

**FOREWORD BY MAX LUCADO**

# 10,000 REASONS

STORIES OF FAITH, HOPE, AND THANKFULNESS  
INSPIRED BY THE WORSHIP ANTHEM

**MATT REDMAN**  
WITH CRAIG BORLASE

**SAMPLE - CHAPTER 6**

*Excerpt of Chapter 6 from . . .*



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10,000 REASONS  
Published by David C Cook  
4050 Lee Vance View  
Colorado Springs, CO 80918 U.S.A.

David C Cook U.K., Kingsway Communications  
Eastbourne, East Sussex BN23 6NT, England

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“10,000 Reasons” by Matt Redman © 2011 sixstepsrecords/Sparrow Records.

LCCN 2016938479  
ISBN 978-1-4347-0290-6  
eISBN 978-1-4347-1088-8

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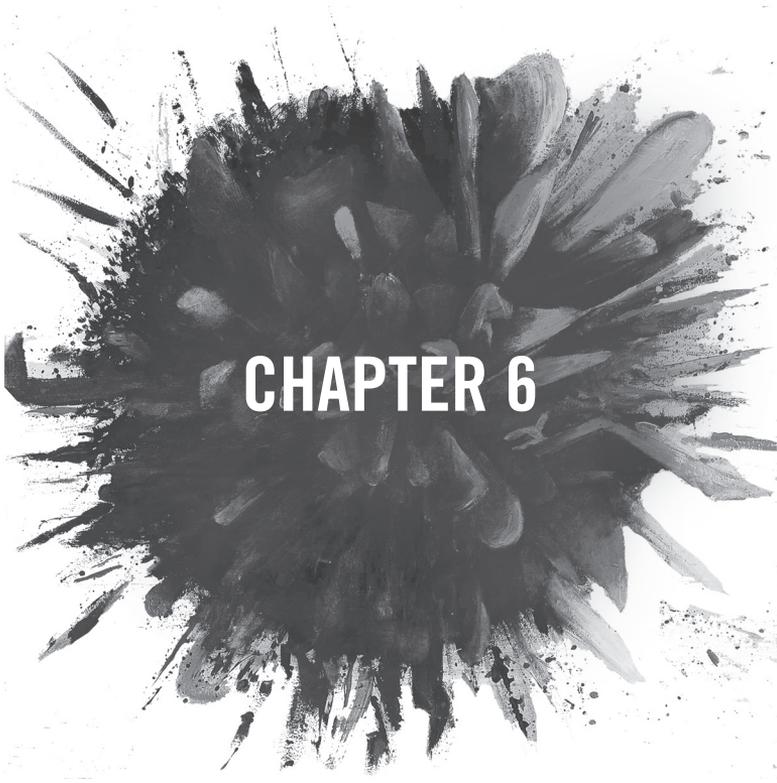
Cover Artwork: Cindy Hong

The Team: Kyle Duncan, Amy Konyndyk, Nick Lee, Jack Campbell, Susan Murdock  
Cover Design: Leighton Ching

Printed in the United States of America  
First Edition 2016

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

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# CHAPTER 6

# THE ULTIMATE REALITY CHECK

Diane Lockhart told me how she had moved away from her home in Northern Ireland and spent two years living in Uganda. She partnered with a local gentleman, who had been brought up in the slums, to set up a project to help children in one of Kampala's poorest neighborhoods. Together they worked to grow the project into a school that was educating nearly two hundred children. These boys and girls woke up and went to sleep in dirty surroundings, with no clean water and a lack of safety. Diane, however, was inspired by how, despite these desultory surroundings, these children were still so intent on thanking God for all they had.

Then, shockingly, two years after returning to Ireland, Diane was diagnosed with breast cancer, and "10,000 Reasons" took on a special meaning for her. It became her theme song through all the hours of chemo, and as she tried to imagine the children waking up

to a new day, it helped keep her focused on the goal of being back with them at some point.

I know it wasn't the song that was responsible for her worship—the song itself was just a vehicle for her to carry her trust and praise to the Savior. The source of her worship was a heart that had decided to keep Christ in the center, no matter what the circumstances.

