

Being a Good Witness

Thank goodness, thought Jeanne, that Brad was one of those youth workers who was always there when you needed him. He was driving her to the hospital to visit a youth group student because Jeanne was afraid to drive through downtown traffic, especially during the late afternoon commute.

As they pulled into the hospital parking garage, Brad cut too close to a parked car, clipping its right side, seriously gashing the door, and shattering the tail light.

Brad stopped immediately and told Jeanne to visit her friend while he took care of the problem, then meet her in the lobby later.

"Is everything okay?" Jeanne asked as they climbed back in the car an hour later to go home. "I feel kind of responsible...I mean, you wouldn't have been here if it wasn't for me."

"Don't worry," Brad assured her. "Everything's fine. It's not your fault."

Jeanne had almost forgotten about the accident when Brad called her a week later.

"Jeanne, I, um, have a little problem. You remember that accident I had at the hospital last week? Well, I decided not to leave a note—because the church hasn't been able to pay me the last few weeks, so I let my insurance lapse."

Yet someone had apparently seen Brad hit the other car and had called the police. The witness also wrote down Brad's license plate. Brad told the police that, yes, it was his car—but that Jeanne, not he, had been driving.

"Jeanne, if the church knew I was driving without insurance, I'd lose my job. Please do this for me: tell the police that you were driving, and I'll pay you or your parents back for the damage to the car. Besides, your parents have insurance on you. The insurance company will pay for it."

"But Brad," Jeanne protested, "you're asking me to lie for you and risk my own driving record, as well as my parent's anger. Isn't what you did considered a lie and run?"

"Don't worry about it, Jeanne. I told them we left a note and it must have blown away."

Jeanne was shocked. Her youth worker was lying...but she felt the whole incident was her fault...but lying for her youth worker just didn't seem right...but she'd feel terrible if Brad lost his job over this. It was Brad she had confided in when she had sex with her boyfriend. Brad had kept his word and told no one. So how could she now betray his confidence? She decided to tell the police she was driving.



"Everyone lies.

It's just part of being a teenager. If you can keep your folks happy by lying, why not? I don't think it's okay to lie all the time, and I don't think you should lie to your friends, but, hey, I'm sure my parents didn't tell their parents the truth either. It saves everyone a lot of pain. Lying is just the way to keep your parents from having a heart attack. Believe me, what they don't know won't hurt them."

Brenda, 17, junior

The Stats

Of Christians who classify themselves as born again, 26% don't believe they have a responsibility to share their faith with others.

Barna Research Group
March 18, 1996

By the Book...

Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity. Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching...Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress. Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.

1 Timothy 4:12-13, 15-16

Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly.

James 3:1

1. What would you have done if you were Jeanne?

2. Did Jeanne owe Brad because he had kept a confidence of hers?

3. Does the fact that Brad is a liar disqualify him from ministry?

4. Was Jeanne responsible for Brad's accident?

