

3(D) Review { By Walt Mueller }

SONG/VIDEO: "Blurred Lines"

Robin Thicke, Pharrell, T.I.

Background/summary:

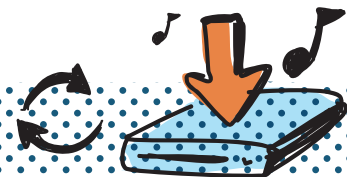
Written and recorded in an hour-and-a-half, this title cut from Robin Thicke's sixth studio album was named Billboard's "Song of the Summer" for 2013. Released on March 26, 2013, the song has charted at #1 in multiple countries and stayed atop the U.S. Billboard Hot 100 chart for twelve weeks, becoming **the longest-running chart-topping single in the U.S. this decade.** The music

video for "Blurred Lines" was released in two versions on March 20, 2013. Both videos feature a trio of models with the trio of singers. In the "clean" or "edited" version, the models are minimally dressed. In the "unedited" version, the models are topless and seen dancing naked with the exception of flesh-colored G-strings. **Both versions are available for viewing online.**



DISCOVER: What is the message/worldview?

- Thicke says the song's title is *"about blurring the lines between men and women and how much we're the same. . . And the other side which is the blurred lines between a good girl and a bad girl."* He claims that *"even very good girls all have little bad sides to them."* He says the song's purpose is to *"stir conversation"* and that *"it's supposed to make us talk about what's important and what the relationship between men and women is."*
- The singer tells the female object he's spotted that *"you're an animal, baby, it's in your nature/Just let me liberate you."* Over and over again he tells her that he knows she desires a sexual encounter: *"I know you want it/I know you want it/I know you want it. . ."*
- He refers to her as *"the hottest bitch in the place"* and goes on to say *"I feel so lucky/You wanna hug me?"* Then, with thinly veiled innuendo he asks, *"What rhymes with hug me?"* He gets even more direct when he claims *"I'm gonna take a good girl. . . One thing I ask of you/Let me be the one you back that ass to. . . I'll give you something big enough to tear your ass in two. . . Not many women can refuse this pimpin'."*
- Thicke maintains that the video is all done in a silly and fun way: *"It makes me smile. It doesn't even look dangerous."* He also says, *"We tried to do everything that was taboo. Bestiality, drug injections, and everything that is completely derogatory towards women. Because the three of us are happily married with children, we were like, 'We're the perfect guys to make fun of this.'"*
- The video—in both versions—depicts a simply staged (in front of a blank wall) encounter between the three singers and the three models. There is no relationship. This is purely a lusty encounter where the fully-dressed men ogle and touch the girls as they seductively move and dance. There is a clear delineation between the consumers and the object to be consumed. At one point in the "edited" version, silver balloons spell out "Robin Thicke has a big D" on the wall. In the "unedited" version, the same balloons are shown with the last "D" word spelled out in its entirety.
- The video ends with a visual clue that sex is commodified. Thicke hands T.I. a roll of bills and T.I. starts to count out money that viewers assume will be paid in a transaction with the girls.





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

- Our kids are **“over-sexed”** thanks to the constant barrage of sexual messages being fed to them by pop culture. “Blurred Lines” affirms the cultural messages they hear, specifically that there are no boundaries when it comes to sexuality. You can do whatever you want, wherever you want, however you want, whenever you want, with whomever you want. Contrary to these beliefs, the reality is that sex has been created by God as a good gift that He’s given humanity. The Scriptures are clear from Genesis to Revelation: Sex is a wonderful and good thing when it is shared between one man and one woman within the context of covenantal marriage (Genesis 1&2). We are to flee from sexual immorality (Colossians 3:5; Galatians 5:19-21; I Corinthians 6:18).
- Culture puts a premium on **appearances**. Our boys are growing up in a culture that encourages them to view females as nothing more or less than sexual objects. Our girls are learning that they must center their lives and identities on creating a visual persona that pleases the boys. . . including everything from clothing, to makeup, to hair, to body shape, to how they talk, etc. Identity is now found in “sexual consumerism.” “Blurred Lines” both reflects and promotes these values, where females are “displayed,” “purchased,” “consumed,” and then “disposed of” by male consumers. The Scriptures tell us that we have been made **by** God and **for** God. **Finding our identity in anything other than Christ is idolatry** (I John 5:21; Exodus 20:3-6). While humans mistakenly focus on outward appearance, it is our hearts that need to be cultivated into faithful obedience to God (I Samuel 16:7; Proverbs 31:30).
- It is a good thing that our culture is increasingly sensitive to and responding to the scourge of sexual trafficking. Whether it be the trafficking of real flesh and blood human beings, or the use of photos, videos and other imagery, the business of selling sex and selling a culture of sexual objectification is **wrong**. “Blurred Lines” promotes both. And with an audience of vulnerable young people looking on and listening in, these compelling and convincing lessons are being taught, learned, and embraced. “Blurred Lines” contributes to our sexualized culture of objectification and misogyny.
- The dictionary defines **“Pornography”** as “the depiction of erotic behavior intended to cause sexual excitement.” The word “Pornography” is rooted in the Greek word “porneia,” which means to practice prostitution, sexual immorality, or fornication. In the New Testament, the Apostle Paul frequently uses the word in reference to any kind of sinful and illegitimate sexual activity. “Blurred Lines” meets these definitions, doing so in a manner that is unprecedented for a chart-topping song and video that is popular among all ages of children and teens.



DECIDE: What do I do with it?

- You can be assured that the overwhelming majority of kids have heard and seen “Blurred Lines.” They are aware of the “unedited” version and many have gone there. While we don’t recommend showing the video to students, we do recommend aggressively looking for opportunities to talk about the song and its messages, contrasting those messages with the Scriptures. Discussions can include sex, sexuality, objectification, body image, pornography, misogyny, sexual trafficking and aggression, and what makes music “good.”
- Talk about Robin Thicke’s statement about the “silly and fun” nature of the song. Discuss the proper understanding of, place for, and use of humor. Talk about the life-shaping power of music/media and the need for consistency and clarity between a song’s message and an artist’s intent.

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



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