

CPYU 3(D) REVIEW

Song/Video: "The Lazy Song" - Bruno Mars

By Walt Mueller

Background/summary: This song is the third single release off the Grammy-winning singer's debut studio album, *Doo-Wops & Hooligans*. The album was released in October 2010, with the single dropping to radio on February 15, 2011. The single quickly charted and was one of the most-downloaded songs on iTunes. The video for "The Lazy Song" debuted on April 14, 2011. Bruno Mars is a pop music up-and-comer who is gaining influence and popularity among young music listeners.

Discover: What is the message/worldview?

- The reggae-influenced and catchy tune is simple and straightforward musically, lyrically, and visually. The video is shot from a stable single-camera, giving the appearance that Mars made it with a webcam in his bedroom. Mars sings to the camera while surrounded by five dancers (from the Asian-American dance troupe Poreotix), all of them wearing monkey masks.
- Mars begins by announcing that "today I don't feel like doing anything/I just wanna lay in my bed." He decides he won't pick up his phone, he's going to kick his feet up, he's going to watch TV, and he's going to throw his hand in his pants. . . all because he can and because "nobody's gon' tell me I can't" and "cause in my castle I'm the freak-in' man." He proceeds to say that he said it "cause I can."
- He goes on to list other things that he plans on doing. He'll spend time laying on his couch, "chillin' in my snuggie." He's going to watch MTV "so that they can teach me howda dougie" (urban slang for putting on swagger and having a cool or hip style).
- His laziness is going to extend into the next day. He announces that tomorrow he's going to wake up and do some exercising with P90X. Then he's going to "meet a really nice girl" and "have some really nice sex," so much so that she's going to "scream out 'This is great! (Oh my God! This is great!).'"
- He also teases with parental expectations when he sings, "I might mess around and get my college degree/I bet my old man would be so proud of me," but goes on to say "but sorry Pops, you'll just have to wait." Instead, he's going to "just strut in my birthday suit and let everything hang loose."



Discern: How does it stand in light of the biblical message/worldview?

- Rest is meant to be an essential and necessary part of our humanity. God has created us to live in a regular rhythm of work and rest. The model for this is God's creative work over the course of six days, followed by a seventh day of rest. In the same way, God commands humans to follow the same rhythm, taking a regular Sabbath and keeping it holy (Exodus 20:8-11). In today's world, many people are far too busy and in need of rest. When "lazy" is used in a way that loosely refers to this type of day off and the pursuit of much-needed God-centered quiet and rest, it can be justified.

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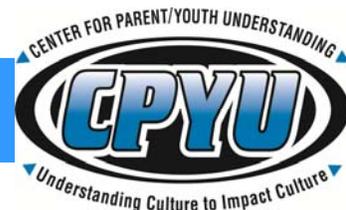
- At the same time, the Scriptures warn against laziness. The “slothful” person is one who is loose and undisciplined, avoiding work and a good work ethic. The writer repeatedly condemns those who are lazy, encouraging the “ sluggard” to “go to the ant” to “consider its ways and be wise!” (Proverbs 6:6-11). The Christian is responsible to work hard at whatever they find themselves doing, all in an effort to bring glory to God (Colossians 3:23&24).
- In today’s world, self-centeredness rules, with people erroneously believing – like Bruno Mars – that “it’s my life and I can do whatever I want with it just because I can.” This type of cavalier attitude is wrong, as it sets one’s self up as the Lord of one’s life. Instead, we are to love and serve the Lord Jesus Christ first, and then love our neighbor as ourselves (Mark 12:29-31). We are to live under God’s authority, not the authority of self.
- As with many in today’s popular culture, Bruno Mars reflects a casual attitude towards a variety of issues. . . attitudes that are totally contrary to God’s will and way. First, there is his attitude towards sexuality. Conventional wisdom takes a self-centered, mechanistic view of sex. “If I feel like I want to have sex, then I will.” Mars steps out of a biblical view of sexuality to plan the pursuit of sexual pleasure with someone he hasn’t even yet met. Second, his ho-hum attitude towards educational and vocational pursuits reflects today’s “whatever” and “whenever” spirit of a generation that often lacks direction and ambition. And third, Mars serves as his own authority, deferring to self and his personal desires as the basis for his direction and decisions.’



Decide: What do I do with it?

- “The Lazy Song” captures the spirit of the times with amazing forthrightness and clarity. Because it mirrors emerging values, attitudes, and behaviors, those charged with loving and nurturing children and teens should view, dissect, and discuss the song and its messages. Then, strategies must be developed to address issues raised in the song. These strategies must be balanced between the prophetic (What does the Bible have to say to issues raised in the song?), the preventive (How can we steer kids away from believing and living these things?), and the redemptive (How should we respond to and correct those who are already living out these ideas?).
- Because of the song’s mainstream popularity, this is one that can and should be shown to all of our middle school and high school students. Chances are, most of them have already heard it and they are mindlessly singing along. We should take the time to discuss the song and its messages from a biblical perspective, affirming those things that can be affirmed, and challenging those messages that are misguided, immoral, and wrong.
- The song can be used to spark thoughtful, biblically-based discussion on a variety of issues, including vocation, work, calling, rest, quiet, stress, casual sex, use of time, and authority.

Dr. Walt Mueller is the president of the Center for Parent/Youth Understanding.



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