

# Judge Not Lest You Be Judged

## Week Eight A Trip to the Beach

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The next week, instead of attending the weekly Interdenominational Campus Fellowship meeting, Ed and Amy skip out mid Friday afternoon. As they are packing up Ed's Jeep, Amy tells Ed, "I can't tell you how much I appreciate you taking me to the beach. Thank you so much." Ed replies, "no problem. And, besides, why wait until Spring break to hit the beach?" Amy replies, "that's a good point. If it were up to me, I'd be there every weekend. But, I don't have a car." Ed asks Amy, "why didn't we think of heading to the beach over the weekends earlier in the semester?" Amy replies, "yeah, seriously!"

Checking the oil in the Jeep before they head out, Ed asks Amy, "are you sure you have everything?" Amy replies, "I think I have everything I need. If I forgot something, I can always stop by the store." Ed, always prepared for an emergency, checks his battery, makes sure he has an extra quart of oil or two, and makes sure all the fluid levels are normal before setting out. Ed announces, "it looks like we're ready to go." Ed starts the engine, and he and Amy are off to the beach.

During the three-hour trip, Ed and Amy have a lot to talk about. Not fully understanding the details regarding their accommodations, Ed asks Amy, "where are we staying again?" Amy replies, "the lifeguards have a bunkhouse near the beach. I talked to Mitch, and he said we can stay at the bunkhouse over the weekend since the season is winding down. The seasonal lifeguards do other things over the off season, so they have to move out. I got to stay at the bunkhouse when I was in community college because I was part time over the off season. Oh, and the only catch is that we have to wash our sheets and towels before we leave."

Ed curiously asks, "why does the head lifeguard always have the name 'Mitch'?" Amy laughs, and replies, "apparently, to be division chief, you have to have the name 'Mitch'. It's a universal constant." Ed laughs, and

comments, “so, if you have a son someday, and you want him to be division chief, you’ll have to name him ‘Mitch.’” Amy replies, “exactly!”

Amy tells Ed, “while we’re down there, I want to drive around and see if I can find a house.” Ed asks, “to buy, or rent?” Amy replies, “I want to buy one. And, I kind of know exactly where I want to live.” Knowing Amy has no job at the moment, Ed asks, “where are you going to get the money to buy a house?” Amy explains, “when my dad died, I got about five hundred thousand dollars. If I buy my house with cash, I won’t have many expenses. I can live on the cheap.”

Hearing that Amy has a lot of money, Ed asks, “how come you never bought a car?” Amy replies, “you’ll see when we get to the beach. The bunkhouse, the beach, the park, and the community college that I went to are all really close together. So, I have a bicycle. That’s all I ever really needed. My bicycle is in the storage room at the bunkhouse.” Ed replies, “wow! Such a simple life.” Amy replies, “that’s me. All I really need is a place to sleep, and a beach. Well, and a job so I can eat.”

Amy then confesses, “maybe it’s because I had no neurotransmitters that I like the simple life. All I really want to do, Ed, is to wake up in the morning, get online and look up my assignment for that day, and head to the beach. And, honestly, in my world, my biggest challenge of the day is to figure out what to do for lunch. I really don’t know what I was thinking when I applied to the University.” Ed replies, “I totally get that. Mr. Frazier is right. You have to follow your passion.”

Amy thinks for a moment, and tells Ed, “if I didn’t read Mr. Frazier’s motivational speech to his team, my life would seriously be on the wrong track.” Ed points out to Amy, “but, for the last few months, you’ve been on the right track.” Amy asks, “how can you say that?” Ed replies, “God sent you to the University so that Joe can find your problem. And, not to mention, if you didn’t go to the University, you probably wouldn’t have run across Mr. Frazier’s motivational speech anytime soon.” Amy exclaims, “you’re right! You’re a genius!” Ed laughs, and replies, “far from it.”

Amy asks Ed, “I wonder if Mr. Frazier is a real person.” Ed surmises, “his character is probably modeled after a real person. Joe would probably know.” Amy asks, “how would Joe know?” Ed reveals, “Pete told me that Joe’s father knows the author.” Amy tells Ed, “we’ll have to ask Joe sometime. I really want to know.” Ed replies, “so do I. And, I want to know if Mr. Zunde is a real person too.” Amy laughs, and tells Ed, “Mr. Zunde is so funny!”

Out of the blue, Amy tells Ed, “Axel Braden is a real person.” Ed asks, “how do you know that?” Amy laughs, and explains, “I went to high school

with a guy named Jimmy Johnson. I've read most of the outtakes, and I'm almost finished reading *Eddie, The Sophomore Year*. Axel Braden sounds just like Jimmy Johnson."

