

Rape Recovery

QUICK REFERENCE COUNSELING KEYS Excerpt

Taking Back Your Life . . .

The unthinkable happens. Your life is shattered, your peace destroyed. Every day after is filled with fear (*What if it happens again?*) and guilt (*What did I do to provoke it?*).

Your attacker has robbed you of enough. Don't give him your future as well. It's time to take back your life.

*"Even though I walk through the valley
of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil,
for you are with me; your rod and
your staff, they comfort me."
(Psalm 23:4)*

Q: "How can I go on with my life since I've been raped? God seems far away."

We are all impacted by our past, but God doesn't want us impaired by our past. Rape is a sin, and God hates sin. So God hates what has happened to you. He knows your heart has been traumatized. It's natural for your heart to feel numb. The Lord is not far away from you.

*"The Lord is near to the brokenhearted
and saves the crushed in spirit."
(Psalm 34:18)*

Q: "How can I ever trust any man again after having been raped?"

Be aware of a tendency that many people experience after trauma: they "over generalize." For you, that means ascribing one man's sin to all men. There are godly men as well as ungodly men, just as there are godly women and ungodly women.

Would you consider the apostle Paul untrustworthy? And what about Joseph, who fled when his boss' wife sought to seduce him—do you consider him untrustworthy? Many trustworthy men today have followed in the footsteps of Job, making a covenant before God to remain sexually pure.

*"I have made a covenant with my eyes;
how then could I gaze at a virgin?"
(Job 31:1)*

Practical Precautions for Rape Prevention

In the Home

- Install a reliable security system.¹
- Install a peephole in the front door.
- Do not open the door to anyone you are not expecting.

Away from Home

- Trust your instincts, and exercise caution whenever you sense danger.²
- Look confident and assured when walking.
- Check the backseat of your car before getting in.
- Have your keys ready to unlock car doors quickly, and lock them again immediately as you get in.
- Park in busy, well-lit parking lots.
- If leaving shopping malls late at night, ask the security guard to walk you to your car.
- Beware of staged incidents and requests for help.

*“The prudent sees danger and hides himself,
but the simple go on and suffer for it.”
(Proverbs 22:3)*

Key Verse to Memorize

*“The LORD is near to the brokenhearted
and saves the crushed in spirit.”
(Psalm 34:18)*

Key Passage to Read and Reread

Psalm 37

ABC's of Response to Rape³

Assure your own safety. (Psalm 23:1, 4)

- Relax.
- Breathe deeply.
- Wrap yourself in a warm blanket.

Begin a support system of help. (Proverbs 23:12)

- Report incident to the police. (In order to preserve physical evidence, do not wash or shower.)
- Ask a friend to take you for medical care to check for injuries and/or venereal diseases.⁴
- Seek legal advice to learn the rights of rape victims.

Call on others for emotional support. (Proverbs 18:24)

- Call someone you trust.
- Seek professional counseling.

*“In peace I will both lie down and sleep;
for you alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety.”
(Psalm 4:8)*

Suffering

Seek, through prayer, God's supernatural help to overcome the negative consequences of rape. (1 John 5:14–15)

Understand that Christians are not immune to misfortune. (1 Peter 2:21)

Forgive the offender, and leave the revenge to God. (Ask God for the power of Christ to do this in you—you cannot do it yourself.) (Romans 12:19)

Forgive others (family members and friends) and most of all yourself. (Colossians 3:13)

Exchange your old identity for your new identity in the person of Christ. (Philippians 3:7–9)

Remember, the Lord is your Shepherd. (Psalm 23:1–6)

Incorporate reading and meditating on Scripture along with listening to praise music daily. (Isaiah 26:3)

Notice and encourage others around you who are hurting. Your sensitivity and compassion for others will be a blessing to them and healing to you. (2 Corinthians 1:3–4)

Glorify Christ by allowing His splendor to be displayed through you. (Isaiah 49:1–3)

Practical Do's and Don'ts When Helping a Rape Victim

- **Don't** ask for details of the incident.
Do . . . Suggest the victim write down the details for authorities.
- **Don't** offer quick and simplistic answers.
Do . . . Encourage the victim with God's unfailing love.
- **Don't** press the victim to initiate immediate forgiveness.
Do . . . Refer the victim to professional counseling.
- **Don't** change the subject.
Do . . . Urge the victim to write out her feelings.
- **Don't** speak at all if you don't know what to say.
Do . . . Comfort with your presence.

*"[There is] a time to keep silence,
and a time to speak."
(Ecclesiastes 3:7)*

Related Topics . . .

- Evil & Suffering . . . Why?
Is God Fair?
- Fear:
Moving from Panic to Peace
- Forgiveness:
How to Forgive . . . When You Don't Feel Like It
- Guilt:
Living Guilt Free
- Trials:
Seasons of Suffering
- Victimization:
Victory Over the Victim Mentality

HOPE FOR THE HEART's *Biblical Counseling Library Quick Reference* provides immediate, concise, biblical truths for today's problems.

For more comprehensive help, refer to our *Biblical Counseling Keys . . .*

Rape Recovery:
Rescued and Restored.

If you would like more information,
call 1-800-488-HOPE (4673) or visit
www.hopefortheheart.org.

For prayer encouragement and biblical counsel
call 1-866-570-HOPE (4673).

1. For this section see Jennifer Botkin-Maher, *Nice Girls Don't Get Raped* (San Bernardino, CA: Here's Life, 1987), 20–22.
2. Botkin-Maher, *Nice Girls Don't Get Raped*, 122–26.
3. Botkin-Maher, *Nice Girls Don't Get Raped*, 18–22.
4. Botkin-Maher, *Nice Girls Don't Get Raped*, 23–41.



*Together . . . Changing Minds.
Changing Hearts. Changing Lives.*

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