

A portrait of Jeremy Camp, a Christian musician, looking off to the side. The image is overlaid with a large, stylized 'CCM' logo in teal and red. The background is a soft, out-of-focus landscape with warm, golden light.

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JEREMY CAMP

FULL CIRCLE

AMID A SEASON OF RECOLLECTION
& REDISCOVERY—HOW IS ONE
OF CHRISTIAN MUSIC'S MOST
CELEBRATED ARTISTS STILL
THANKFUL FOR IT ALL?

OCT 15, 2017

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Jeremy Camp

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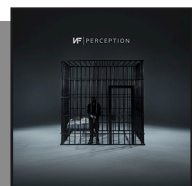
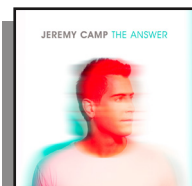
Jamie Grace

How does the award-winning artist hold fast to her full trust in God's goodness & glory?



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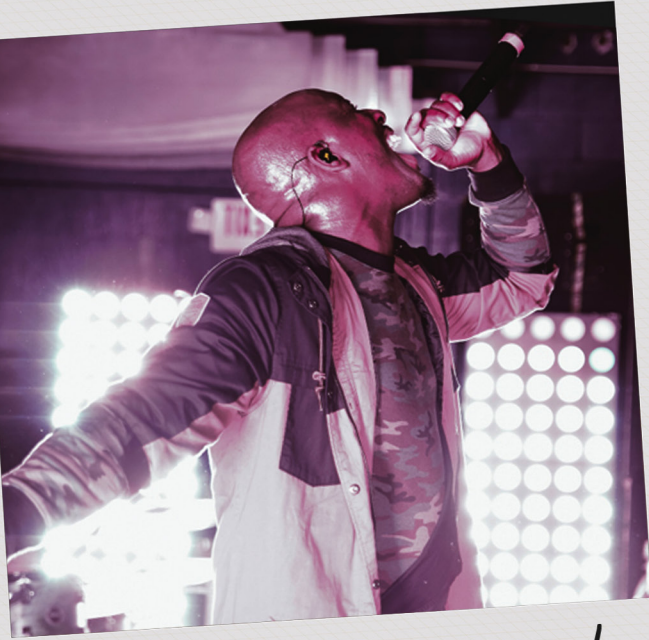
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A portrait of a man with short, dark hair, smiling and looking down. He is wearing a black t-shirt. The background is a light blue gradient with a darker blue shadow of his head and shoulders on the left. A semi-transparent green horizontal band is across the middle of the image.

JEREMY CAMP

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Jeremy Camp — Full Circle

Fifteen projects in fifteen years—how has one of Christian music's most celebrated artists found himself within rediscovery and recollection, yet still thankful for it all?

By Kevin Sparkman

Depending on how you look at it, the title to **Jeremy Camp's** newest album, ***The Answer* (Capitol CMG, Oct. 6, 2017)**, could be a little misleading. Make no mistake, however, Camp doesn't pretend to have a solution to some of life's biggest questions. In fact, before the title track was even conceived, if you were to ask Camp to summarize what this entire project was really all about, he may not have even been able to give a clear answer?

And speaking of "The Answer," the single wasn't so much birthed as it was a gift from God, as the now-seasoned singer-songwriter might say. "I thought I was done with the record, but a friend and I decided to write just for fun. It's six o'clock at night and he says, 'Let's go back to that one we were messing around with earlier. We'll work on it for five minutes, if we don't feel it and the Spirit's not in it, we'll stop,'" recalls Camp.

"As soon as we started, we immediately began to sense the Holy Spirit at work. The song was done in an hour, I sang it, and it's the same vocal track you hear on the recording—I didn't need to change a thing." But this story goes much deeper than just solidifying an album's concept, marketing plan, and lead single in one culminating evening. Now fathering a teenager (yes, folks, Camp's recording career itself is now in its fifteenth year!)

and fielding some real-world questions in his own home—amid the seemingly non-stop, crazy demands as an internationally sought-after touring artist coupled with news headlines that dominate the world we all share—Camp rediscovers that the answer to, well, everything simply rests in Jesus Christ.

