

Despite Death of Wife, Jeremy Camp Still Believes

Sprawled out on the hospital room floor, mere months after his wedding, 23-year-old Jeremy Camp wept in desperation to the Lord. His bride lay in the next room, dying from ovarian cancer. "Lord, what is happening?" he cried out.

How would you respond? In the passing of a loved one, would you be able to turn your earthly sorrow into heavenly hope? Could you truly lean on the Lord, trust in the power of His word and see that His plans toward you are for your good?

Camp, a talented singer/songwriter, wrestled with these questions and others from the depths of anguish after his wife, Melissa, died on Feb. 5, 2001.

"Why didn't you heal my wife?" he wailed in the weeks afterward. "I had faith. I believed. Why?"

The answer he heard from the Lord was not the one he wanted: "You are not supposed to know why. That is not my purpose for you. I want you to have a testimony of walking by faith."

In the years since her tragic passing, Camp has gone on to sell millions of records, charted 19 No. 1 hits and won several major Dove Awards. But, more importantly to him, he has encountered a solace that has carried him far beyond easy answers.

Camp has walked through fire and emerged on the other side—not only refined and restored, but also intently focused on proclaiming the reason for his hope in song and now in written word. One of his best-known songs, "I Still Believe," the first he wrote after Melissa's death, serves as part of the inspiration for a new book he's written with the same title.

The timing, he feels, is God-ordained. Camp wasn't ready to pen his story until now. "I realized there's so much that God still had to teach me in order for me to write this book," he said in a recent interview. "There's still so much He has to teach me just in life anyway, and I'm going to continue to learn until I go be with the Lord."

While a portion of the book deals with Melissa's death, it spans the entirety of Camp's testimony. "And that's why I wanted to write the book, sharing about the loss of my wife to cancer, and what God has done through that. But there's a big portion too at the end that was definitely me sharing my heart now, what God has done now, and my heart for this generation."

In both his music and the book, Camp has several goals. "I wanted to be able to share comfort and to show God's faithfulness, but also to be able to provide exhortation and encouragement to people in their own lives. And to those who maybe haven't been through that tragedy, to still encourage them as well."

Camp realizes trust is a word some people throw around casually. Walking in trust during life's bleakest moments takes courage. "You can say, 'Alright, Lord, I don't get it, but I'm going to trust you,' and go to the only One that offers life and hope and peace and joy."

His heart is that no matter what situation a reader may be going through that they'll run towards the Author and Finisher of our faith—run to our Refuge, our Strong Tower, our Fortress.

While Melissa's death served as the darkest moment, he has experienced other challenges throughout his life. There have been tough moments in the music business. His brother, Josh, has Down Syndrome. His family struggled with poverty while Camp was growing up. And during his adolescent years, Camp spent a few years rebelling against God.

“But I’ve see God’s faithfulness in all of that,” said Camp, “and I see His hand in my life. And He who began a good work will be faithful to complete it in Christ Jesus. For me He began a good work and He’ll be faithful to complete it. It’s what He’s doing, and He’ll be faithful to complete the rest of this journey as well.”

Camp realizes the journey requires courage and tenacity: “We’re soldiers enlisted in this battle, and I awaken every day saying, ‘Alright I’m going to put on my armor, and I’m going to not get entangled with the affairs of this world.’ And that’s what I want to do every single day.”

Since the painful days of 2001, Camp has remarried and he and his new wife, Adrienne, have two daughters. Even in this joy, they lost a baby to miscarriage in 2009. Still ... he believes.

Camp hopes you will too. In sharing the story of his life, he wants readers to be encouraged by it and draw closer to the Lord.

“I hope this book draws people to want to really get on their face before Jesus and to deepen their relationship with Him—that deeper intimacy with Him,” said Camp. “We’re called to love the Lord with our heart, mind and soul, and I hope this spurs people along to do that, because that’s why we’re here on the earth anyway.”

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