

CPYU 3(D) REVIEW

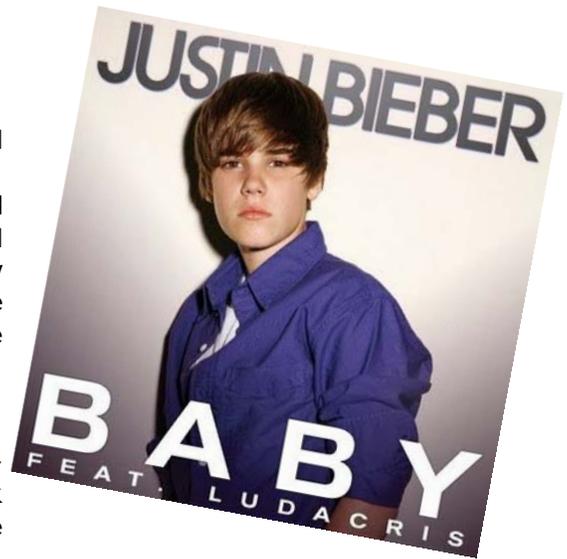
Song/Video: "Baby" by Justin Bieber

By Angelina Deola

Background/summary: According to DigitalJournal.com, Justin Bieber's hit, "Baby" has gained the attention of millions by claiming the title of the most viewed video in YouTube.com's five year history. On top of his YouTube fame, the sixteen-year-old Canadian hip-hop star's name is tweeted sixty times a second. Many websites title the craze, "Bieber Mania," and his fans are now hailed as "Beliebers." Justin Bieber was also recently announced "Best New Artist" at the 2010 VMA's. Given all of this, it will be important for parents and youth workers alike to determine what message this young man is spreading, for his influence reaches an incredibly large crowd of teens and preteens.

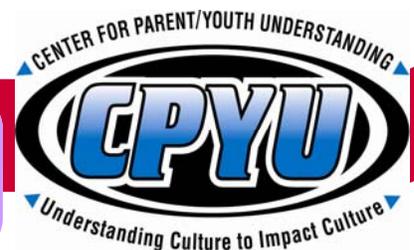
Discover: What is the message/worldview?:

- The song is about young love, particularly slighted young love. In the beginning of the song, Bieber says, "My first love, broke my heart for the first time," and the rest of the song is about his pining after her, and his willingness to go to any lengths—offering to buy her anything, or even any ring—if she would just take him back. Justin does not remain rejected, for at the close of the video, Justin draws in close to his girl, and they leave the bowling alley holding hands.
- The lyrics suggest that Bieber's first love is rejecting him, and the song is his attempt to sing her back into his life. Though the lyrics are almost desperate (at one point he sings, "I'm in pieces, baby fix me"), the mood of the video is playful and fun, with lots of dancing and flashes of bright lights.
- In a way, the piece makes the listener feel badly for Justin, for he is slighted by the girl he loves. As with his song "One Less Lonely Girl," the message of this song seems to encourage the listener that Justin Bieber is the ultimate guy, willing to go to any lengths for the girl he "loves."
- Love is tricky to define in this music video. Justin's "first love" claims there is another, ending their relationship. Justin sings about how he had hoped that he and his love would never be apart, and seems to suggest that "love" is meant to last. Love, however, is centered more on the emotional high that comes from new relationships, as well as the sexual tension that comes from dating (as demonstrated in how Bieber repeatedly touches the girl he likes) rather than the deep, intentional love as described in 1 Corinthians 13.
- The presence of Ludacris in this music video brings with it his reputation for sexually graphic lyrics.
- At one point in the video, Bieber rolls over on a pool table to confront the girl he is trying to win back and begs her to wake him from this bad dream of her rejecting him. He



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seems to see her as a savior, a fixer of his problems, and thus sends the message that having a girlfriend or boyfriend is of utmost importance, and gives the significant other the role of “god” or savior.

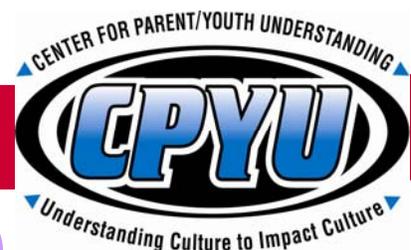
Discern: How does it stand in light of the biblical message/worldview?

- It is important to note that Bieber’s songs don’t match up with his actual views on life. “Baby,” and “One Less Lonely Girl,” suggest that Bieber is interested in long-term relationships where he will be the epitome of the perfect man... or boy. Yet, it seems Bieber is not consistent with his songs, or his own words. On September 18, 2010, Bieber reported to disneydreaming.com that “girlfriends are trouble at this age. Girls are fun to hang out with but, like, having that one steady girl... we’re constantly traveling and one girl’s not gonna really [work]. You can’t really have one girl, I don’t really have any crushes at the moment.” Despite his committed claims in his songs, Justin is still a sixteen-year-old struggling more than most with the pressures of teenage life.
- This song certainly hits on the topic of love and rejection. While it’s questionable as to why Bieber wants to get back together with his first love, the desire to be in relationship and to love is in line with the Bible. We were created to live in community. Relationships leading to marriage, one of the deepest relationships available to humans, are good. But, it’s important to differentiate pop culture’s definition of love and relationships, and God’s definition. Love is portrayed in “Baby” more as a fix to a drug problem than the not-self-seeking relationship described in the Bible (the idea of love as an addiction has become rather prevalent in today’s culture, from Kesha’s “Your Love is my Drug,” to Allstar Weekend’s “Come Down with Love”).

Decide: What do I do with it?

- Compared to the vast majority of music videos being produced today, this video is incredibly innocent and clean. It could easily be used as a catalyst for a discussion about the difference between the love Bieber sings of and the love God demonstrated on the cross, especially with younger teens who happen to be fans of Bieber.
- Despite the video’s innocence, there is a pattern emerging where the girls in Bieber’s videos are becoming older and less clothed (which is especially evident in the single “Eenie Meenie”), and Bieber himself is becoming more forward in his pursuits of those he “loves.” It might be useful to share the progression with both adult leaders and youth, to see how the industry “develops” pop stars and also to determine if that progression is setting precedence in your teenagers’ lives and relationships.

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