

## Jeremy Camp

## *Speaking Louder Than Before*

When you think of Jeremy Camp, the words “shy” and “quiet” don’t come to mind. Energetic? Yes. Passionate? Definitely. Straightforward? Absolutely. Camp’s thoughtful lyrics and booming voice have earned him legions of fans and accolades including 16 No. 1 songs, five Dove Awards, three ASCAP Songwriter of the Year wins and an American Music Award nomination. So why would someone so well known for his willingness to speak his mind and share his heart title his latest release *Speaking Louder Than Before*? After all, his message has always come through loud and clear.

Jeremy Camp is a renewed man, that’s why. Over the course of four studio discs and one live album, this grown up pastor’s kid has shared his life with us. Through his songs we’ve seen the joy and the sorrow, his devotion to God, his fear of falling short and his certainty that Jesus is the answer to life’s toughest questions. Even when Jeremy’s message became painfully personal when losing his first wife to cancer just months after their wedding, he boldly wore the mantle of comforter, soothing the pain of others by sharing his story, listening patiently to theirs, and providing them with songs that expressed what they were feeling when their grief left them unable to speak. It was that life-altering tragedy that inspired his early career.

Now, remarried with two young children and a new home base in Nashville, Camp feels like he’s starting fresh. “It’s so new because I’m in such a different place,” he says. “I’m 30 years old now. I’ve been doing this for a while and so much has happened since it began. At this point, I have a more clear-cut purpose and vision of what I’m meant to do. I’m more purposeful in what I’m sharing.” Being more purposeful is important now that time on the road can mean time away from his family. So *Speaking Louder* isn’t so much about Camp turning up the volume as it is finding greater clarity in what God’s called him to do. And while he continues to grow and mature as an artist and a man, it only makes sense that this rocker with a preacher’s heart would use his platform to proclaim – louder than ever – the message he knows today’s kids need to hear.

*Speaking Louder*’s songs will resonate with people of any age, but Camp’s message this time around is directed squarely at youth. “I see the hurt, the lack of direction, in this new generation,” the former youth leader says. “I always had a passion for youth, but this album is really aimed at them.” He just planned on delivering that message from a different location. The Camp clan was planning to settle down in Jeremy’s home state of Indiana, build a home, plant some roots. It seemed like the right time to take that next step. But as he was reading his Bible one day, Camp says he sensed God saying, “don’t put your tent pegs in too deep here.” Soon after, he felt directed to move to Nashville. Since relocating, he’s found his place, encouraging other artists by sharing what he’s learned. The Camps also found a spiritual home in a church just outside of Nashville. Adrienne is involved in the women’s ministry and leads worship (drawing on her experience in the Christian band The Benjamin Gate), while Isabella, nearly four, and Arianne, two, were welcomed with open arms by a congregation completely unfazed by what their dad does for a living. The positive effects are visible to others, too. “My mom told me, ‘you just seem more at peace and more settled than you ever have,’” Camp recounts.

It’s a good thing life at home is calm, because Camp admits he’s “the busiest I’ve ever been,” balancing work and family life. It helps that the Camps have made a commitment not to be apart for more than a week at a time. “My priority is my family – the girls are at such a crucial age that I just want to pour into them even more – but I also know what I’m called to do. We tell the girls, ‘dad’s going out and sharing Jesus with people.’”

If life had gone just a little differently, Camp would probably be standing behind a pulpit instead of a microphone. But he spreads his message through music, anthemic songs with all the depth of a Sunday sermon. Sometimes waiting for that divine inspiration can be a little nerve-wracking, though. Camp was scheduled to start recording *Speaking Louder Than Before* in May 2008 with Grammy-winning producer

Brown Bannister (Amy Grant, Michael W. Smith, Third Day, Rich Mullins). The album's first single, "There Will Be a Day," wasn't penned until April. Talk about cutting it close. "It wasn't because I wasn't prepared," Camp insists. "It was because I refused to force it." In the end, he replaced a several of the songs written earlier in the year with newer tunes that may draw some attention because of the urgency that he addresses.