About three hours after they left, Amy tells Ed, "we're here," and shuts off the GPS on her phone. Coming to an intersection, Amy tells Ed, "hang a right at the light." Amy tells Ed, "if you want pizza for dinner, there's a place a few blocks down that has the best pizza ever." Ed replies, "sure. Let's stop for dinner."

Over dinner, Ed asks Amy, "so, what's the plan?" Amy replies, "tomorrow morning, I have a meeting with Mitch to see if he'll hire me full time. After that, we can do whatever we want. But, I would really like to look at that neighborhood near the park to see if there's any houses that I like. It's all the way down on the South end of the beach." Ed tells Amy, "you seem to have this all under control." Amy explains, "when I'm in my little bubble of a world right here at the beach, it's the only time I feel like I'm in control. Everything is simple and perfect. Ed, I really belong here. I really do." Ed replies, "I can tell."

After dinner, Ed and Amy drive to the bunkhouse. Pulling into the driveway, Ed comments, "this is really nice. I was expecting something more like barracks." Amy tells Ed, "this was my home for two years when I was in community college."

The bunkhouse, a small motel across the street from the beach, was bought by the State several years ago to provide housing in close proximity to the beach for the lifeguards. The lifeguards enjoy greatly reduced rent with the understanding that they are on twenty-four hour call should an emergency situation exist.

Ed and Amy get out of the Jeep, and walk in the front door. Sitting in the living room, one of the lifeguards jumps off the sofa, and exclaims, "Amy! You're back! What happened?" Amy exclaims, "Angel! I've missed you!" Angel asks, "what brings you here?" Amy replies, "I'm only in for the weekend. I have a meeting with Mitch tomorrow morning. Mitch said I can stay here over the weekend." With great excitement, Angel asks, "what? Are you coming back? Tell me you are!" Amy replies, "that's the plan. Hopefully, there's an opening for full time."

Making introductions, Amy tells Ed, "Ed, this is Angel. Angel is one of the full-time lifeguards. Last Summer, me and Angel patrolled on the boat a lot together. Angel, this is my boyfriend, Ed. Ed drove me here from the University." Ed tells Angel, "it's nice to meet you." Wondering where Amy found such a hot boyfriend, Angel tells Ed, "it's really nice to meet you, too." Angel asks Ed, "are you staying with us?" Replying for Ed, Amy tells Angel, "Mitch said it was okay."

Hearing Angel so excited, Mike, another lifeguard, walks down the hall, yelling out to Angel, "where's the party?" Angel yells back, "you'll never guess who just walked in!" Mike enters the room, and exclaims, "wow! Amy! I totally thought you were gone forever." Amy laughs, and tells Mike, "you're only glad to see me back so you don't have to teach the beginner's classes by yourself!" Mike laughs, and replies, "guilty as charged!"

Ed, Amy, Angel, and Mike sit and talk for a while, catching up on the last few months. With a bit of hesitance, Amy asks Angel and Mike, "do either of you know if Mitch has any full time openings?" Angel explains, "well, yeah. John left for the Keys as soon as he got his captain's license. Let's see. Who else? Dan is gone. He's teaching scuba classes in the islands somewhere. So, there's at least two openings for full time. And, there's an opening for beach captain on the South side. But, you have to be advanced open water certified, and a certified instructor." Amy doesn't say anything, but she is both advanced open water certified and a certified instructor. Angel perhaps forgot those little details.

Very excited to see Amy, Angel announces, "we need to get you guys settled in. Let's find you guys an open room." Mike heads out for dinner, as Angel, Amy, and Ed head to the small office, where Angel gets the keys to two rooms, one for Amy, and one for Ed. Angel tells Ed, "house rules. Gals on the left, guys on the right." Ed replies, "got it." Ed tells Amy, "I'll go and get our stuff." Amy tells Ed, "when you get back, we're going to the beach!" Ed walks out to his Jeep, seeing quite a stark difference in Amy when she is in her element.

After getting settled, Ed and Amy walk across the street to the nearly deserted beach. After a long walk down the beach, Amy sits on Ed's lap as they watch the waves crashing onto the shore. Amy tells Ed, "I think we're going to see the moon rise!" Ed asks, "how do you know?" Pointing over the ocean, Amy replies, "over there, on the horizon, it's getting a little lighter. And, a few more people are showing up. They're probably coming here to watch the moon rise over the ocean."

