

**Youth Culture Lesson**  
**Finding Teachable Moments in Culture**  
**From *YouthWorker Journal* and [YouthWorker.com](http://YouthWorker.com)**

**‘Why Did You Do It?’**

Our Choices Impact More than Ourselves

By Paul Asay

When singer Justin Bieber was arrested in January for driving under the influence, many of his fans took it hard. Perhaps none was more disappointed than an 8-year-old Ohio girl named Serafina.

The second grader was so upset at Bieber’s arrest (he had alcohol, pot and prescription drugs in his system while drag racing a rented Lamborghini) that she wrote him an open letter, asking him to reconsider his behavior. What follows is what she wrote.

“I’m very disappointed. It breaks my heart that you were in jail for just one night. I loved most of your songs. I dance to them a lot! So many things have changed this year. This is the biggest one yet! Why did you do it? Why did you race cars? What made you do it?

“Didn’t you know it was a bad thing to do? I’ve read your books and watched your movies. You had something special. But you gave it up for drugs. My whole life I have been warned about drugs! And now my idol has started taking them! There are many drunk people in the world and you have become one of them. That’s sad to me! I think you should be disappointed in your self. Just take a minute to think about what you did.”

According to her mother, Serafina started crying when she heard about Bieber’s night in jail. “I used his arrest as an opportunity to talk to her about good and bad choices,” she told Fox News.

**Talk About It**

Serafina wasn’t alone. Thousands of Bieber’s fans—sometimes called Beliebers—are having an increasingly hard time believing in their teen idol. We can’t know whether Bieber read or heard about Serafina’s letter, but she made it perfectly clear the singer’s choices aren’t hurting just himself. They are hurting the legions of fans who admire and trust him.

The reach and influence we have over other people isn’t as broad as Bieber’s. We don’t have millions of fans and Twitter followers paying attention to our every move, but our impact runs just as deep. People care about what we do and say; when we make bad decisions, it’s not just ourselves we hurt.

When have you made a choice that hurt someone else? Have you made your parents cry? Have you let down your friends or teachers? Disappointed someone very close to you? What was worse for you—the pain you caused *yourself* by your own bad decision or the pain you caused someone else?

Sometimes our bad decisions can hurt not just someone’s feelings, but the trust someone might’ve placed in us. What’s the best way to go about repairing that trust? How did you go about fixing things?

Justin Bieber was raised by a Christian mom and still publicly credits his faith for helping him through tough times. If you were Justin Bieber's advisor, what would you say he should do to get through *these* tough times? How would you advise him to start fixing his reputation?

### **What the Bible Says**

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to Him, and He will make your paths straight" (Prov. 3:5-6).

"If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you" (James 1:5).

"Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, 'This is the way; walk in it'" (Isa. 30:21).

Paul Asay has covered religion for *The Washington Post*, *Christianity Today*, [Beliefnet.com](http://Beliefnet.com) and *The (Colorado Springs) Gazette*. He writes about culture for *Plugged In* and wrote the Batman book, *God on the Streets of Gotham* (Tyndale). He lives in Colorado Springs with wife Wendy and his two children. Follow him on Twitter at @AsayPaul.