

ALL IN Series – Part One
Finding Your Purpose and Passion
Lester Zimmerman

Opens with ALL IN Video.....

As Pastors, we have been looking forward to this ALL IN Series. It's going to be both challenging and fun. This is a great follow up to the Acts 29 series where we looked at the lives of the believers in the early church and how they lived their lives with this sense of total abandonment to God.

We believe by the end of this series, as we go ALL IN in a fresh new way, we will be transformed one again – from glory to glory he is changing us to be more like Jesus.

- As we together, explore what a fully surrendered life looks like I believe we will experience God's pleasure on our lives in a new way.
- In this series, the purposes of God will become more clear and active in your life.
- You will become bolder and more daring in pursuing God's call on your life.
- You will find your life increasingly centering more around Jesus than yourself.
- We will discover what some people call radical is really normal New Testament Christianity.
- You will become more extravagant like your Heavenly Father.
- And - You will find the Christian life is anything but boring when you are ALL IN with God.

Or like the video said: We want to live by faith - not fear, play offense -not defense, live big – not small, use all we got, bringing all I am – day in and day out, defying timidity and fear, going ALL IN - holding nothing back.

The hard reality is that it is possible for us to go to church every week and never go ALL IN with Jesus. You see people can follow the rules without really following Christ. That's called religion.

A good question is - who is following who? Are we really following Jesus or asking him to follow us and bless our decisions and answer our prayers according to our time table and wishes?

A good test is - do we get mad and upset with God when he doesn't come through for us? Do we take the time to ask God's guidance before making decisions?

Each week we are going to ask ourselves a key question to challenge our hearts. **Today's question is: Am I living to please God, or myself?**

Sadly, the gospel and Christianity today has become very me centered.

Mark Batterson has some great thoughts in his ALL IN book and he states that he is afraid that we have cheapened the gospel by allowing people to buy in without selling out. We have made it too convenient and comfortable.

He says we have given people just enough Jesus to be bored but not enough to feel the surge of holy adrenaline that courses through your veins when you decide to follow Him no matter what, no matter where, no matter when.

I think we have sold people an American version of the gospel that is not really the gospel.

- The real gospel says come to Jesus and die to yourself.
- Come to Jesus and he gives you a cross to carry
- Come to Jesus and suffer for him
- Come to Jesus and let him take complete control of every area of your life.
- Come to Jesus and let him totally transform your life
- Come to Jesus and go ALL IN. Total Surrender.

You see the Christian life is more of a way of life than a belief system.

In our introduction to this series we stated - *When did we start believing that following Jesus is easy? Or that it's safe? Or that we could just add him to our lives like an addition to a house. Jesus calls his followers to abandon all to him, go all-in, give it all up.*

- How does Jesus define the normal Christian life?
- And what if radical was actually pretty normal?

When you go ALL IN things get exciting. It is never boring living this way because God loves to partner with people who are ALL IN and do his thing through them.

To kick things off this morning I want to start with a basic truth and that is - every single one of us has been created with a God designed purpose to walk in.

Going ALL IN is connected to knowing and embracing your purpose. I know some people struggle to understand their purpose. Let me share a few things to help us.

1. Our overarching purpose is to worship God and bring pleasure to Him with our lives.

Years ago, we did a message series using the book called *"When the game is over it all goes back in the box"*. Like a game of Monopoly when it is over it all goes back in the box. When our life is over it all goes back in the box except for those things we did for Christ – those rewards go forward with us.

Our purpose here on earth is not seeing how much we can accumulate or how much happiness we gain for ourselves. We were created for something much greater.

Read 2 Thessalonians 1:11 NIV

¹¹With this in mind, we constantly pray for you, that our God may count you worthy of his calling, and that by his power he may fulfill every good purpose of yours and every act prompted by your faith. ¹²We pray this so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Revelation 4:11 KJV Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

Without God, life does not make sense! Even **Atheist Bertrand Russell** said: *“Unless you assume God, the question of life’s purpose is meaningless.”*

Colossians 1:16 The Message: For everything, absolutely everything, above and below and invisible, ...everything got started in him and finds its purpose in him.

