struggles the people were going through at the time.

**Lamentations 1:20** says:

***"O God, look at the trouble I'm in!  
My stomach in knots, my heart wrecked by a life of rebellion.  
Massacres in the streets, starvation in the houses."  
(Lamentations 1:20)***

I wonder how many of us can relate to that feeling. As you look around at the world in which we live, the pain and suffering around the globe, not to mention the internal battles we all face every day, life can quickly become overwhelming to the point we feel like our stomach is in knots.

We're going to spend a few minutes here, reflecting on where those "knots" are in our lives; the struggles, the anxieties, the disappointments and fears, the things that tie us up and leaving our souls feeling tangled and stuck.

As we walk through this reflection, I'm going to invite you to take the rope in your hands and – literally – to tie a knot for every aspect of your life that comes to mind that feels like a "knot in your stomach, or your soul."

Start by thinking about your **RELATIONSHIPS**. Where do you feel tension and strain these days? It might be at home, with a family member or a close friend. Perhaps it's someone at school or at work. It might be someone you're fighting with, or even someone you don't speak to anymore. As you think of these people (there might be more than one!) tie a knot for every relationship that feels tangled in a knot.

**[Spend as long as you need in quiet reflection here, before moving on to the next section]**

Now, let's think about **FINANCES** for a minute. Money can be a huge stress for many of us, one that we carry around with us just under the surface all the time. Where are you feeling the pressure? Have your spending habits gotten out of control? Is it just straight-up financial fear? How is money creating low- or even high-grade stress that's eating away at you? As you zero in on your particular pressure point, tie a knot in the rope.

[Spend as long as you need in quiet reflection here, before moving on to the next section]

Now, consider your **SPIRITUAL LIFE**. Are you plagued by unanswered questions or unspoken doubts? Are you feeling lost or unfulfilled, spiritually? Do you struggle to feel loved by God, unable to receive His full forgiveness for your sins, or maybe unwilling to offer that same forgiveness to someone else? Do you find it hard to trust that God has a plan for your life, or that He knows what is best for you? Or maybe you've suffered debilitating spiritual trauma and it's become difficult to even participate in church life and spiritual community. If any of these strike a chord with you, tie whatever knots you need to, as a way of representing your feelings to God.

[Spend as long as you need in quiet reflection here, before moving on to the next section]

Finally, we want to take one more moment to consider **ANY OTHER AREAS** of your life that are creating stress or anxiety in you: *worries about the future, the feeling that you don't fit in, health concerns, self-doubt, grief, feelings of failure, lack of purpose, shame-filled secrets, habits and addictions you can't seem to break free from...* or **WHATEVER ELSE** goes in that blank for you... for some of us, the list may seem to go on and on and you might even feel like you're coming to the end of your rope. Take one more moment and tie as many knots as you need to, to feel like you're being honest with yourself and with God right now.

[Spend as long as you need in quiet reflection here, before moving on to the next section]

There's a verse in the Message translation of the Bible that comes at the end of a story of Jesus teaching his earliest followers. They were lost and confused, unable to make sense of what they were experiencing, and it says that, ***"When [Jesus] was alone with his disciples, he went over everything, sorting out the tangles, untying the knots."*** (Mark 4:34)

The truth is, we all have knots in our lives. None of us have it all sorted out. But Jesus desperately wants to spend time with us, going over everything and untying and untangling the things that have us in knots.

I would invite you to complete this experience by following the YouTube link below to a worship song, called "Give Me Faith." This song is a prayer of trusting and learning to let Jesus sort out the tangles in our lives, to soften us and take apart the messes we've created.

As you sing (or simply let the song play), you can actually invite Jesus to take hold of your life, represented by your rope, and – with him – begin untying the knots. Obviously, this is symbolic and many of the knots we've tied are so complex and tight, and in some cases we've lived with them so long that we've grown used to them. They're pretty sticky. But right now, as a tactile expression of the prayer that invites God to come and untangle us – *to untie the knots, in our relationships, our finances, our faith, and everywhere else* – I invite you during this song to slowly go over each of the knots you've tied and now undo in the rope... while trusting Jesus to do the same work in your actual soul.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dNwt7LQiYck>