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CPYU (D) REVIEW

By Walt Mueller



song/
video

“Despacito”

by Luis Fonsi and Daddy Yankee

Background/summary:

Released in audio and video format on January 12, 2017, the Spanish-language song was named the 2017 “**Song of the Summer**,” ending the summer as the most-streamed song in history. By April 2018, “**Despacito**” had become the most viewed YouTube video in history, with **over 5 billion views**. The danceable Reggaeton/Latin Pop song has topped the charts in almost 50 countries, has garnered multiple awards, and was banned in Malaysia.

(D)iscover

WHAT IS THE MESSAGE/WORLDVIEW?

- The song’s title is translated as “**slowly**,” “**gently**,” “**softly**,” and/or “**quietly**” in English. Written to be danceable, the song’s lyrics are sung in Spanish, with few English-speaking listeners fully understanding the meaning of the song. Reviewers have accurately called it “**less-than-innocent**,” as the song offers a steamy narrative of the singer’s desire to satisfy his sexual lust.
- The song’s video is a celebration of the beauty and culture of Puerto Rico. The singers move from setting to setting, all the while sharing their intentions regarding the female objects of their desire, who figure prominently in the dance and party scenes.
- The song begins with a statement of mutual physical attraction: “**Yes, you know I’ve been looking at you for a long time/I must dance with you today/I saw that the look in your eyes was calling me/Show me the path that I will take.**” He finds her physical beauty difficult to resist and begins to develop his plan to satisfy his lust: “**You, you’re the magnet and I’m the metal/I am getting closer and making a plan/Simply thinking about it makes my heart race.**”
- He states his intentions regarding what he wants to do with her and how he wants to do it: “**Now, I’m already liking it more than usual/All of my senses are asking for more/We cannot do this in a rush. . . I want to breathe in your neck slowly/Let me murmur things in your ear/ So that you remember if you’re not with me.**”
- The song’s trajectory becomes more specific in terms of stating his sexual desires: “**I want to see your hair dance/I want to be your rhythm/Want you to show my mouth your favorite places/Let me trespass your danger zones until I make you scream/And you forget your last name.**”
- He moves beyond foreplay and oral sex to progress further: “**Come try my mouth and see if you like its taste/I want to see how much love fits into you.**” As the song winds down he sings, “**We’re gonna do it on a beach in Puerto Rico/Until the waves scream ‘Oh Lord!’/So that my seal stays with you.**”



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?

- The Genesis creation account establishes the clear fact that God made all things and declared them good (Genesis 1&2). This includes sex and sexuality, which God created to be experienced within the context of a covenantal, life-long, monogamous heterosexual marriage between one man and one woman. The act of sexual intercourse and the gift of sexual foreplay/progression leading up to intercourse are a gift to a husband and wife which have purpose: to consummate a marriage, foster unity (Genesis 2:24), give mutual pleasure, and fill the earth (procreation). Any sexual activity beyond God's order and design is called "**sexual sin**" or "**sexual immorality.**"
- The Scriptures tell us that taking any created thing and making it an ultimate thing is idolatry. In today's culture, indulging one's sexual desires without borders and boundaries has become an end in and of itself, thereby making sexual immorality a type of idol. This breaks the first two of the Ten Commandments.
- Luis Fonsi and Daddy Yankee have created a song that celebrates and encourages the indulgence of one's lust. In the Hebrew language, **lust** is a craving or desire that promises satisfaction. Proverbs 5 offers a sobering narrative of the dangers of going down this path and the traps/snares that wait to consume one when what in the moment seems/feels so right.
- While physical desires are placed in us by God, we know that all creation is broken, including these desires. Our default setting is to do the wrong thing. Because sex and sexuality are such powerful realities, we are warned to "**flee from sexual immorality**" (I Corinthians 6:18).
- Our dignity and value as human beings made in the image of God are rooted in our humanity rather than in our appearance. "**Despacito**" and the culture elevate physical attraction and the acting on such without borders and boundaries to the highest level, thereby turning human beings into nothing more than sexual objects, along with turning our desire for our spouse into a selfish hunger to simply be satisfied.

(D)ecide

WHAT DO I DO WITH IT?

- Since nearly all students have heard the song multiple times (and perhaps can even sing it in Spanish), use the song's audio to contrast the spirit of the times on sex/sexuality, and God's Word on sex and sexuality. Encourage questions, and answer them honestly.
- When using "**Despacito**" as a springboard for discussion on matters of sex and sexuality, always begin by affirming the goodness of sex and sexuality as gifts given to us by God. They are a good part of our humanity and are not to be scorned.
- Use the song to discuss the theological reality of humanity's fall into sin (Genesis 3:6) and the manner in which our brokenness extends to all nooks and crannies of life, including sex and sexuality. Affirm God's good gift of salvation through His Son, Jesus Christ, and the life of sexual discipleship to which His followers are called. Don't negate the difficulties and struggles of this life. Rather, discuss God's promised measure of grace that always offers a way out from temptation and sin (I Corinthians 10:13).
- Ask students to discuss what relationships should be built upon. Physical attraction? Lust? Sacrifice? Covenant? Trust? Etc. Get them to consider the contrast between the cultural narrative and the biblical narrative.
- "**Despacito**" offers students a powerful opportunity to think critically and Christianly about popular music. Run them through the **3(D)** evaluation steps (**Discover, Discern, Decide**) and end with a strong challenge to consider whether or not music that undoes God's order and design should be celebrated, sung, or even danced to.