So the previous spoiler alert doesn't shut this article down before it starts, we asked Jeremy Camp to answer a few questions of our own with, of course, a little extra commentary.

CCM Magazine: Time flies...you're now a father to a teenager. How has living into that both impacted your spiritual walk and spoken into the music you're currently making?

Jeremy Camp: For sure. As my kids get older, they're starting to ask real questions, which I'm thankful for. Just the other day, my daughter came up to me and said, "Dad, I lost my faith in prayer." She's at that age where she's really beginning to "think." So, I was like, "Okay, what's going on?"

She goes, "I've been praying for 'this,' and I'm praying for 'that,'" (she went down a list). "I feel like the Lord hasn't answered my prayers." I said, "Hon, first of all, God's not a genie where you say 'this' is what I want, and You provide it for me. That's not how it really works." I said, "There's reasons why sometimes He wants us to keep pressing in to Him..." So I explained to her about the woman in the Bible where she was pressing in the crowd and kept pressing and finally touched the garment of Jesus and was healed. There's times we have to keep pressing in because it's about really wanting it and really saying, "Lord, I'm going to seek You and continue to seek You."

Then there's the relational aspect of it that's built through prayer. Then I said to her, "There's times when God says, 'No.'

You have to understand that's not because He was mad or He didn't want to answer your prayer, but it's because He in control and only He knows what's best for you."

I went on to tell her about how I prayed and prayed that my wife **Melissa** would be healed. Then she went up to be up with the Lord. I said, "If she would have been healed, your sister and your brother wouldn't be here right now," At the time I thought, of course, that would have been the best thing—and everyone [in those moments] want that. Just think about the ministry we would have had of going around the world to share how God healed her, you know? But I said, "I'm thankful, and I look back and know God didn't answer my prayer because He saw our family now and saw how He was going to use us."

Honestly, sometimes I still have these kinds of questions. But, as time goes on, I'm able to grasp them a little better—I'm understanding them more and more. I said, "You can come to me with any question. No question is a dumb question. I'm not going to look at you and say, 'Oh, my goodness, how can you ask that?'" It's been amazing to have real conversations with my daughter and my son. My daughter is a little older, so it gets a little deeper.

And, it's definitely shaped a lot of where I am at right now, because I'm watching them and I'm learning how to pour into them. When I'm writing, I start thinking, "What do I want to articulate that would be what God is doing in my heart—even if they wouldn't understand," you know? I was thinking of the song, "The Answer," which really culminated the whole record and of where I'm at with the whole "being in the moment" thing. Look up the names of Jesus in the Bible and you'll find everything: Provider. Comforter. Shelter. A good shepherd. Faithful. Hope. Peace...all these things. When we say, "Well, I need this," well, that's actually what Jesus says He is. We are looking into

everything around us, looking to the world for answers—we're not going to find them there. They're literally all inside of Jesus Christ. That's where I am...in the simplicity of that. I pray it changes people's lives, that we run to Jesus for everything.

CCM: Just like living into and enjoying every moment as your kids develop, the same has been said for you at this stage of your career, and especially for this project...

JC: Sometimes our lives can be dictated by everything around us, for me, it can be planning for the next record or for the next tour, even far in advance. When we're thinking so far ahead it's easy to forget what's happening today. It can happen with anybody. But for this album and this time, it was such a sweet, sweet process because I just wrote...whenever! It wasn't about, "I need to write for a new record." I was just writing the songs and filling them with the people that I love. It was a lot of, "I feel like I want to write today," and would write a song. It's true, there was so much "in the moment," moments like, "What's going on in the world?" and being inspired by that. I don't like just writing songs to write songs. They have to reflect what I feel like God is doing something in my heart.

I also took my time. This will be the longest period between releases I've ever had since I've been doing music. It will be about two years and nine months apart from my I Will Follow, once this one releases. The Lord simply provided the songs in His time, and I felt like this is what I wanted to put out. That's what happened, and that's why it's the sweetest project. I even told the record company, "If I take three and a half years, I'm going to take three and a half years!" It's gotta be the Lord laying something on my heart. So, when I say this is "in the moment," it's definitely "in the moment!"