Diane's now through the treatment she had back in her homeland, and she regularly visits the children in Kampala, where the song has taken on its own unique meaning. Since her return to Uganda, the children have learned to sing "10,000 Reasons." And whenever she hears them sing, the worship resounds more powerfully than ever.

The song was just a vehicle for her to carry her trust and praise to the Savior.

## STRAIGHT TO THE HALLELUJAH

A story like Diane's always interests me, for in the middle of her struggles with cancer, she didn't choose to sing a song about her health. She didn't choose a theme song that named her illness or focused in on the specific struggles associated with battling such a horrible disease. Instead, she picked "10,000 Reasons" as her theme, deciding instead to focus on the kindness and greatness of God and to bless His name. There's not a word in the song about cancer. It's all about Jesus.

One thing I learned quite early on as a worship leader was that, though sometimes it's useful to name the issues, it can be just as

powerful when we don't. In other words, it can be powerful when we linger less on the "help me" stage of our songs and head straight to the "hallelujah" part. I'm not saying "help me" is an unimportant prayer—no, not at all. I'm arguing that "hallelujah" is often a very underrated piece of the equation. I believe there's a dynamic shift that happens inside of us, and in our situations, when we give more attention to the worth of God than we do to the worries of this world.

Worship is a window onto the heart of God. It's a way of seeing, not just a mode of singing. It's a place of illumination, not just a means of exaltation. Remember what Psalm 73 says: "When I tried to understand all this, it troubled me deeply till I entered the sanctuary ... then I understood" (NIV). Things that made no sense to the psalmist suddenly came into focus when he fixed the eyes of his heart on God in a moment of worship.

Life can be so confusing and disorientating, especially when it involves suffering and struggle. At times we need some reassurance that there is a purpose and a plan and that someone at some point will make sense of it all for us. Worship can help complete the puzzle.

If you think about it, worship is the ultimate reality check. We're checking in with the reality of a God who is on His throne and who will never be shaken. We're checking in with a King who reigns and rules forever and yet cares about the details of our everyday lives. We have all of our other realities going on—all the stresses and strains that can show up in

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this life, whether it is money issues, people problems, or whatever. But, as real and as relevant as those worries may be to us, in worship we check in with a reality that trumps them all. It is the reality of Jesus on His throne.

Worship must always take us to that place. As a worship leader I often remind people that we don't need to "get anything going" in that moment of leading worship, because we're simply joining in with something that is already happening. It is the eternal, heavenly song of Jesus, which now and forever swirls around His glorious throne. Scripture paints an amazing picture of that place; it describes angels in their millions, encircling and singing. There are elders bowing and living creatures speaking out praise upon praise. It's the grandest thing you could ever get involved with, and the most glorious song you'll ever get to be a part of. And there, right in the center of it all, is Jesus.

## REARRANGING THE FURNITURE

Ron Owens explained that "when we come to worship, we come to a throne ... [and] everything else arranges itself around that throne."<sup>1</sup> It's a perfect summary of how our lives work best too. For life to work as it was designed to, Jesus must be the focus, and we must shape our lives around Him. He must become the hub—central to all of our thinking, singing, speaking, and doing.

N. T. Wright took this theme further, saying, "Only humans it seems have the capacity to live as something other than what they are (God reflectors, image bearers). Trees behave as trees; rocks as rocks; the sea is and does what the sea is and does."<sup>2</sup>

In other words, though you and I were created to worship God, we have to choose to do it. Every other created thing will automatically perform whatever function it was created to do. But you and I, though we were made to be God reflectors and image bearers, have the capacity to wander away from that call and to arrange our lives around something or someone else instead. And as we do so, Jesus gets shifted off to the side, or maybe knocked out of the picture altogether.

In worship, we rearrange the furniture, making sure Christ is in the center place, where He belongs.

When we put something or someone else other than Jesus in that place of ultimate prominence, that thing becomes an idol. It is a fallen excuse for a god, with a string of false promises. C. S. Lewis said, “Idols break the hearts of their worshippers.”<sup>3</sup> Whether it’s sexual lust, the love of money, or an insatiable quest for a prestigious career and social status, if any of these things become our god, eventually they will consume us, fail us, or even break us.

