

Singer Jamie Grace Holding On to God's Promise

At 21, Dove Award-winning singer Jamie Grace still has her girly moments full of playful giggles, bad impersonations of her parents, and occasionally admiring a cute guy.

But ask her about life and she seems to morph into this wise woman with a knack for therapeutic advice.

"I remember when I was growing up, I was always focusing so hard on being better and just thinking, 'God, when am I going to get better?'" she told the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association.

"I just want to remind young girls especially that it's OK to feel hurt. It's OK to feel scared. It's OK to feel different. It's OK to feel left out or to feel like everything's not perfect," she said.

"It's even more OK to go to your Father, your Heavenly Father who loves you and cherishes you and adores you," Jamie Grace added.

The daughter of pastors, Jamie Grace stays grounded even while touring with some of the best-known Christian artists around. In 2011, she was discovered on YouTube and signed by TobyMac, who is featured on her No. 1 single, "Hold Me."

Listening to her poised voice and slight Southern accent, most would never know she has Tourette syndrome. The sometimes-debilitating disorder causes uncontrollable facial tics and other random behavior like sporadic noises and fidgeting.

"[Ages] 9 to 15 were pretty miserable," she said. "There was a time when I really didn't leave the house."

So her mom painted the hallways light blue to represent the

sky and bring a sense of joy from the outside. When she couldn't sleep, Jamie Grace's father would stay up late and groove to jazz with her.

"He would just dance the night away with his little girl. I would be in so much pain, but I would laugh so hard," she said.

Watch Jamie Grace share her testimony with Ransom below.

Now, her happy-go-lucky spirit is nothing short of contagious.

"Everybody's got something in their life that they can't control," she explained. "I choose not to dwell in my Tourette. I choose not to focus on that."

What she does focus on is her music. Jamie Grace has spent the last two months traveling with the Winter Jam tour, Christian music's largest annual concert that has led to thousands of salvations since its start.

So what does she think about her journey from leading youth at her dad's church in Lithonia, Ga., to touring with names like Matthew West?

"It's crazy."

But in a good way.

"It just blows me away that God would allow me to be a part of an industry that has had such a huge impact on my life," the Atlanta native explained.

She recalled one moment her past and present seemed to collide in front of her.

As a teen, Jamie Grace was a big fan of the former group ZOEgirl. When she was 14, she attended a Winter Jam concert where the girl band was performing. There was only one thing standing in the way of fully enjoying the moment.

Her tics.

"As I get up to the table I just remember tears in my eyes, apologizing for being so weird and trying to explain to them what was going on," Jamie Grace recalled.

"And it was just their sweet words of telling me I didn't have to be insecure and that God still loved me," she continued. "I always just wanted to give that same feeling back to someone else."

Two years ago she had that opportunity with a fan in Ohio.

"This moment felt precisely like that moment when I was 14. Here I am signing autographs and this girl, probably the exact same age as me [back then] comes up to me," Jamie Grace shared.

"She just said to me, 'I used to cut myself, but I know now that God is holding me after hearing your song, and I know I don't have to cut myself anymore,'" the singer/songwriter continued.

"And I just got chills.

"I felt the Lord saying to me, 'Because you were faithful, you were able to give that same feeling to this little girl what someone else's ministry gave to you.'"

Remembering Home

Jamie Grace is no doubt a Southern girl, cowboy boots and all. She and her older sister Morgan, who also sings, were home-schooled by their mom.

"People would always pick on the way we were raised, but I'm thankful for that element of Jesus that was put in our home," she said.

The rules of the house included no dating.

“I always tell people I’ve been single since I was born. I’m not ashamed to say that,” she said. “When dating is something that can be done with intention, don’t waste your time just doing it for fun. We’re too precious for that.”

In the meantime, Jamie Grace will continue to sing and give back to the youth at her home church when she can, as well as at Camp Electric, a growing worship music camp for kids. She’s already working on her second album and will perform with former American Idol contestant Mandisa after Winter Jam wraps up.

“It’s scary but it’s exciting and it’s a privilege to know that I’m a part of what God is doing in someone’s life,” Jamie Grace said. “If I can just be a small part of that then I can go to sleep happy.”

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