CCM: Is this a formula that you will adopt going forward, and what does Capitol think about that?

JC: Yes, one-hundred percent. Yeah, everyone has been super-supportive. I'm really encouraged.

CCM: With regard to being inspired by events happening in the world today, you've stated, "We need to be about changing hearts, not situations." How does that apply to handling those situations as a family? As an artist with a platform?

JC: We hear all of the time, "Jesus is the answer," "Jesus is all we need," which is all completely true. What we often do, however, is add, "Well, if we can also change 'this' or 'that' politically..." for example—we can allow that to shift our focus off of the Answer: Christ. I'm not saying there aren't certain things that should (or shouldn't) change politically, to use that example specifically. But the root of the problem is people need to give their life to Christ, and people need to understand that Jesus is the only hope. Once that is instilled in us, the climate of this whole culture can ascend. As believers, a lot of times we say, "Culture is trying to change us," when we should be focusing on changing culture. You know what I'm saying?

We need Jesus. He's so loving and He's there with arms open wide saying, "Hey, I'm all that you need!" He's the answer to everything...all these hurts, pains, and questions.

Do we talk about those things as a family? Absolutely. My girls, they know everything that's going on, and they ask questions. We communicate a lot and we don't guard anything from them because it's the world they're living in and they have to learn how to come after it through Christ.

CCM: In your opinion, what is contemporary Christian music's role in this crazy world we're living in right now?

JC: I've been doing this for a long time, and I've learned a lot. As artists, I think we always have to assess what we're doing and measure it to the Holy Spirit. We can't rely on, "Hey, this is what it looks like to play in the music industry," and, "This is the road and the path that I'm going to follow," etc. We have to be reminded to look upward and ask, "God, where do You want me to go? Where are You leading me? How do You want me to do this? How do You want me to use this platform? Holy Spirit, YOU lead and guide me. YOU direct."

A lot of us do that, for sure, but we've all been guilty of not doing that at times, too. We have to remember as artists, we do have a loud voice—we have microphones—very loud ones. It's about continuing to press in to God's Word and the Truth.

Just the other night at a festival **John Cooper** from **Skillet** said, "Guys, we need better theology." He wasn't implying that we as believers need to be walking around being all-heady in our knowledge. It felt like he was in a place where he was honestly seeking God for what to say. I believe God directed John's words and went on to say, "It's not about us. God loves us and He created us. But we're also created for His Glory. We're created by Him, for Him." And what he was all boiling it down to is this: Choosing to stand on God's Word over our own. You can't say anything against God's Word, really. I mean, people will. They'll say, "Well, that's your opinion." For me, it's not. That's what God's Word says. Someone may not agree with God's Word, but that's where I'm going to stand.

Instead of fighting over 'this' or talking in circles around 'that,' I think we should just speak God's Word. Period. I think that's

how we, as artists, or as people in the Christian music industry, can start to turn things around. Resting on God's Word a lot more. That can lead to a massive difference, because we don't have to give our thoughts and opinions now on what we see and hear in the world—we can just offer the Truth that comes from God's Word.

CCM: Speaking of culture, particularly American culture, you certainly have a unique perspective given your experience overseas.

JC: Yeah. I've been to 43 countries. It opens your eyes a little bit more, and your perspective changes on things. You start understanding how much of a bubble we live in. In a lot of places certain people are brought up in "certain religions," and that's just what they are. The culture is just that, it's innate, and they are dedicated in that—but there's no understanding of the heart-thing. It's been my experience that when you show your heart and they can see that, it's like, "Whoa. There's love, and there's something different. They care." That triggers something, because everyone does "religion," but when someone comes with a heart to just love, it's different. Here, we often put God in a box, and I think that that's why we have to really be lead by the Holy Spirit.

CCM: During the course of making this project, at what point did you look back and realize that God had been creating an album about the fruits of the Spirit?

