

## HEART OF THE ARTIST



*We had the chance to get Jon Steingard, Hawk Nelson's lead singer, to answer some questions about the "heart" of their music and ministry. Check it out!*

### **What energizes you about engaging with young people?**

I think that teenagers and young adults are in such a formative season of life. So much of the person I am was influenced during those years. Young people have so many voices shouting at them from all sides—family, friends, culture, and even the church. Separating the wheat from the chaff, so to speak, can be hard.

I'm passionate about communicating ideas that were crucial to me in that time, and maybe some things I wish I had understood back then—specifically, the simple truth of who God is and how free He has truly made us through the Cross. Often, it's actually more about unlearning some of the things we've come to believe about who we are and how we relate to God.

### **How has an interaction with a teenager has influenced you as a band?**

I spoke with a girl at a concert once who was maybe 19. She had been having conflicts with her parents and had stormed out of the house one night. Driving away, she heard our song "Words" on the radio, and God used it to soften her heart to her family. She actually brought her parents to a Hawk Nelson concert that night since we happened to be in town. That was a great reminder to me that God uses us in situations both big and small. Sometimes we feel as though our specific situation is too insignificant to matter to God. He tends to prove us wrong if we are paying attention.

### **Did you have a youth leader that impacted you as a teenager? How so?**

I had a youth pastor who encouraged me to join a band when I was 15. Up until that point I didn't realize that was even an option! I'm grateful for that little nudge at a critical moment, and I don't think I would be doing what I'm doing now without it.

### **What song on your album do you think will especially connect with teenagers? Why?**

"Live Like You're Loved" is one of the most powerful takeaways for me. I think in an effort to understand God's grace, we sometimes add a lot of things to it. "Sure God loves me, but He probably would love me more if I read my Bible more, or if I witnessed to my school friends more." The truth is that He could never love us more than He already does. We can walk into our lives with confidence and boldness knowing that the Creator of all things already loves us to the MAXIMUM amount.

### **What's the story behind *Diamonds*, the title of your new album?**

*Diamonds* is all about how God uses the pressures and stresses of life to shape us into something stronger and more beautiful than we were. Just as diamonds are formed underground through periods of intense pressure and heat, the trials of life are being used by God to refine us. It's a huge comfort to me during those hard times, to know that they're not for nothing!

# Hawk Nelson