We see it all the time—people sacrificing themselves on the altar of something that their whole lives now revolve around. It starts to consume them, and eventually relationships fall apart, family happiness fades, and even health begins to suffer.

Anything we bow down to will eventually gain mastery over us. It’s not a matter of if; it’s a question of when. Jesus, on the other hand, is a supremely kind master who always satisfies the hearts of His worshippers.

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worshippers.”**

Wise hearts soon realize that not only is Jesus praiseworthy, but He is trustworthy too. There is no kinder or firmer a foundation to build our lives on. Life works best with Jesus on His throne in the center and everything else revolving around that throne. As He Himself taught us to pray, “Let it be on earth as it is in heaven” (see Matt. 6:10).

## A DECISIVE CRY

Of course, it’s easy enough to write these words down. It’s another thing entirely to live them out. Sometimes life presents such turbulent circumstances that finding our way to the place of praise, and keeping Jesus central, is a huge undertaking.

It amazes me that in some of these life stories worship wasn’t just something the person got around to later on, once they’d worked through some of the shock and pain. It was there in the mix, right there from the beginning. When the storm arrived, the instinct of

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their souls was not a defeated song of woe, but a decisive cry of worship. That’s exactly what went through my mind when I received this email from Shirley.

*Dear Matt,*

*Last night I received a text from a woman in my church. She saw that you are writing a book and*

*encouraged me to submit and share my story. So as I sit and stare at the screen, I think ... how do I begin? I guess I just start on the day it happened.*

*October 29, 2013. It was mid-morning when my husband and I received word that Autumn, our three-year-old granddaughter, was being airlifted to a nearby city because she had fallen down the steps at the daycare provider's home. Upon arriving on the scene, the paramedics said she was unresponsive.*

*We dropped everything and drove the 70 miles. For the next two days we did not leave the hospital. The daycare provider came and was distraught, so we prayed with her there in the family room. The next day we found out that Autumn did not fall, but was the victim of child abuse and blunt force trauma at the hands of her daycare provider.*

*Autumn died late in the afternoon on the 31st. Our son and daughter-in-law entered a grief that was beyond words. We watched them and their two children, Faith and Jared, drive away from the hospital. Autumn's car seat was empty. Then we left too. Autumn's body remained. She was now a crime scene.*

*We were in shock, functioning in a daze. We had to wait to bury her, as an investigation was in action, but as we prepared to leave her celebration-of-life service and go to the cemetery, we stood in the church and sang the song "10,000 Reasons." The drummer*

*belted out the drums and I felt my heart pound as the tears ran down my face.*

*The days passed and families went home, but the investigation was still under way. Every time we turned on the news we heard about our loved one. CNN. Nancy Grace. Dateline. They all approached us for comment. We heard it went international and saw articles in the London Times. Whenever we were asked to speak about what had happened to Autumn, we wanted to be real and we wanted to show Christ. God gave us an opportunity to be witnesses to people in far-off countries in a way we never thought would happen.*

*Thanksgiving came, and then Christmas, and those months were so hard. We had an empty chair. In the weeks ahead, as a mother I watched how all my children were doing. As a wife I was watching and caring for my husband. As a grandmother I was watching my grandchildren in their grief, and I was exhausted.*

*Six weeks after Autumn died, I used sign language in church to sign the song "10,000 Reasons." As I signed, I saw hands raised, tears flowing, and grief on the faces of the people in church. It was the end of December and I knew then that God was urging me to write throughout the year ahead.*

*So, starting January 2014, I wrote a daily Facebook message. I would ponder and share things*

*that were hard and real, but I also shared blessings that God unfolded in each day. I decided to start every post with the words “10,000 Reasons . . . Bless the Lord oh my soul . . .” and then write about the day. I always ended, “Bless the Lord oh my soul . . .”*

*At first I did not think I could fulfill my promise of doing it for a whole year, but in the end I found it to be an amazing journey. I prayed that it touched hearts and I just wanted to be obedient to Him.*

*Many times it was not easy, but I knew God wanted me to face my grief head on. I knew God wanted me to be real and honest. He wanted me to share about Him because so many other people face this kind of journey every day. Many become bitter and angry and they stay there.*