JC: We thought we had the record done, then God literally dropped what ended up being the title track "The Answer" in my lap. And going back, everything on the album pointed to Christ being the answer. If you want joy, peace, patience, goodness, kindness, self-control...you've got to run to Jesus, you know?

Lift your hand and walk in the Spirit, because He gives us His Spirit. It's the same power, the same Spirit that arose Christ from the grave lives within us. So, if we are pressing towards that, He will give us the Spirit and the fruits of His Holy Spirit. It's pretty incredible how all that came about, actually.

CCM: You've been at this fifteen years, and this is your 15th project—what's that mean to you?

JC: Oh man, I don't know what it is but this year I've been, "Mr. Nostalgic." [Laughs] For our upcoming tour we are doing an acoustic section where we'll be performing some of the songs from years ago. I'm even going to bring out the first guitar my parents bought me, and the ones I actually wrote most of the songs on, so that's pretty nostalgic. I'll be making a lot of fun of myself, actually [laughs]. Seriously, this is one of those albums where I really wasn't trying to "do something." Like with my first album, I wasn't trying to get signed at all. God just gave me some songs when I was going through some very difficult times, and those are the songs that helped to get me through a lot.

He laid these new songs on my heart. The Lord said, "Yeah, this is what I want you to say." There's a lot going on right now, but I'm not trying to make things happen. I'm taking my time, and when it's His time, I'm ready. I think it's so amazing how He's brought everything full-circle. CCM



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A full-page portrait of Jamie Grace, a woman with long dark hair and purple lipstick, wearing a white fur vest and black cowboy boots. She is crouching on a stone ledge with a blurred city background. A green horizontal band across the middle contains her name in white text.

JAMIE GRACE

Jamie Grace

Worship In The Waiting

Through the accolades and the agony, the award-winning and multi-talented artist holds fast to her full trust in God's goodness and glory

By David Daniels

On September 1, 2017, Dove Award-winning, GRAMMY-nominated singer-songwriter **Jamie Grace** dropped her first studio album since 2014—back when her track “Hold Me” (featuring **TobyMac**) made her one of only four female Christian artists ever to boast a certified Gold single.

Grace's new LP, titled **'91** (after her birth year), which released independently and featured her sister and **Harper Still** partner, **Morgan Harper Nichols**, as well as an eclectic blend of musical flavors. The Los Angeles-based musician discussed this “comeback” album with us at *CCM Magazine* earlier this month.

CCM Magazine: What's' your take on the reaction to '91 so far?

Jamie Grace: I've had the most overwhelming experience with this record, as far as reaction. When the album came out, and the next five-to-seven days there after, my sister and I were away filming and I didn't have my phone. We didn't have access to the internet, so I didn't know anything.

By the time I got home and turned my phone on for the first time I saw that it had gone number one on iTunes! People were tweeting about it, making videos to the songs, and friends were

texting me back home. I was particularly nervous about the song “Reverb” on the record, and how people were going to react to it, and **Mandisa** said that she loved it. I was like, “What?! So cool!”

CCM: What was the film shoot for?

JG: I can’t really say what it is yet, but we were away filming for two weeks.

CCM: Why were you nervous about how people would perceive “Reverb?”

JG: I have not rapped on an album since I was seventeen. I was a little nervous, because I didn’t want people to think that I was trying to do a new thing or attempting to brand myself as a rapper. I grew up on Christian hip hop—**T-Bone** and **Cross Movement**, etc. I always loved it, so I wanted to pay tribute to part of my roots in a way.

CCM: You let listeners know at the start your album that you were “Different.” In addition to rapping, what were some of the more creative risks you think you took on ‘91?

JG: It’s funny, because I wrote “Different” the day before the album was supposed to be turned in. Originally, ‘91 started off with the interlude “Spotlight,” and there was another interlude in “Spotlight’s” place that got kicked-off. I think one thing, from a production standpoint, that I’ve always wanted to do is an entire chorus in half-time, so that’s what we got to do on “Different.”

