

# The All Ins

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Recently there have been a number of songs written and popularized that have used the phrase or idea of “*all in*”:

- NF and Toby Mac’s “Till the Day I Die” proclaims:

[Chorus] I can’t stop. I can’t quit. It’s in my heart. It’s on my lips.  
I can’t stop. No, I can’t quit. It’s in my heart. Yeah, I’m *all in*.

[Rap Bridge] God is not a crutch, you can use Him when you wanna.  
You only look to heaven when you goin’ through some drama.  
And when they goin’ through some problems, that’s the only time you call Him.  
I guess I don’t understand that life – wonder why?  
Cause I’m *all in* - to the day I die!

- Toby Mac’s “Eye On It” does not use the phrase *all in* but instead refers to “the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Phlp. 3:14 ) as he sings:

[Verse 1] I set my eyes to the west, walkin’ away from it all.  
Reachin’ for what lies ahead, I got my eye on it.  
I see my sweat hit the ground. I put my foot in the block.  
This is the race of my life and I can’t wait for this shot!

[Bridge 1] ‘Cause I can feel the wind at my back,  
Chest is pumpin’ like a heart attack,  
Feet are moving and my mind is locked, pressin’ on with everything I got!

[Verse 2] I got a new passenger to help me navigate the way.  
So when my heart hits the floor I can recalibrate.  
I feel the deeper callin’ me, all else is fadin’ in the past.  
So let me run in the race that I know is built to last.

[Bridge 2] ‘Cause I can feel the wind at my back,  
Chest is pumpin’ like a heart attack,  
Feet are moving and my mind is locked, pressing on I gotta take my shot!

I got my eye on the prize, I got my eye on it.  
I got my eye on the prize and I will not quit.

- Lecrae’s “Give In” says:

[Verse 2] They laugh at me and they say I’m going too far.  
But it’s satisfying my soul to give You my all.  
They don’t understand what I got is so real.

They can talk about me, they can kick me out, but can't take away what You give.  
People telling me that I'm probably too far gone.  
But they don't understand where I been  
And ain't walked the roads that I walked on.  
Tell me who I'm gonna call on, what solid ground can I fall on.  
You everything that I never dreamed and You given me and it's all on you!  
You know You got me deep off in this thing – I'm *all in*!  
I swear ain't no love like this love that I been given.  
I can't resist. It's just too much – Your love is endless.  
And I don't care what they say, no more, no way, I give in, yeah!

[Hook] I'm giving it all away. No more hiding.  
No more stalling. I hear You calling me.  
And I'm coming, see me running! I give in - You win!

- Jeremy Camp's "Take My Life" displays a similar surrender as he sings:

[Chorus] Take my life. Take my mind.  
Take my soul. Take my will.  
I am Yours now, and I give it all to You.

There are surely more artists and songs out there that present this same attitude but these four clearly represent what we need to examine here.

These songs bring forward at least two powerful questions to the probing mind:

- Why does the Lord's touch seem to go deeper in some but not in others? And,
- Where are all the people who have the attitude these songs promote?

Let me present a personal perspective on the second question before we look at the first one. At the time of this writing, I am working in a city (I normally live in the country) and I have been visiting various places seeking how I might serve the body of Christ in this more populated location. It's not a large city – population is about 50,000. It has just over 100 "churches" of some sort of "Christian" flavor or bent with about 10,000 people on the "church" rosters. House "churches" are notoriously hard to find (unless you want a cell group of a larger "church") but I could find none at all in this city. Worse than that, out of all this religiosity, I could find only one man routinely doing street ministry. And in participating in that street ministry, I found that nearly everyone we spoke with, however briefly, claimed to know Jesus as their personal Savior! I suspect their definition of Savior and His is vastly different! When I asked this "evangelist" if he knew of anyone in his city (and because of his past, his routine visibility on the streets, and because he visits as many of the "churches" as he can, he knows a good portion of the people in this city) whom he could classify as "*all in*" for Jesus, he could not come up with any names. Certainly, he could think of some who

were zealous to build up their “church” membership (and thus their salary) or for their peculiar doctrines or practices, but “*all in*” for Jesus was a zero in this city even though many of the people here who claim to be “Christian” are likely to listen to – and sing along with! – the songs with which we started this article.

### **Where are the ALL INS?**

More importantly, how can there be a 20% portion of the population in this city who claim to be “Christian” and no one comes up as “*all in*”? If we have spiritual eyes and ears, we can know that the answer to this is closely related to the first question about how and why the Lord’s touch goes deeper in some than in others.

The first factor seems to be what some might call a “dramatic” conversion – or at least a deep one. Each of the artists mentioned above have each experienced an intense personal conversion to Christ. But surely, Christ does not only choose musicians (or musicians to be) to receive this passion. Or must we simply reduce this to some psychological, left-brain scientific theory that completely dismisses the intervening work of Christ? Is it just a coincidence that these musically oriented people are those who are more passionate about Christ or is this simply an indicator of music being the only outlet and environment in the “church” where people are *expected* and *permitted* to be enthusiastic and passionate?

