

**Youth Culture Lesson**  
**Finding Teachable Moments in Culture**  
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**No Lie**

Fibs Have a Way of Growing

By Paul Asay

**What Happened**

Like many parents this May, Paul and Joanne Steindorf were excited to watch their son, Jon, graduate from college. They fully expected he'd be marching in his cap and gown May 9 and accepting his diploma from Penn State University. When they drove to his apartment to pick him up for his commencement exercises, he wasn't there.

The fact their son was gone was vexing enough, but when they tried to track him down through the university, Paul and Joanne discovered Jon wasn't a student there. He hadn't been registered at Penn State for a full year.

A manhunt was launched. Friends searched hiking trails for Jon with no luck. Jon's keys and credit cards were found in his apartment. In desperation, his father went to the police and took the case to the media. "We love him and want him to come home to us," Paul told the press. "That's all that matters to us is that he's safe at home."

Jon was spotted the next day, and police took him back to his family. "I asked if he wanted a ride to his parents, and he got in the car and our case is closed," says State College Police Department Lt. Keith Robb. "This is a happy story." So it is. However, while Jon's parents are very happy with his return, we can be sure they're asking him some fairly serious questions.

**Talk About It**

We can't know why Jon Steindorf disappeared on the eve of his non-graduation ceremony—but it's not too hard to conjure up a likely story. Perhaps Jon was struggling in his classes. Perhaps he got sick of school. Whatever the reason, he dropped out, and he was simply too scared or embarrassed to tell his parents.

As the days and weeks passed, perhaps it became harder and harder for Jon to tell the truth. The lie grew too big to tell the truth—but it also grew too big to hide. Eventually, maybe it seemed as if the only thing Jon could do was run away.

It's easy to see from a distance that it's better to deal with a problem head-on than lie about it, but most of us probably have some experience this sort of lie. Most of us probably have wanted to run away from a lie that grew just too big for us.

Have you ever lied to save yourself from embarrassment? To keep from getting in trouble or disappointing your parents? When was your lie discovered? What was the fallout?

Did a lie ever grow so big that you just wanted to run away or escape somehow? Did you try? What did you learn from the experience? Do you think most lies are uncovered sooner or later?

**What the Bible Says**

“Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord, but those who act faithfully are His delight” (Prov. 12:22).

“For nothing is hidden that will not be made manifest, nor is anything secret that will not be known and come to light” (Luke 8:17).

“‘Am I a God at hand,’ declares the Lord, ‘and not a God far away? Can a man hide himself in secret places so that I cannot see him?’ declares the Lord. ‘Do I not fill heaven and earth?’ declares the Lord” (Jer. 23:23-24).