Amy asks Ed, "so, what do you think?" Ed replies, "this place is really nice. I can really see why you want to come back here." Amy tells Ed, "there's only one thing wrong with this place." Ed asks, "what's that?" Amy puts her head on Ed's shoulder and, coming back to reality, replies, "you won't be here." Suddenly emotional, Amy begins to cry, telling Ed, "maybe I'm making a big mistake coming back here!" Ed holds Amy tightly, reminding her, "this is your passion, sweetie. You can't walk away from it. If you walk away from this, someday you'll seriously regret it." Ed holds Amy tightly, communicating far more than words could ever express.

Taking in what Ed said about her passion, Amy asks, “how can I know for sure that being a lifeguard is God’s will for my life?” Ed asks Amy, “who do you think gave you your passion to be a lifeguard?” Amy is silent for a moment, then tells Ed, “you’re right! The only reason I picked computer science as a career is because people always say that, sooner or later, you have to get a ‘real job’. How is being a lifeguard not a ‘real job?’” Ed tells Amy, “take your pick. Being out on the beach for the rest of your life doing what you love, or sitting in an office behind a computer screen.” Amy sighs, and tells Ed, “you’re right. I definitely don’t belong behind a computer screen. It’s not me.”

Ed thinks for a moment, and reminds Amy, “do you remember when Joe said something like, ‘God allowed you to be this way for a reason’. And that, ‘you may not find out the reason for many years.’” Amy replies, “yeah. I remember him saying that.” Ed tells Amy, “I think you just found out why God made you like you are. The beach is where you belong.” Amy stands up, and exclaims, “you’re right! What’s the matter with me? How come I couldn’t see this before?” Ed replies, “maybe it wasn’t the right time.” Amy is now very confident that she knows God’s will for her life.

Now more relaxed, Amy tells Ed, “Mr. Frazier must be a Christian.” Ed asks, “how do you know?” Amy brings up Mr. Frazier’s motivational speech on her phone, which she must have read two dozen times by now, and read, in part, to the fellowship group last week. Also wanting to hear it again for herself, Amy reads to Ed, “Beginning his talk in a way quite familiar to the team, Mr. Frazier exclaims, ‘let me remind you of something we all need not forget. In any race, there is only one winner! In the Bible, in the book of First Corinthians, in chapter 9, verse 24, the scripture reads, ‘Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win.’ Make no mistake about it! There is only one winner! Whoever comes in second place is the first loser!’” Amy then adds, “and, in the *Eddie, The Mechanic* series, Mr. Frazier references that Bible verse quite a lot.” Ed replies, “you’re right. Now, I really have to know whether Mr. Frazier is a real person or not.”

Amy reminds Ed of what she said last week, telling him, “so, right now, I’m in second place. I don’t want to be the first loser.” Thinking about what Amy just read, Ed replies, “Mr. Frazier is right. There is only one winner.” Amy reconsiders, and tells Ed, “you know, Ed. I’m not in second place. If I get a degree in computer science, I’d be more like in last place. I’d be a big time loser.” Ed is silent, deeply contemplating what Amy just said.

Now that Ed and Amy are a bit more relaxed, Ed tells Amy, “the moon is rising.” Amy turns around, telling Ed, “the moon is so beautiful!” Ed

mentions, "I think it's a full moon." Amy tells Ed, "it's a full moon. Tomorrow, the moon will rise about an hour later." Ed doesn't ask Amy how she knows. Ed has figured out that, since Amy's life was at the beach for a few years, she knows these things. With her head on Ed's shoulder, Amy watches the moon as it rises over the ocean.

Once the moon is far above the horizon, Amy tells Ed, "we'd better get back. I have to get a good night's sleep." As they are walking back to the bunkhouse, Ed asks, "what time are you meeting with Mitch?" Amy replies, "at nine o'clock, which means we have to wake up sometime between seven and eight. The main precinct is in town, a few miles up the road. We can get breakfast on the way." Ed tells Amy, "if I'm not up in time, bang on my door." Amy replies, "will do!" Walking through the door, Ed and Amy kiss good night, and they each head to their rooms.

The next morning, after breakfast, Ed and Amy head to the main precinct where Amy will have her interview with Mitch. Arriving a little early, Ed asks Amy, "how long is your interview?" Amy replies, "I'm not really sure. If you want, you can go take a look around town. I'll text you when I'm finished." Ed replies, "that will work." As Amy heads inside, Ed decides what he is going to do around town for an hour or two, perhaps longer.

Looking diagonally across the street, Ed sees a gym on the second story of a row of shops. At the street level, on the corner, is a swimsuit shop. Next to the swimsuit shop is a bicycle rental facility. A little farther down is an ice cream shop. Everything Ed sees speaks of the beach life he's heard Amy so passionately talk about. Hoping that the gym has a pay per visit program for out of town visitors, Ed decides to walk across the street, planning to get in a workout while Amy is in her interview.

