

CPYU 3(D) REVIEW

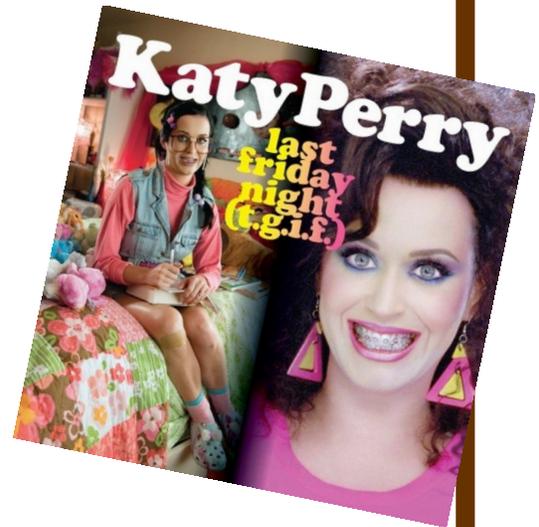
Song/Video: "Last Friday Night (T.G.I.F)" by Katy Perry

by Walt Mueller

Background/summary: This catchy dance/pop song is the fifth single from Katy Perry's *Teenage Dream* album to chart at #1, making her the second artist (Michael Jackson was the first) and first woman to have five songs from the same album top the singles charts. The single released on June 6, 2011, with the video debuting six days later. The eight-plus minute video is a mini-movie mimicking the teen-targeted coming-of-age films of the 1980s. It features appearances by Rebecca Black, Kenny G, Debby Gibson, Corey Feldman, Hanson, and members of the cast of *Glee*. Perry says the song was written the day after a night she spent partying, drinking, and even doing some streaking through a public park with friends in Santa Barbara.

Discover: What is the message/worldview?:

- The video opens with Perry portraying the nerdy 13-year-old Kathy Beth Terry waking up on a Saturday morning to a trashed bedroom, littered with passed out high-school boys, including one in her bed. After being congratulated by another boy who pops in to enthusiastically thank her for throwing the best party ever, she is stunned to find compromising pictures of herself from the night before—which she does not remember— posted online. The video then shifts into a visual and lyrical recounting of the previous night.
- Perry begins to sing about what she discovers as she pieces together the events of the last few hours by examining herself and her surroundings: "There's a stranger in my bed/There's a pounding in my head/Glitter all over the room. . . I smell like a minibar/DJ's passed out in the yard. . . . There's a hickey or a bruise. . ." (which she points to on her neck). After taking inventory and realizing that last night is a drunken blur, she concludes, "I'm screwed. . . Oh well. . . It's a blacked-out blur/But I'm pretty sure it ruled."
- As the previous night is visually re-run, Perry's Kathy Beth Terry goes next door to Rebecca Black's house and weaves through a front-yard full of party-goers to knock on the door and be pulled into the house by Black. After being rejected by a high school boy who finds her repulsive and then pursued by an equally nerdy male peer, Terry is then made-over by Black, a transformation from a 13-year-old nerd to a stunning and immodestly-dressed beauty.
- The metamorphosis goes from appearance to behavior. She is now lustily pursued by the boys. She engages in all the behavior that a few moments ago she had found so foreign and even appalling. She describes the night's activities: "We danced on tabletops/And we took too many shots/Think we kissed but I forgot. . . Yeah, we maxed our credit cards/And got kicked out of the bar. . . We went streaking in the park/Skinny dipping in the dark/Then had a ménage a trois."
- The transformed Terry concludes that even though what they did was illegal ("Yeah, I think we broke the law"), they will go out "This Friday night" and "do it all again/do it all again" even though "we always say we're gonna stop."
- The song ends with Terry's stereotypically clueless parents arriving home and asking for an explanation. With no consequences/discipline, they actually approve as they tell their young daughter that they were the ones who *really* invented Fridays. As the video closes and credits roll, the curious young adolescent settles back in her bed and takes a peek into her male bedfellow's pants.



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

- According to Perry, the song is about “debauchery,” a word the dictionary defines as “corruption of fidelity” and “seduction from virtue.” It is an excessive indulgence of lust and sensuality. The Bible consistently condemns debauchery as sinful behavior, naming many of the elements Perry celebrates in her song as wrong: orgies, drunkenness, sexual immorality, sensuality, etc. (Romans 13:13; 2 Corinthians 12:21; Galatians 5:19; Ephesians 5:18; 1 Peter 4:3). Instead, we are called to be “filled with the Spirit” (Ephesians 5:18).
- Actions have consequences that are immediate, long-term, and even eternal. God’s commandments and parameters exist to keep us from harm and to provide for our wholistic well-being. In Galatians 5, the Apostle Paul describes what it means for followers of Christ to walk by the Spirit of God, contrasting the desires of the flesh against the desires of the Spirit. We are told that those who choose to walk by the flesh and “do such things will not inherit the Kingdom of God.”
- Since the moment we humans first chose to follow our own will and way instead of flourishing within God’s boundaries and parameters, we have been flawed. Our default setting is to choose that which is wrong, rather than that which is right. The Apostle Paul wrote about his own struggle with sin in Romans 7 and his desire to do the right thing but to keep on doing the wrong thing. Perry echoes Paul’s words when she tells listeners about always saying she will stop, but then doing it all again. With Paul, we must realize our need to be delivered through confession, repentance, and salvation through Jesus Christ (Romans 7:7-25).

Decide: What do I do with it?

- Children and teens – the primary listening audience for this song – are incredibly vulnerable to media influence as a result of where they’re at in the developmental process. They want answers to their questions. Their beliefs and behaviors are shaped by catchy tunes like “Last Friday Night.” The song “maps” the transition from childhood to adulthood. While some will argue that the song is a joke that kids will “get,” the great majority of kids might not only emulate what they see and hear, but will be desensitized by the softening of “the blow” of debauchery by embedding it in lyrical and visual humor. For that reason, we must view the song with our kids, deconstructing it’ message in light of God’s Word.
- The video can be shown to students and used to spark discussion on a variety of topics including sexuality, authority, substance abuse, partying, gender roles, body image, identity, peer pressure, etc. In addition, the video can serve as a springboard into opening the Scriptures to teach about discipleship, consequences, obedience, sin, repentance, forgiveness, and what it means to integrate one’s faith into daily life.
- The “Last Friday Night” video offers a case study in how to effectively cross-market and embed product to children and adolescents in today’s world. Consequently, we should ask kids to spot the marketing efforts in the song (the band Hanson, Rebecca Black, Glee, the *Just Dance 2* video game, etc.) The song can be used to make kids savvy to marketing.
- “Last Friday Night” is an ideal song to use to teach students how to think Christianly and Biblically about music and media. Show it to your group and then take the time to break into groups to filter the song and video through CPYU’s *How to Use Your Head to Guard Your Heart 3(D)* Media Evaluation guide (available online at www.cpyu.org).



Scan this code to watch the “Last Friday Night” video.

Scan this code to access info on the *How to Use Your Head to Guard Your Heart 3(D)* Media Evaluation Guide.

