

Hearts of Saints: 'Four Guys Who Love Jesus'



L.J. Granstaff, Craig Felker, Jason Killebrew and Joel Purdy (pictured left to right) have been worshiping together for 4.5 years and release their first studio album as Hearts of Saints on Jan. 26. Lead singer Felker says the group changed its name from Special D to Hearts of Saints based on Philemon 1:7, in which Paul writes to Philemon: "I am encouraged by your kindness and faith because you've refreshed the hearts of the saints."

He says this verse is their mission statement. "We are four guys who love Jesus, and so everything we're going to do in life, whether it be the way we live, [our] music, we want to be His light. We want to be transparent. And these songs ... this music that we play is all about Him and about hope."

Felker shares the opinion of Switchfoot's Jon Foreman when describing the bands' type of music: "We are Christian by faith, not by genre."

"We are trying to be a great band and we make no bones about what we do," he adds. "We love worship, and we love playing songs about Jesus; and we hope that inspires the saints; and we hope that through our music ... people come to know Jesus. We hope that it's both reaching the church and the unchurched. It's just about uplifting, encouraging and trying to be His light and hands and feet anywhere we go."

The band wants to be a part of changing the perception of worship. Felker calls worship a "heart condition" and says music is only one aspect of worshiping. He says Hearts of Saints combine their love for rock 'n' roll, worship and

Jesus. "Some songs are a little more energetic, kind of live, straight rock, but in everything trying to give Him glory."

The song on the self-titled CD that Felker connects with the most is the band's new single, "Recapture Me."

He says God "breathed on [this song] in this authentic way" as it was written during an instrumental, free moment in worship. The chorus just came to him, he said, and he penned: "God, set my heart on fire, set my heart on fire."

Two weeks later, his wife told him that there was something more there. The band wrote verses around the chorus, and Michael Farren of Pocket Full of Rocks loved it and helped them finish it. Felker says, "It's not like we sat down to write a song; it just totally happened."

Their pop rock is energetic with a hint of electronic and dance elements, he says. Their inspiration comes from many different artists, but one that had a direct impact on Felker was Jars of Clay. He says their *Much Afraid* record is the reason he started "digging Christian music. They continue to reinvent themselves."

As a band, they also like Switchfoot and U2, and people have compared them to the Killers. Hearts of Saints simply appreciate bands that not only put out good music but also captivate their audiences, which is also their goal.

Felker and Granstaff write most of the lyrics and music, but the whole band gets credit for their songs. Felker says it was just not an issue they wanted to bring up.

"We're all just 25 percent. We all share in everything we do. It's four guys in this band; four people putting in the time. So when it comes to writing, publishing—we're one."

This attitude of unity needs to spread throughout the body of Christ. Hearts of Saints will surely be leading the way.

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