

Refined by Pain

Tragedy made Heather Williams' faith take a dramatic turn—for the better ❏

When people hear that Heather Williams leads worship with her husband, Tim, it could be easy to assume that she has lived an idyllic life. But that couldn't be further from the truth.

Williams grew up going to church with her mother and stepfather, but the family was broken. She experienced complete abuse and oppression and wanted nothing to do with God.

When she was 11, Williams went to live with her grandfather, a loving man but not the strictest of disciplinarians, she says. She did whatever she wanted and eventually her life spiraled out of control.

As an 18-year-old, Williams reconnected with her birth father and started going to church with him. One day, she heard for the first time that God accepted her just as she was. He loved her.

"I gave my life to Christ at that point. I accepted His forgiveness and I accepted the grace that He gave to me," she explains. "But I wasn't actively giving it away to anybody else."

Everything changed on Dec. 30, 2002, the day the Williamses' 6-month-old son, Caedmen, died unexpectedly.

"I know that's when my relationship with Christ really began because up to that point it was just this shell of Christianity, playing the part if you will, loving God, knowing who He is, accepting that His Son had died for me—but

that was about it.

“My life was all actions and words that were trying to prove something, not trying to live out what God wanted me to do, [which was to] reach people for Him, to forgive people who had wronged me and to be [an example of] Christ.”

God showed up in that tragic moment, and from that day forward, Williams hasn't looked back. Now she's also expressing her faith through her own music.

“My heart's desire is to have God take music that He inspired in me and touch other people's lives,” she says.

But for Williams, this musical journey isn't about being just another Christian artist: “I'm not seeking fame. I'm not seeking glitz and glamour. I'm seeking God.

“If you strip everything away my core message and what I want to stand for and have people say would be: ‘Look what God did in her life, and not only can He do it in her life, He can do it in mine because God is just that big and He loves me that much.’”