

Jordan Feliz

There's a subtle shift that happens in an artist's life when they start to achieve any amount of success. It's almost imperceptible at first. Private life turns public. Empty calendars turn full. Rest turns obsolete. And the pressure heats up. Christian pop artist Jordan Feliz has experienced this firsthand. So much so, in fact, that Feliz was forced to pump the breaks, taking two months off to reassess as 2019 came to a close and 2020 began. "I just kind of realized how much I was holding my career almost as an idol above God and above my family. I just really lost myself," the singer candidly admits. "All of a sudden, I hit a wall, and I just kind of self-destructed."

Prior to detonating the grenade, Feliz was on top--of everything. His first radio single, "The River"--the title track from his critically-acclaimed Centricity Music debut--became a smash hit. Spending an unprecedented 12 weeks at No. 1, the chart-topping single was named ASCAP's "Christian Music Song of the Year" and garnered Feliz his first Gold certification. Each of his five subsequent radio singles has landed in the Top 10 with "Witness" notching a second No. 1 for the singer. In addition, Feliz has been nominated for five Dove Awards, taking home the trophy for 2016's "New Artist of the Year." He's toured with some of the biggest names in Christian music, including TobyMac, for KING & COUNTRY, Matthew West, Michael W. Smith and Crowder, among others; and in a short time, he's risen to headliner status. When his highly-anticipated sophomore LP, FUTURE, released in 2018, it debuted at the top of the Billboard Christian Albums chart. Looking back, it's hard to believe that just six years ago, Feliz was valeting cars in downtown Nashville.

"Record two, as of right now, was probably one of the roughest times of my career. Personally, I was just going through a really tough season," he reveals of his latest LP. "I feel like I went from being a dude who was parking cars every day to, all of a sudden, being pulled in a million different directions."

Not only was his career on the fast track, but his personal life was rapidly changing, as well. The California-native's fanbase wasn't the only thing growing; so was his family. Feliz, his wife Jamie, and their young daughter, Jolie, welcomed a second child, Judah, in 2018. Now, the father of two had to learn how to balance family and career on an even greater scale. The stress of it all was, simply, too much. Add to that, the fact that Feliz was now responsible for churning out another record of hits, and like anyone carrying the weight of the spotlight and the livelihoods of multiple families on his shoulders, he found himself on the brink of shutting down.

While grateful for the chance to make a second record--an opportunity reserved for only the most successful--crafting his next artistic chapter in the shadow of The River's success proved challenging, bringing with it a spiral of anxiety and fear that resulted in Feliz experiencing the first panic attack of his life. "I had three years to write my first record, and all of a sudden, I had a year to write the follow-up to a giant record; and I became a dad to not one, but two children," Feliz recalls of the stressful season. "That's been a huge learning curve. Going from a dad of one to a dad of two is definitely not for the faint of heart, but it's a beautiful thing."

From the outside looking in, he had it all. The perfect little family. The skyrocketing career. The radio play. The notoriety. But at the end of the day, success felt less like a blessing and more like

a burden. "It's like all your dreams kind of get handed to you, but there's really no fulfillment in it, and I realized that it was because everything was out of alignment for me," the singer reveals. "Nothing was in the right place in my heart or in my mind."

Feliz admits time management isn't his strong suit. So he had to find better ways to structure his schedule and set firm boundaries. "I'm realizing just how important the word 'no' is, even though people don't like to hear it very often," Feliz confesses. "I'm also a mega people-pleaser, so it's taken me a lot of practice to get used to saying it."

The singer also began opening up to his family about his emotions. It was only through this season of healthy re-evaluation that he was able to better assess the collateral damage and then take the necessary steps to prevent it from destroying him. "I realized the answer and the solution were right in front of me," Feliz says. "It just took me saying, 'Jesus, I need help. I can't do this by myself.'"

Now, on the heels of another No. 1 and two additional Top 10 radio hits from FUTURE's pop-centric singles "Witness," "Changed" and "Faith," Feliz is entering the next phase of his career with his priorities in order--a change of pace from his previous album cycle--as he crafts his third full-length project.

If lead single, "Glorify," is any indication, he's on the right track. The soulful, R&B-tinged cut takes listeners to church with a powerful Gospel choir backing Feliz's recognizable falsetto. In the vein of soulful acts like Earth, Wind & Fire, Al Green and Sam Cooke, Feliz pushes the song into wooden pew, altar call simplicity with a soaring praise-heavy chorus and signature propulsive beats.

"I don't know if I've ever been as excited as I am for a song as I am for this one," Feliz says of the new single. "Glorify means 'praise and worship,' but the sub-context of the word actually is to acknowledge and reveal the majesty and splendor of God by one's actions. For me, coming out of this hard season of anxiety and stress and messed up priorities, now all I want my life to do is to glorify. I want to reveal the majesty of God by my actions."

"Before we started working on new music, I started asking the Lord to give me something to say, and I felt like He just said, 'Say everything that's on your heart. Say everything that you've been through. Be as vulnerable as possible. Tell the world the thing that you're terrified to tell the world,'" Feliz says. "I think sometimes the things you're scared to bring to people are most likely the most impactful."

"Glorify" might not be a personal confession; but its message is simple as it lays out our sole purpose here on earth--the kind of purpose Feliz is now singularly focused on. "I feel like God has really revealed a lot to me in this season, and I think He's gearing me and my team up for something special. I'm really honored to be a part of the ride right now, and I just want God to be honored through it," Feliz shares. "I'm going to be the most vulnerable, God-loving, Jesus-focused person I can be. I want to show people who I am."