

JEREMY CAMP | *RECKLESS*

Jeremy Camp's seventh recorded studio album *Reckless* needs a warning sign: NOT FOR THE FAINT OF HEART. For come February 12, when the album releases from BEC Recordings, it just might inspire listeners to surrender everything, even what they never thought they could give up.

This happened to Camp about a year ago when he felt God ask him, "Are you willing to surrender everything?" For him, "everything" was music. Something he has been quite successful at for the past decade, with 32 No. 1 radio hits, a Grammy nomination and five Dove Awards. Even with this success, Camp says God brought him to a place where he could, if the day ever came, surrender music. "Not that it wouldn't be a challenge," says Camp, "but I wouldn't be devastated because this is not my life. Christ is my life."

It was with this mindset that Camp wrote "Reckless," the first single on the album. "Reckless" tugs at the listener with its call-to-action lyrics: *I'll lay my life down and give it up / I'll give it up ... I will not be afraid to surrender my way to follow who you are / I want to be reckless.*

Camp explains the concept of recklessness through the life of Paul. In Acts 14, Paul returns to Lystra to share the gospel—a city where he had been stoned and left for dead just days before. Sounds crazy that he would return to a place like that. But as Camp explains, it's more reckless than crazy, and there's a difference. "[Paul] wasn't being crazy for crazy's sake, saying 'I don't care what's going to happen. I just want to go.' No, when you feel God calling you to do something, you have to be obedient. And that's the difference. Paul was just obedient. That's what reckless is."

Camp co-wrote "Reckless," along with several other songs on the album, with producer and longtime friend, Andy Dodd. Dodd produced several of Camp's earlier albums including *Stay* and *I Still Believe*. With Dodd back on as producer, Camp says he feels like he is getting back to his roots yet creating a new sound.

"Musically and vocally, it's more raw," says Camp, "but in a good way." Like with "Reckless," rather than bringing in heavy guitar for the chorus, they cranked up the keys and let the piano do that rock part, something Camp has never done before. And rather than overthinking it musically and trying to "over-perfect" the production, Camp and Dodd focused on the lyrics. "We were over-thinking it in a good way," says Camp, "going back and forth with each other always asking, 'What impacts most?'"

"The Way You Love Me," the second radio release from the album, impacts listeners with its reminder of God's love and what our reaction should be because of it. One of Camp's daughters demonstrated this reaction when she asked her father one day, out of the blue, "Is there anything that I can do for you that I've never done before that will make you happy?" Camp looked at her and said, "You don't have to do anything to make me happy. *You* make me happy." Camp heard the lesson God was teaching him through that moment. Just like his daughter knew he loved her, so do we know God loves us and that's why we desire to please him, out of love and not obligation.

"The Way You Love Me" is a declaration of that love for him, as the worshipful and punchy chorus says *So I will lift the broken words / Show the world how you love me / How you love me*. Camp sites the prophet Jeremiah as the heart behind this song, a prophet who could not hold in his love for the Lord: "If I say, 'I will not mention him, or speak any more in his name,' there is in my heart as it were a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I am weary with holding it in, and I cannot" (Jer. 20:9).

Camp provides an example of the tangible way we show God's love through the song "We Need." This upbeat anthem encourages acts of social justice, which is something Camp and his family are very familiar with. They support Compassion International and travel to places like Josiah's House, a home for boys in the Dominican Republic, and New Hope Haiti Mission, a children's home in Haiti.

But Camp is quick to explain, "There are a lot of people doing social justice things, which is great. But we can't just say, 'Here's some food. Here's some stuff.' We have to be able to give the gospel, share the hope and have a real heart for that." As "We Need" says, *Into the lives of forgotten children / Showing the love they were never given.*

Camp believes balance is crucial in the realm of social justice and following God's call. "We need to be reckless," says Camp, "but let's spend time with Him so we know where to go." That's what the final song on the album, "Without You," is all about. With a softer yet strong melody, this song, strategically placed last, gives a final instruction to listeners on how to surrender our lives to Christ: *I won't make a move without you right by my side / I will wait for you to lead me to any place where you lead.*

The chorus reflects Camp's main goal for this album. "My heart's desire is that people will listen to the Lord and his leading," he says, "and really dive into the fullness of what He's called them to do, whatever that looks like."

"Come Alive" also expresses this desire for listeners to experience fullness. Struck by the solemn scene of a New York City street, Camp says, "It was like looking at the living dead... all they're doing is living for their own desires. I want this world to come alive, to see that yes, you're dead in your trespasses, but you have been made alive in Christ."

With powerful strings as a backdrop, the chorus of "Come Alive" builds, dramatically proclaiming *You have restored us / You have redeemed us / We have been given new life / You are alive.*

Camp will share this message of hope with large crowds as he tours this year. This CCM success would rather play for a crowd of 100 than 50,000 if that would increase the ripple effect. "If I play for 100 people and those 100 people are impacted radically," says Camp, "that's so much greater than doing something massive with no impact.... I'm at a place where I've just let this go. I put my whole heart, blood, sweat and tears into this and, God, it's yours."

As a part of giving everything to God, Camp has also penned his story in the upcoming book *I Still Believe* (Tyndale). In *I Still Believe*, he shares, with unflinching candor and emotion, the extraordinary story behind his award-winning lyrics—from his impoverished childhood, rebellious teenage years, and spiritual awakening at Bible College, to the tragic loss of his first wife, Melissa, to cancer and the heart-wrenching spiritual journey that followed—a journey that reignited his faith, inspired some of his most beloved songs, and paved the way for a second chance at love with his second wife, Adrienne.

Some may call Jeremy Camp crazy for not caring more about the success of his career, but others know, he's not crazy; he's reckless.