

4 'American Idol' Alumni Who Praise Jesus Through Their Music

When *American Idol* first premiered in 2002, many aspiring artists saw this as their golden ticket into the music industry. After auditioning for a panel of celebrity judges, contestants earn their way through the ranks of many hopefuls by perfecting their music craft and giving it their best shot. However, there can only be one winner on this reality show, and as such, many contestants are sent home. Despite this, some noteworthy artists you might know and love today took what they learned from the show and paid it forward by honoring God with their unique vocal talents.

1. Lauren Daigle

Daigle tried out for *American Idol* for the first time at age 17. She made it pretty far on "Hollywood Week" before being sent home. Daigle tried out an additional two times for the show, making it to the Las Vegas rounds, but explains the Holy Spirit's prodding during this time. "During this time, I asked the Lord to come meet me in the middle of the performances. It didn't matter that I was potentially singing in front of millions of viewers because it felt empty." She continued, "without His presence, there was no joy in the process. This is when the Lord taught me about the importance of worship and how fulfilling it is to lift up His name. I left *American Idol* with a great experience under my belt."

Daigle came back to her hometown in Louisiana to lead worship, and the rest is history. Currently Daigle's most recent album, *Look Up Child*, has also given her the opportunity to share her heart for the Lord on national TV by performing on the daytime show *Ellen*. The talk-show host was a judge on one of Daigle's

Idol stints and welcomed her with open arms on stage. Daigle also performed songs from the new album on *The Tonight Show* with Jimmy Fallon. *Look Up Child's* acclaim has also spread its way into the secular community.

2. Mandisa

Mandisa was a frontrunner on season five of *American Idol*, ending in the ninth spot. While on *Idol*, Mandisa experienced some negativity when Simon Cowell made some snide remarks about the gospel singer's weight. She didn't give in to anger but instead forgave him. Mandisa noted her words in the forgiving exchange with Cowell, "I want you to know that I have forgiven you. You don't need someone to apologize in order to forgive somebody. I figured that if Jesus could die so that all of my sins could be forgiven, I could certainly extend that same grace to you." Simon Cowell was "humbled" by her kind response. Since her *Idol* days, Mandisa has released a book, *Idoleyes*, and multiple albums that feature songs with other popular Christian artists like TobyMac and Britt Nicole.

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