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CPYU (D) REVIEW By Walt Mueller



"good 4 u"

by Olivia Rodrigo

Background/summary:

Best known for her starring role in *High School Musical: The Musical: The Series*, 18-year-old Olivia Rodrigo has taken the pop music world by storm since debuting her singing/songwriting talents in January 2021 with the release of her first single, "Drivers License". On May 14, her third pre-release single, "good 4 u" debuted at #1 on the Billboard Hot 100 chart, and charted globally. The pop/rock/punk/grunge sounding single continues to break records for streams and downloads, with the official video approaching 150 million views. Her debut album, *Sour*, was released on May 21. As of the end of June, ten of the album's singles were sitting on the Billboard Hot 100 chart.

song/
video

(D)iscover

WHAT IS THE MESSAGE/WORLDVIEW?

- The post-break-up song lyrically and emotionally addresses the lover who jilted her with words and postures oozing hurt, anger, attitude, angst, and vengeance. The video draws inspiration from three cult-classic films, loosely reprising scenes from *Jennifer's Body* (a 2009 horror flick about a demon-possessed high school cheerleader who kills her male classmates), *Audition* (a 1999 Japanese horror film), and *The Princess Diaries* (as Rodrigo wears a cheerleading uniform identical to that of the film's cheerleader/bully, Lana Thomas).
- The song opens with Rodrigo addressing her former boyfriend, who feels none of the regret and pain Rodrigo is feeling: **Well, good for you, I guess you moved on really easily/You found a new girl and it only took a couple weeks.** She reminds him of his promise: **Remember when you said that you wanted to give me the world (ah-ah-ah-ah).** She goes on to sarcastically commend him for seeking out therapy and becoming a **better man for your brand new girl.**
- The tempo picks up into an angry pace as Rodrigo jumps into the chorus, the video depicting her as an irate high school cheerleader: **Well good for you, you look happy and healthy, not me. . . Good for you, you're doin' great out there without me baby/God, I wish that I could do that/I've lost my mind, I've spent the night cryin' on the floor of my bathroom/But you're so unaffected, I really don't get it.**
- Her anger builds as she sings, **Well, good for you, I guess you're gettin' everything you want/You bought a new car and your career's really takin' off/It's like we never even happened/Baby, what the f___ is up with that?/And good for you, it's like you never even met me/Remember when you swore to God I was the only person who ever got you?/Well, screw that and screw you!/You will never have to hurt the way you know that I do!**
- The song continues with Rodrigo lamenting that **Maybe I'm too emotional. . . your apathy is like a wound in salt. . . or maybe you never cared at all.** The song climaxes as she screams at him, calling him a **"damn sociopath!"**
- As she lyrically expresses her hurt and anger, the video shows her plan for revenge unfold as she goes into a grocery store to purchase two items: a bag of Smartfood white cheddar popcorn, and a five-gallon gas can. The setting for her continued diatribe is her former boyfriend's bedroom, which she has flooded and set on fire. Rodrigo has moved from being a hurt victim to being a perpetrating hurt-inducer.



Walt Mueller is the President and Founder of the Center for Parent/Youth Understanding.

(D)iscern

HOW DOES IT STAND IN LIGHT OF THE BIBLICAL MESSAGE/WORLDVIEW?

- Relational breakdowns, interpersonal conflict, and the hurt/pain that follow are part and parcel of living in a sinful and broken world. Sin has polluted, broken, and undone all things in God's good creation. Nothing is left untouched, including humanity. Every relationship, no matter how healthy, will be marked by conflict at some level. Wherever two or three broken people are gathered together, there is bound to be difficulty from time to time. The Apostle Paul reminds us that we battle with our fallen flesh 24/7, a battle evidenced in all kinds of sin, including enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, dissensions, etc. (**Galatians 5:19-21**). Rather than caving in to sin, we are to **"put to death what is earthly in you"** (**Colossians 3:1-10**).
- When emotional pain and heartache result from the hurtful behavior of others, the Christian is called to respond in ways that bring honor and glory to God. In the midst of our anger we are not to sin (**Ephesians 4:26-27**). In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus reminds us that **"Blessed are the peacemakers"** (**Matthew 5:9**), that vengeance-filled anger is liable to divine judgement (**Matthew 5:21-26**), that retaliation is wrong (**Matthew 5:38-42**), and that we are to love our enemies (**Matthew 5:43-48**). While emotions can run hot and high, we are to manage our emotions not on our own willpower and strength, but with the help of the Holy Spirit.
- Our ability to handle relational difficulties and heartache grows as we immerse ourselves prayerfully in God's Word, allowing the Holy Spirit to sanctify and grow us. In addition, our habits form us. In other words, walking by the Spirit and seeking to practice the Fruit of the Spirit will yield a harvest of the Fruit of the Spirit in our lives (**Galatians 5:16-26**). In obedient response to God's grace in our lives, we are to put on compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, forbearance, forgiveness, and love (**Colossians 3:1-17**).
- The doctrine of God's Providence teaches us that the God who created all things does not step away from His creation, leaving it to chance, fate, luck, or fortune. Rather, God has remained continually involved in all things He has made, directing them as He will. Providence teaches us that God is at work in the midst of our circumstances – even relational breakdowns – to complete His good work in our lives. We must pray to see difficult circumstances from this perspective, realizing that in the moment we might not see what He is doing. Still, we must trust that in the long run we will be able to see how He uses our difficulties for our good and His glory. At times, God is actually saving us from something that would undo us.

(D)ecide

WHAT DO I DO WITH IT?

- Show the **"good 4 u"** video to parents and youth workers to give them a clear perspective on how the adolescent experience of breakups can be devastating to kids. Help them see that Olivia Rodrigo is giving kids an unhealthy and sinful script for how to deal with breakups and relational conflict of all kinds. Because our kids are prone to follow the cultural narrative, prepare parents and youth workers to teach kids how to respond Christianly and counter-culturally in ways that bring glory to God.
- With parental permission, show the video to your students, using it as a discussion-starter which contrasts the cultural narrative with the biblical narrative on a variety of topics, including commitment, love, dating, relationships, handling break-ups, anger, revenge, etc. Ask them for their opinions on why the song has become so popular among their peers.
- Since **"good 4 u"** is such a simple and straightforward lyrical/video package, it is a perfect song to use to teach kids how to think critically and Christianly using the 3(D) method used in this handout. For more information and to order copies of our **How To Use Your Head To Guard Your Heart: A 3(D) Guide To Making Wise Media Choices** for your students, visit CPYU online at cpyu.org/3d, or scan this QR code.