It has been rightly observed that many of those who are currently abandoning the institutional “church” are simply done with the “plop, pray and pay” mentality of Sunday morning “services” and that they are frustrated at being stymied at their every attempt to become involved in “ministry” because it puts them in competition with or in “rebellion” against the “pastor” and/or the paid professional staff. And now musicians are rising up trying to call forth that passionate living for Christ that is the birthright of every believer – and finding that their work is not as fruitful as they might hope or expect.

There are certainly other factors at work in this big picture, but the biggest ongoing factor must surely be that the musician (and any other type of person who engages in true service to the people of Christ) somehow is not sufficiently anesthetized or immunized or immobilized at a “church” to render him fully spiritually unconscious. Though they may indeed be a “church” member and even sit routinely under “sermons” and teachings, these are sufficiently involved in the work of bringing lost and hurting and dying souls to the loving embrace of Christ (just as they themselves received from Him) so that they do not succumb to the completely spirit-numbing effect of being only a pew-potato.

It is not enough to preach against apathy from the pulpit – any true words spoken from the pulpit are drowned out by the paid professional’s “superior” position over the people. Passivity and apathy are ingrained into the pulpit and pew symbiotic sickness but few dare to call it what it is – a scheme of the devil designed to prevent the people from ever reaching spiritual maturity. So, week after week, month after month, year after year, the same methods are used and no one seems to understand why the numbers dwindle or, where there are large numbers, why so few are able to be depended upon for laboring in the harvest fields. Expecting different results while repeating the same stimuli is one definition of insanity!

The pathetically few musicians and gospel workers who invest their lives in trying to stir up this passion and zeal for Christ stands in stark contrast to the vast numbers of people who claim to be “Christian” – and the claim of these vast numbers is laid low in the dust when we see the growing darkness and evil of this world. The “God” of this vast majority of “Christians” simply must have no ability to overcome darkness – but this only proves that most “Christians” serve some “God” other than the real Christ and God.

The *all in* attitude is the right one. Jesus said that the most important commandment was to “love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.” (Mk. 12:30) It’s exceedingly difficult to find a better description of the all-in mindset! And Jesus gives it top billing in the priorities of God. But yet it comes up a big, fat zero in most “churches” and few dare to ask why this is so.

The time for silence about the culpability of the “church” and its rogue clergy and diverted and wasted resources is past. As the time for the wheat and the tares to be separated comes upon us, we must recognize that the “church” is only a demonic deception of worldly trappings designed to look “spiritual” to the unwary and undiscerning. The true wheat, the sons of the kingdom of God, can look upon the tares, the clergy, just as Jesus instructed His disciples about the Pharisees: “Let them alone. They are blind leaders of the blind.” (Mt. 15:14)

Consider the parable of the talents in which Jesus spoke of three kinds of people who were each given a sum of money (see Mt. 25:14 and following) In Bible times a “talent” was a weight equivalent to perhaps about 90 pounds. The parable speaks of 8 “talents” (over 700 pounds) that represented a significant portion, perhaps most or nearly all, of the master’s possessions which he was entrusting to his servants. If this were talents of gold, this was a substantial investment indeed. These eight talents were given to three men, two of whom doubled what had been given to them. The third man, however, dug a hole and buried and hid his master’s gold. This third man was cast out into outer darkness. (Mt. 25:30)

The talent in this parable *does not* represent our stewardship of *money*. It represents the divine life God has planted within our souls. (Jn. 14:23, Jas. 1:21, etc.) It is His life that is on display in our earthen vessels. (2 Cor. 4:7, Gal. 2:20) It is on this investment that God intends we should bring forth an increase and return.

The first two servants were *all in* and brought forth a complete return on their master’s investment. Hear it well – the third servant hid what Christ had planted within his soul and buried it under the dirt of his flesh life. It does not require much imagination to see that this person, after having received Christ, becomes a faithful “church” member who routinely plops his backside into a pew or chair and enjoys having his ears tickled and scratched oh so well week after week after week. He could easily be someone who even participates in some “ministry” but never surrenders his carnal religiosity to the Lord so as to be fully conformed to the likeness of Christ. This one is to be cast out into outer darkness.

Jesus said of the Laodiceans, “I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of My mouth.” (Rev. 3:15-16) Jesus would prefer that we love or hate Him than treat Him with the putrid indifference of using His name while we have no concern for His nature and requirements. Those who have vomited poison or

drugs out of their system have a vivid memory picture of what will happen when Christ the Head forcefully removes the offensive elements from His body.

There is no neutral ground in the war between Satan and God. We are one side or we are on the other. Those who claim now to be on God's side of the war but are not *all in* may yet find on the last day that they are *all out!*

Let he who has ears hear.

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