"Some people might think I'm being preachy. I'm not angry; I'm not pointing a finger. Really, my heart is breaking. I'm talking about loving people and serving people." And it's not a message he necessarily believes everyone is called to deliver. "I'm telling *my* story," he clarifies. I'm pointing that finger at me." As he works to live out what he's teaching others, Camp admits it's a battle to stay on track. "If my heart's not breaking for the lost, I won't come across the way I need to." That realization keeps him on his face before God, turning to passages like Psalm 119, where's he's regularly reminded that he's not the one building this house. "I've given up on making this life my home," he says, adding, "I don't want to put my messy handprints all over this."

During pre-production, Camp was still bringing songs to Bannister, whose excitement was just the encouragement that was needed. Once in the studio, Camp recorded for five straight days, 12 hours each day, with some of Nashville's best session players backing him up and offering input that resulted in a larger sound than ever before. With its epic feel, haunting strings and plenty of ear candy, *Louder* goes far beyond any of Camp's previous projects, but the inspiration solidly remains the same.

The track "You Will Be There" is drawn directly from Psalm 139, while "I Know Who I Am" is based on Paul's impassioned speech in Romans 7 about doing the things he doesn't want to and failing to do what he knows he should (who can't relate to that?). Camp credits Bannister's "true heart and passion for what he's doing" with bringing out the best in him. "He knows how to get in my head and help me figure out how to get across what I want to." There's also the very personal song "Healing Hand of God," which serves as an epilogue of sorts to the story of Camp's loss of his first wife, a subject he needed encouragement to revisit. "I never want this to be just a story. It was my life, it was her life, and it was hard. But I still have people who come up to me every night who have lost someone, and God showed me that this is still part of His plan for me. It's a chapter of my life He still wants me share." But as the years have passed, he's been given a new perspective on his pain, singing now about finding rest in the shadow of His wing. The worshipful track "Surrender" serves as a fitting album closer.

Camp's calling isn't for the faint of heart. He knows he's to be the image of Christ to those he comes across, to show love and serve at all times. It's what he sings about and it's what he lives. "God called us to be the light of the world as we represent Him," he says emphatically, his conviction never wavering. "When you're speaking the truth, when you know what you believe, you speak loud." If that's the case, it's no wonder Camp goes through life with the volume turned all the way up.

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## Jeremy Speaks Loudly About...

**Sharing the Gospel at his concerts:** “Realizing that I have a platform to share with thousands of people, I always share the gospel every night, speaking the truth in love. I also know I need to be an example of Christ every day, too.”

**Love without truth:** “Society today is all about love and no rules. We tiptoe around people, but if you love someone and never tell them the truth, their life will never be changed. When you speak the truth, that *is* love.”

**Talking to others about our faith:** “God’s Word is living and active and when you’re experiencing God moving and living in your life, that will come out naturally when you’re talking to somebody.”

**The role of the Bible in our lives:** “The Bible is all we need, but there is a departure from the Word of God -- we’re replacing it with other things.”

**His new campaign, Speak Up, Speak Now, Speak Loud:** “It’s an agenda without an agenda. The Speak Up comes from Paul saying, ‘I didn’t come to you with persuasive words, the Holy Spirit did the work.’ It’s not about what you can do on your own power. God just wants us to spend time with Him and have a willing heart. Speak Now comes from the urgency of the scary times we live in. Lastly, Speak Loud challenges us to hear loud this declaration from out across the nations where people are crying out. It’s not about volume, it’s about the substance behind what we’re saying.”

**The teaching tools that accompany this album:** For each song, Camp has created commentaries that feature him in a video song-by-song for the whole album. There are also music videos, and whether you’ve purchase a physical CD or download of *Speaking Louder Than Before*, you’ll get access to these extras.