

My idol experience

by Matt Metzger –

All eyes were on me. Cameras, lights, microphones all focused on capturing my reaction and broadcasting it to the world. I had sung my best. Now I was completely at the mercy of the infamous trio: Randy, Paula, and Simon. After an unnecessarily dramatic deliberation (obviously designed to make me sweat profusely), two of the three thumbs pointed upwards, and I received my yellow paper with those enticing words: “You’re going to Hollywood!” And so began my quest to become the next *American Idol*.

Soon, I found myself miraculously progressing through the rounds of auditions and into the first group of eight contestants from *American Idol* Season 3’s Top 32. Nervous, I stumbled my way through Marc Cohn’s hit, “Walking in Memphis,” which earned me national television exposure, third place in my group . . . and a one-way ticket home, because only the top two in the group advanced that day.

Weeks later, however, I was given another chance when I was invited back for the wild card round. I sang “When I See You Smile,” the Bad English song. But, despite the second chance and my best effort, that night was my last on *American Idol*.

Late that night, I lay down on my hotel bed in the darkened room, stared at the ceiling, and wiped away tears of disappointment. I was terrified. My wedding was six months away, and I had no job, no money, and no plan. I had staked everything on that dream. I had built my plans and expectations on it. It had become my focus, what I sought after. I may have had good intentions, but the life that *American Idol* offered had itself become an idol to me.

It is so easy to stop focusing on God and his plans...and turn to an idol. But when I finally recognized my idolatry, and repented of it, God met me there, purified my heart again, and gave me a single-minded devotion once more. And in the months that followed, he brought my bride and me to New York, where I’ve been working as an actor, living the adventure he has planned for my life, instead of some cheap imitation I dreamed up on my own. Sometimes I wonder how I could have ever even considered settling for anything less.



I don't suppose I've waged my last battle against idolatry. I imagine I'll have to be vigilant if I'm going to put my trust in God and not the things of this world and the prolific, pervasive idols of the culture in which I live and work. But I hope I'll always remember this: the moment I was ready to expel my idol from the throne of my life, God was ready to take his rightful place as King of my heart. I know he will do the same for you.

*Jesus calls us from the worship
Of the vain world's golden store.
From each idol that would keep us,
Saying, "Christian, love Me more."*

*In our joys and in our sorrows,
Days of toll and hours of ease,
Still He calls, in cares and pleasures,
"Christian, love Me more than these."**

Matt Metzger is an actor who portrays "Duke Buchanan" on ABC's One Life to Live. He and his wife, Natalie, live in New York City.

*Cecil F. Alexander, "Jesus Calls Us O'er the Tumult," The Lutheran Hymnal (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1941).