I love playing the acoustic guitar, but I also really do love pop music—and I really do love urban-sounding music as well, I even love country. So something that was really important to me is

that I got to implement all of those styles in an album in a way that was true to who I am and the music I grew up with. If you played all of my different CDs as a kid, you would literally go from playing the most pop, upbeat, **ZOEgirl**-kind of song, to **Skillet** the next moment, to **Bill Gaither**, to **Kirk Franklin**.

CCM: A prominent theme on '91 was your identity as a child of God. Why do you think you were moved to write about that particular topic as much as you did?

JG: With the exception of “Daughter Of The King,” I don’t necessarily even remember trying to make that a theme. It’s just something that the Lord has so graciously reminded me of, especially these last two years. I think I needed the reminder for myself, so I put it on paper then put it to melody. I also know how refreshing that reminder is, and so I want to remind other people, as well.

There’s a line in “Different” about not having a lot of friends, and, “I know some lovely people now, but one thing still remains.” The deeper heart behind that is that I do have a few great friends now, and I love them dearly, but I don’t have a million friends. As you get older, you realize you may not fit-in with everyone, but you’re still a child of God. The King of the world says, “You are Mine.” The King of the world says, “You are loves.” The King of the world says, “You’re My daughter, and that’s enough.”

It’s just a good way for me to keep my heart in check and remain at peace. Of course, it’s easier said than done because I’m still human, 25, a millennial and kind of a nutcase [*laughs*], but it’s a good reminder to know that I don’t need anything else. I’m a daughter of the King of all Kings, and the Lord of all Lords, and He’s literally all I need.



CCM: *Your album ended on a powerful note with the song “Heaven.” Could you share the story behind that track?*

JG: About five years ago, my mom got really sick, and life took a turn that I couldn’t have expected. I’m on tour and having fun, but sometimes literally walking on stage and getting a text from my dad that says, “We’re going to the ER again.” And then, having to sing for an hour, not knowing what is happening. There was a time when my mom actually flat-lined, and we didn’t think we were going to be able to bring her back.

It was really hard for me. A lot of people I was working with, I wanted them to be there, and they weren't. I started to feel very alone and very secluded, and I didn't know where I could turn. For me, anytime that's happened in the past, I go to the Word of God. I go to prayer. I drop to my knees, and I talk to the Lord. I remember many nights praying to God, asking Him for healing for my mom; asking Him to do a miracle in her. She's the most amazing woman that I know; she's everything to me. Even now in this present moment, my mom still has a condition with chronic pain. It's called pudendal neuralgia. Mentally, she's still able to manage my career. But physically, it's the most unbearable pain that even doctors all around the country can't even figure out, a main reason we've moved from Georgia to California.

All of this stuff I'm dealing with over the last four-to-five years and trying to figure out, "Okay, God, why aren't you fixing things?" Out of that, honestly, I've come to this peace with the Lord. Sometimes I fall away from it, and He has to bring me back. But I've come to an understanding that we don't live in a perfect world. But I do believe in the power of God. I do believe that He can heal. I believe He can restore. And I also believe we will see the fullness of who He is in heaven—we will see the fullness of His redemption, of His power, of His glory, and of his goodness.

That's where I am. That's where my mom is—the understanding that for right now, this is her lot. God could change it all on this earth, which would be very much appreciated. But as far as we know, we just continue to trust Him, serve Him, and wait for heaven. [CCM](#)



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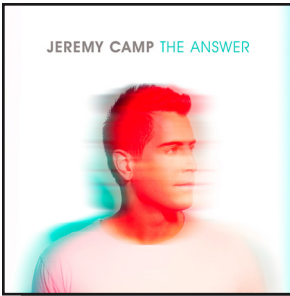
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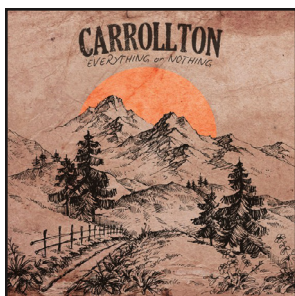
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