Life is about living for God, not myself. The world does not revolve around us but around God and his purposes. You were created for his purpose, not yours.

2. We all have specific God-given gifts to match His purposes for us.

Romans 12; I Corinthians 12

In trying to discover your purpose, take a look at the gifts God has given you. And take into consideration the things that bring you joy and fulfillment.

Another way of saying it is to say, *“What are the things I am passionate about, the things I really enjoy doing?”* What desires has God planted in my heart?

I believe when our heart is fully surrendered to God we can follow the desires that reside in our heart.

God has wired us to enjoy doing what he has called us to do. God’s plan for your life will match your passions and interests. However, there are seasons he has us doing a variety of things that might not always line up with our primary desires.

Your purpose may not always lead you into a full-time job in that area or be your full-time ministry. The Apostle Paul made tents on the side to support his ministry. But he found a way to support and do what he loved doing and was called to do.

3. We need to discover the core passion God plants in us and go ALL IN.

There is a core passion God plants in us that connects to the things that break His heart. We pick up his burden. We find our purpose in getting involved in something that we can no longer stand and no longer ignore and no longer just complain about.

This “God birthed passion” moves you to action. You just need to do something.

We discover what going ALL IN means when we find this fiery, burning, unquenchable, convicting, one thing, passion in our lives - We are ready to do whatever we have to, whatever we can, to change what is wrong in our broken world.

- We go ALL IN and sell out to that passion.

There was a day that a man named Bob found his Core Passion, he found his one thing that gripped his heart that would change his life forever. It was 1950 when he was overcome with frustration and disbelief as he watched little kids in Asia who had been orphaned by the Korean war dropping dead while standing in a food line because there wasn't enough food for all of them. He had this massive firestorm go off in his heart. Something gripped him in his core and knew he needed to do something. After coming back to the states, he gathered businessmen together and they birthed what is now known as World Vision. Dr Bob Pierce said: *"We are going to get food to these food lines. Even if it kills me, were gonna do it."*

- Along with the food, child sponsorships started. In one year alone over 100 million people in 96 countries received physical, social, and spiritual support.

What is it that you simply can't stand. What wrecks you? - Injustice, poverty, poor education, political corruption, world hunger, prejudices, homelessness, addictions, orphans, struggling single moms.

God is looking for people that get wrecked about what He gets wrecked about. Like Moses and Nehemiah. Who couldn't stand the status quo any longer.

Many times, this core passion comes out of our past experiences. There's a reason why you grew up the way you did. Why you've experienced what you have. Why you traveled where you've been. And he is looking for someone just like you to start setting some things right in this world.

This doesn't mean that every time you see something that wrecks you it is God giving you a calling or assignment. Many things should concern us and move us to action.

But keep looking for that one cause, one problem, one thing, that grabs you by the throat and won't let you go.

Don't give up if you can't identify that one thing right away. Keep broadening your horizons, visit places and keep exposing yourself to needs. Get out of your comfort zone. There will come a moment when you find it. And when you find it, increase your exposure to it. Don't get distracted. Go ALL IN.

4. Going ALL IN begins with a decision to surrender all.

Sometimes fear holds us back from going ALL IN with God. We want everything God has to offer without giving anything up. We want to buy in without selling out.

We're afraid that if we don't hold out on God just a bit, we'll miss out on something life has to offer us. It's a lie. It's the same lie the serpent told Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. God is not holding out on you.

Here is what he promised in **Psalms 84:11 NLT**

For the LORD God is our sun and our shield. He gives us grace and glory. The LORD will withhold no good thing from those who do what is right.

If you don't hold out on God I promise he will not hold out on you. It's all of you for all of him.

Conclusion:

When you look back on your life, the greatest moments will be the moments you went ALL IN.

Sometimes it comes down to a decision point. A time and place. And sometimes it is a series of surrenders as God does a deeper work in us.