Walking into the gym, Ed sees a help-wanted sign over the front desk, indicating that the open position is for a personal trainer. Not recognizing Ed, the front desk attendant asks, "may I help you?" Ed replies, "I was going to ask if you have a per visit deal, but I noticed your help-wanted sign." The attendant asks Ed, "are you a personal trainer?" Ed replies, "I am. I'm certified by the American College of Sports Medicine." Checking out Ed's athletic physique, the attendant asks, "would you like to speak to the manager?" Ed replies, "sure, if he's available."

The attendant tells Ed, "I'll be right back." As the attendant walks into the gym manager's office, Ed looks out at the floor, checking out the equipment. Looking out the wall of windows, Ed is impressed by the beautiful panoramic view of the beach. Across the street, on the beach, Ed can't help but to notice the lifeguard station where a lifeguard is watching the few people who dare to go into the late Autumn water.

Catching Ed off guard, Scott, the gym manager and owner, walks up, and asks Ed, "Denise tells me you're interested in the personal trainer position?" Ed replies, "yes, sir." Scott asks, "and, you're ACSM certified?" Ed replies, "that is correct, sir." Scott tells Ed, "come back with me, and let's talk." Ed replies, "thank you." Ed and Scott walk back into the office where Ed and the manager have a long conversation.

Emerging from the office forty-five minutes later, Scott escorts Ed around the gym, showing him the equipment, personal training area, and, most of all, the view of the beach. Ed is quite impressed, as the twenty thousand square foot facility is properly equipped and well laid out. Scott then shows Ed an unoccupied office near the personal training area, telling Ed that, should he accept the offer, this would be his office.

After the nearly one-hour interview, Ed asks Scott, "can I let you know on Monday?" Scott replies, "sure. And, if you have any questions, please feel free to call me anytime. I'll write my cell number on my card." It is clear that Scott, who is really impressed with Ed's credentials, really wants Ed to take the position. Ed thanks Scott for his time. Scott hands Ed his card and thanks Ed for coming by. Ed heads out, wondering if Amy is finished with her meeting with Mitch.

Walking across the street, Ed sees Amy sitting on a bench outside the precinct. Seeing Ed walking down the sidewalk, Amy rushes up to him, and exclaims, "Ed! I got the job! Mitch hired me full time!" Ed lifts Amy off the ground, spins her around twice, telling her, "that's awesome, sweetie! Congratulations!" Amy asks Ed, "can we drive down the road, please? I want to see where I'm going to be working!" All excited that Amy got the job, Ed replies, "sure!"

On the way, Amy energetically tells Ed, "Mitch gave me the position of beach captain on the South end of the beach! That's in the area where I really want to live!" Ed suggests, "while we're down there, we can drive around and look at houses." Still not back to Earth, Amy exclaims, "can we? Can we? Please?" Ed replies, "sure." Ed, nor anyone else, can miss Amy's excitement, for Amy has found where she really belongs.

Arriving at the far South end of the beach, Ed drives into the parking lot where the lifeguard office is located. Ed and Amy walk around the beach for a while, as Amy carefully looks over the area as if she now owns it. Finding a place to sit in the sand, Ed asks Amy, "so, this is your beach now?" Amy replies, "you sound just like a lifeguard! That's what we always say. Like in, 'that's Angel's beach', or 'this is Amy's beach'." Ed tells Amy, "I've never seen you so happy." With tears of happiness, Amy replies, "that's because I am happy, Ed! I'm really happy!"

After telling Ed about her job and talking about the beach for twenty minutes, Amy asks Ed, “so, what did you do when I was talking with Mitch?” Ed calmly replies, “I got a job.” Abruptly turning around and, looking Ed in the eyes, Amy exclaims, “what? What are you talking about? Wait a second! How did you get a job?” Ed tells Amy, “I don’t want to go back to the University either. I never really fit in. So, I talked to the owner of the gym on the corner across from where you were, and he offered me a position as a personal trainer.”

Surprised and confused at what she is hearing, Amy exclaims, “how is that? How did all this come about? What are you saying?” Ed explains, “I don’t really belong at the University either. I’m not even good at my major. The only reason I’ve made it this far is because Mark Johnson gave me copies of all the old tests. I would have flunked out a year ago if it wasn’t for Mark Johnson. So, what am I going to do when I graduate? What I really want to do is be a personal trainer, and coach a high school sports team. Maybe, someday, I’ll even get to own my own gym.” Now calmed down a bit, Amy tells Ed, “I can totally get that.”