*I have found that this is part of my life now: seeing God’s blessings even in the worst of days as well as in the best of days. He is there, giving treasures to us in many forms, and often we do not recognize them.*

*Autumn was a little girl who had a compassionate heart. She and her brother, Jared, were best friends. She was silly, loved camping, and savored marshmallows! She looked like a little chipmunk when she ate them. She loved her “Papa”—my husband—and would yell his name and run into his arms. She would sit by him and could charm him into almost anything. But most of all, she loved Jesus, and that gives us great comfort.*

*Autumn's story continues, both good and bad. The daycare provider is in prison, and a new local center is being put up for children to seek help from abuse, autism, grief, illness, and many other traumas that affect children. It's going to be called the Autumn Center.*

*God has used Autumn's short life on earth to touch many lives, and He continues to use her story to reach many people. We pray that many will come to know Him.*

*So, Matt, this is my story. A song played at my granddaughter's celebration of life, signed in church and used by God to fill me with phrases in a daily journal for an entire year.*

*By Grace Alone,  
Shirley*

Fanny Crosby's pen hadn't run dry even after writing seven thousand songs of worship.

The email was powerful enough in and of itself. I was so moved by how this dear family had walked through their dark valley with such a sense of dignity and faith. But when I came across Shirley's daily blog, I realized she wasn't done yet—she still had a song to sing.

It reminded me of the fact that Charles Wesley still had something to say as he uttered that final hymn on his deathbed. Fanny Crosby's pen hadn't run dry even after

writing seven thousand songs of worship. And the psalmist himself declared, "I cannot stay silent." Shirley's blog reminded me of that exact same spirit.

It was day 365 of her entries, and her heart for Jesus was still beating strongly. Her soul, in the midst of all that suffering, was a deep well of worship.

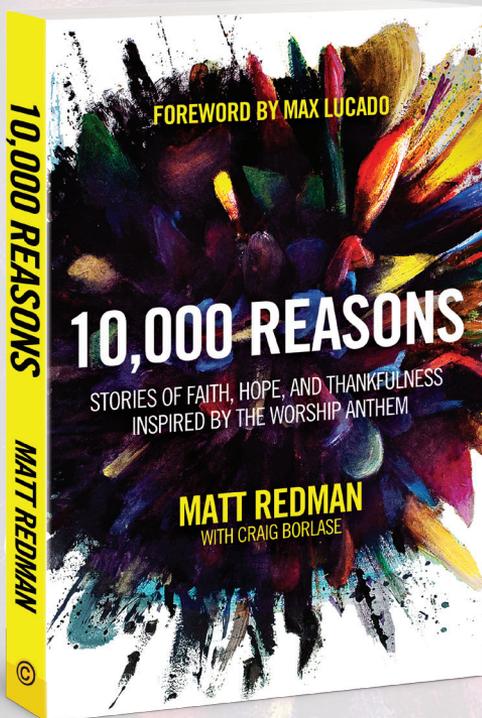
*December 31, 2014: 10,000 Reasons ... the end draws near. In 15 minutes my year and 365 days of this will be done. Last year at this time I was nudged and convicted that God wanted me to do this. I started and really did not know if I would be up to this, but once I began I felt and knew that God had a purpose. My desire was to be obedient. Several times I felt like stopping, and then I would get that convicting nudge again. So what was His purpose? One thing in this year became very, very clear: I am nothing and can do nothing without Him. He is the air I breathe. He did not promise me that if I did this I would be free of pain. Quite the opposite. I have felt some persecution, but I have also known blessing.*

*This was not really about me. It was about God. It was about a journey of one person walking with God. He allowed others to see the ups and downs of the journey.*

*Is the journey over? Nope. But I can say this: it is a journey of hope. God will come back again and*

*I will be with Him and will see and be with my granddaughter.*

*My heart's desire ... is that there will be those who will come to know the Lord through this. And with that I say, Bless the Lord oh my soul.*



MILLIONS  
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In just four years, *10,000 Reasons* has become one of the church's most popular modern worship anthems, providing Christians worldwide a powerful song to sing in times of triumph or trial. Here are the stories both behind and beyond the song from Matt's personal experiences as well as from believers around the world.

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