

CPYU 3(D) REVIEW

Song/Video: "Who Owns My Heart?" - Miley Cyrus

By Walt Mueller

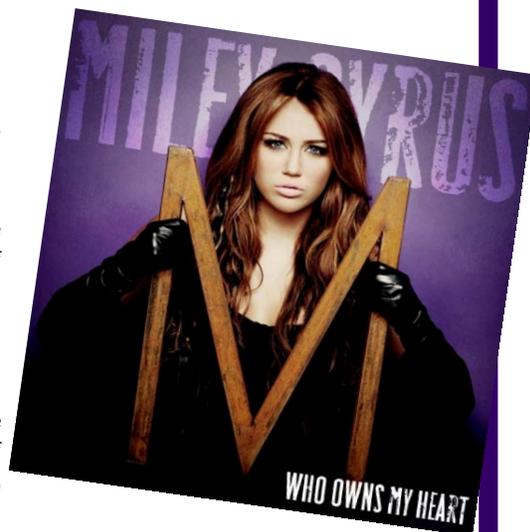
Background/summary: This is the second single release from the 17-year-old *Hannah Montana* star's third studio album, *Can't Be Tamed*, which was released in late June, 2010. Co-written by Cyrus, the catchy pop/dance song and its video were released in October in European music markets. However, the racy video has generated quite a buzz in the U.S. among concerned parents and critics as it has had a growing internet presence and widespread viewership among Cyrus's young female fan base in the U.S.

Discover: What is the message/worldview?:

- The song needs to be processed in the larger context of the album, which Cyrus admits "says the most about me. I wanted this album to be completely and totally honest. It's really about a little of everything going on in my life right now." She says the album is a call to girls to empower themselves and free "yourself from anything you think is holding you back," including limits on identity decisions set by parents and teachers (mtv.com).
- The video opens with a sexy, sultry, and seductively-clad Cyrus waking up and getting herself ready to attend a dance party. The stage is set for her to give in and follow the lead of the music and its beat as she sings, "Creation shows me what to do/I'm dancing on the floor with you/When you touch my hand/I go crazy."
- After a limo ride to the site of the party, Cyrus steps onto the dance floor, grinding with girls and guys alike to the pulsating beat of the song. It's the music that guides, directs, and drives her: "The music tells me what to feel/I like you now, but is it real?/By the time we say goodnight/I will know if this is right."
- Thematically, the song wonders aloud if her feelings for the other are genuine (sparked hormonally by physical contact), or if it's just the power of the music: "Who owns my heart?/Is it love?/Or is it art?/Cause the way you got your body movin's got me confused/I can't tell if it's the beat or sparks. . . . You know I wanna believe that we're a masterpiece/But sometime's it's hard to tell in the dark. . . Who owns my heart? . . . Are you feelin' me or is the music to blame?"
- As the song comes to a close, Cyrus avoids her previous questions, caving in to her feelings. She sings, "So come on baby/Keep provokin' me/Keep on ropin' me/Like a rodeo/Come on pull me close."

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

- In a nod to God as the Creator who made humans in His image as the crowning point of the entire created order - placing them/us over everything else He created (Genesis 1:27-31) - Cyrus refers to being like "living art" and "a masterpiece." While these terms capture the reality of who we are as God's created beings, Cyrus quickly corrupts the terms, draining them of their purpose as she appeals to, serves, and worships her own feelings and opinions, rather than the will and way of the One who made her.



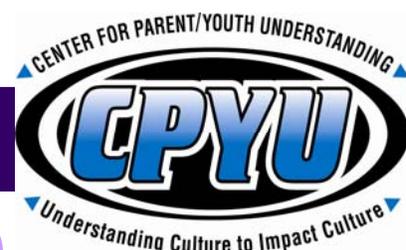
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- The song's title asks a question about one's allegiance in life. In the Scriptures, the "heart" refers to the whole person and the center of one's self. In essence, Cyrus is asking "Who owns me?" or "Who do I serve?" Augustine got it right when he wrote in his *Confessions*, "You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in you."
- According to the song, and in a fashion that reflects our individualized postmodern times, one's own feelings and will supersede transcendent truth as the guide to life. But Jesus corrects that thinking and sends us down the right path when he says, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free" (John 8:31&32). Cyrus not only seeks answers in the wrong way, but the answers she chooses are horribly wrong, making her a disciple of something other than the God-Man Jesus Christ.
- God's wonderful created order and purpose for our identity and our sexuality are dreadfully distorted in the video. Our culture's bent towards objectifying females - reducing them to eye-candy and physical/sexual objects rather than integrated and valuable persons - is evident. Sexuality is reduced to being self-serving, self-gratifying, and mechanistic, rather than being an expression of committed, covenantal marriage (see Song of Solomon). The Scriptures are clear: we are to flee from sexual temptation and sin (I Corinthians 6:18-20), while embracing the wonderful freedom of indulging our sexuality according to God's grand design.

Decide: What do I do with it?

- Miley Cyrus and "Who Owns My Heart?" serves a powerful case study regarding the music industry, artist development/evolution, and the power of music in the lives of young music listeners (elementary and pre-teen). This video is worth showing to those who are raising and ministering to kids of all ages. Place it in the context of the short Miley Cyrus history, pointing out that the song is performed by a 17-year-old teenager who just four years ago began her stint on the Disney Channel as Hannah Montana, the darling hero of the impressionable five to nine-year-old set. To these kids, Miley Cyrus is indistinguishable from Hannah Montana – they are one and the same. This might be the most influential song the world of popular music has seen in quite some time.
- Because music serves as a map to guide children and teens into a set of values and attitudes that they will most-likely embrace for life, those who are the influencers in their lives must not only be familiar with Cyrus and her music, but must be willing and able to discuss the music and its messages with their kids. We recommend showing "Who Owns My Heart?" to all parents. Follow-up with a discussion on how to discuss and process the singer and her music with kids.
- If the kids you know and love have already seen the song's video, watch it with them. Teach them how to use the 3(D) steps, and don't miss the opportunity to address all the issues raised by the song (worship, idolatry, sexuality, identity, objectification, modesty, gender roles, moral standards, dancing, and dress) from a Biblical perspective.

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



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