Ed asks Amy, “do you remember back during the second week of classes when Dr. Lawrence talked about the Control Data supercomputers, and how one guy, Greg Mansfield, wrote the entire operating system?” Amy replies, “yeah. And, I’m surprised you even remembered his name.” Ed replies, “I researched it on the internet. There’s not much out there on the subject, but what Dr. Lawrence said is true. But anyway, I’ll never be like Greg Mansfield. I need to do what God put me on this Earth to do. And, computer programming is not exactly very high on the list.” Amy asks, “what’s at the top of your list?” Ed replies, “personal training, teaching people about their body, diving, sports, maybe owning a gym someday, and that kind of thing.”

Still somewhat totally confused, Amy asks Ed, “are you doing this because of what I’m doing?” Ed replies, “no.” Amy asks, “then, how are you doing this?” Ed replies, “because I love you and I want to be with you. Will you marry me?” Amy suddenly sheds tears of happiness, gives Ed a hug with all her strength, and tells Ed, “I will! I will!” Amy kisses Ed, then hugs him for a good five minutes as Ed gently rocks her in his arms. Amy now knows beyond a shadow of a doubt that the beach is exactly where she belongs. And, best of all, Ed will now be there with her.

After celebrating their engagement at lunch, Amy and Ed drive around the neighborhood across from the beach. Amy mentions to Ed, “if we live here, I can walk to work.” Ed replies, “this is a really nice area. And, it’s only five miles from the gym. I could ride a bicycle to work.” Amy laughs, and tells Ed, “until a storm rolls in. Then, you’ll be calling me and asking me to come get you.”

All of a sudden, Amy exclaims, “stop! Stop! Pull over!” Ed asks, “what’s up?” Amy exclaims, “there’s an open house! Let’s go and look!” Ed and Amy get out of the Jeep, walking up the path to a cozy cottage that has been newly renovated on the outside. Walking into the home, Ed and Amy are given a tour by the real estate agent on duty. Amy is impressed by the fact that the inside has also been renovated, and no work needs to be done.

Looking around on their own, Amy whispers to Ed, “this is perfect. It’s two bedrooms, and eight-hundred square feet. That’s all we really need for now.” With a unique perspective, Ed replies, “I like it. It’s a lot nicer than the dorms or the bunkhouse.” Ed and Amy thank the real estate agent, take a brochure, and head out. Ed and Amy drive around looking at houses for about one more hour, then head back to the bunkhouse.

Ed and Amy hit the beach and, without a care in the world, relax for the remainder of the afternoon. Lying in the sun taking advantage of the rays, Ed and Amy work on their suntans. Suddenly starting to laugh, Amy tells Ed, “you’ve got to read this sometime!” Ed asks, “what are you reading?” Amy replies, “I’m reading another outtake on the *Eddie, The Mechanic* website. This one is called *Jimmy O’Brien’s Folly*. This Jimmy O’Brien character sounds like Rodney, Dana, and Donna all rolled into one!”

Ed gets his phone, and starts reading the story. Halfway through the story, Ed mentions to Amy, “I’m definitely reading this whole series. This is seriously funny!” Amy replies, “I know, right?”

Once he is finished reading the outtake, Ed tells Amy, “you’re right! Rodney is definitely Jimmy O’Brien!” Amy tells Ed, “when you’re done with that one, read, *Jimmy O’Brien on the Track*. It’s funnier than Rodney on the diving board.” Ed mentions, “this stuff can’t be totally made up. Some of it has to be real.” Amy replies, “I definitely get that feeling too. This is not fiction.” Ed moves on to the next story, clearly seeing Rodney in the character of Jimmy O’Brien. Within an hour, Ed and Amy have read all the outtakes, some of them multiple times.

The sun begins to set, and Ed asks Amy, “what’s the plan for tomorrow?” Amy replies, “we can go to church in the morning. The one I used to go to is not too far from here. I really like the people there. It would be really nice to see them again.” Ed asks, “what kind of church is it?” Amy smiles, and replies, “red brick and cement.” Ed laughs, telling Amy, “that’s my favorite kind.” Amy explains, “I don’t really think it has a denomination. A few of the lifeguards go there.” Ed tells Amy, “I bet they’ll really be surprised to see you.” Amy informs Ed, “by now, Angel has texted everyone and they all know I’m back in town.”

Amy then tells Ed, “after church, we can do whatever we want. But, we still have to wash our sheets and towels before we leave.” Ed suggests, “if we get our laundry done before church, we can hit the beach one more time before we head back to the University.” Amy smiles, and replies, “I would love that.”