I remember two of my life points of going ALL IN. One was as a teenager and the other was when I was deciding to respond to the call to be a pastor. Both times I really struggled in counting the cost. I knew it meant surrendering certain goals I had. I had to be willing to lay down my dreams and embrace his dream for my life.

- And his dream and purpose is always better than our own.
- There have been many times of fresh surrender since then in my life.

Pastor Gary shared a story of what one pastor did in helping his people make a commitment to go ALL IN with God. The Pastor created a contract card for people to fill out. On the top was a place to sign their name but the rest of the card was empty. The blank card simply meant that I am committing everything to Jesus. Jesus can write on the card anything he wants from me - any time, and anyplace. I surrender all to him. I am going ALL IN.

Begin Keyboard Music Only I surrender all?

I don't have a card to fill out but *the question for today is: Am I living to please God, or myself? Am I willing to embrace God's will for my life? Am I willing to pursue his core passion for my life? Am I ready to make a commitment today to surrender all. To go ALL IN?*

Moment of silence – with keyboard music

Encourage people to get into a Life Group

Closing Prayer- prayer Ministry

ALL IN



Holding Nothing Back

Petra Fall
Church-Wide
Study

Discussion Questions:
September 24th 2017

ALL-IN: Finding Your Purpose And Passion
Message by Pastor Lester Zimmerman

ICE BREAKERS:

- One of the things I'm looking forward to most about this fall season is...
- One of the ways I've seen God's faithfulness lately is...

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

Each week of the *ALL-IN* series we are answering a different question that will help us assess our commitment to God. This week we are answering the question, ***"Am I living to please God, or myself?"***

1. On Sunday Pastor Lester said, "When you look back on your life, the greatest moments will be the moments you went all-in."
 - Can you think of an example of this in your life—a season of supreme sacrifice, or commitment that required you to give all that you had to a cause? How did that season change your life?
2. Going all-in begins with a decision to surrender all. Often we want everything God has to offer without giving anything up. We want to buy in without selling out.
 - From the Bible what are examples of tangible things God asked people to surrender for His will.
 - From your personal experience what are some tangible things God has asked you to sacrifice for Him?
 - Which of these are most difficult for you?
3. **Read Ephesians 1:3-12.**
 - First make a list of every time the author uses the words: "purpose" or "will" or "intention" or "pleasure" or "plan"; or uses a term of generosity, like "riches" or "lavished."
 - Based on the meaning of this passage, what brings God pleasure? And how does His generosity accomplish his pleasure?

- Just for fun, what are some of the simple pleasures that bring creature comforts to our lives? Is there anything wrong with these?
- What are some of the hidden motivations people have that bring fulfillment and satisfaction to our lives?
- Are there practical ways we can arrange our lives to satisfy God's purposes instead of our own?

4. There will always be obstacles to going all-in. It will always take risk and sacrifice. Below are a few:

Obstacles to going all-in

- A. Fear – we are afraid we might suffer, or have to change, or give something up
- B. Distraction – we are focused on moving our lives forward, not God's will
- C. Unconcern – I just don't really think about the lives of others that much
- D. Religion – we follow the rules and go to church but never go all-in with Jesus
- E. Disobedient – we want to do it our way, and don't want God meddling with our choices

- Which of these do you think you struggle with the most? Why?

5. Ephesians 2:10 says, *"For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."* On Sunday Pastor Lester said, "There is a core passion God plants in us that connects to the things that break His heart. We pick up his burden. We find our purpose in getting involved in something that we can no longer stand and no longer ignore and no longer just complain about."

- Has God given you a core passion? Something that wrecks you; something in the world that you simply can't stand? I.e. Injustice, poverty, poor education, political corruption, world hunger, prejudices, homelessness, addictions, orphans, struggling single moms.
- What is one thing you can begin to do with your passion (if you haven't already) to get involved and make a difference?

CLOSING PRAYER:

Take 5-8 minutes at the end of your group time to commit to the Lord what was shared during discussion. This is a time to dedicate your hearts to the Lord, give him some of your fears, or dedicate some of your action steps to Him.