

The Likelihood of Risk - Rape

This is not a comfortable subject, but we believe it is necessary to tackle it. Not too long ago the general perception of rape was that it was something that happened to women who, sadly, were blamed because of the way they dressed, behaved etc. It was also thought that rape was primarily sexually motivated. Thanks to the work of pressure groups those perceptions have been debunked. We now understand that rape is not driven exclusively by age, gender or just sexual gratification. It's horrible to consider the extent of this deviant behavior unfortunately we need to be aware.

When scoring the likelihood, please consider all your family, whether male or female, and honestly consider the risk. Perpetrators are clever at concealing their intentions they do not walk around with a sign saying "I am a rapist". Take time to consider the following.

Opportunity (Random). Sadly attacks can occur at any time and in any location, so in considering the likelihood don't just think of night time in an unlit alley. We know of it happening in the daytime in a public place with people watching. Sick? Yes, but it occurred. Social events where drink and drugs are used for advantage.

Opportunity (The home). A workman, an employee, a salesperson, somebody from the Christian community?

Children (under 18) are especially vulnerable as they can be, and usually are, innocent and trusting. They can easily be duped by careful online grooming. How often do you hear of a relative or a family friend who has taken opportunity at a sleepover?

Break-in. Rape during a break-in or robbery is not unknown. Often the motive in these occasions is a demonstration of power and control rather than primarily for sexual gratification.

Targeted rape can and does take place. We shall cover this and the other likelihoods under Precautions.

Precautions

1. Don't be neurotic; just be sensible don't walk alone in isolated places or at night without company but avoid large crowds. Carry a torch at night, and a personal alarm in hand, not in a bag!
2. Drive with the car doors locked. Similarly, don't give lifts to people you don't really know unless they are accompanied by people you do trust. Taking an ill person probably isn't a risk, even so keep to the main and often-used routes.
3. It is sensible to familiarise yourself what is considered respectable clothing in your area and adopt those practices. Apart from considerations of rape there is a risk that you harm your Christian witness by being perceived as having loose morals which is not a good. Showing affection in public is also frowned upon in some places.
4. Home is mostly seen as a place of safety – but is it? Keeping doors and windows open is obviously essential in trying to keep the home cool and aired in hot climates, and it also avoids impressions of being barricaded away from the very people you want to reach with the gospel. But in maintaining accessibility it is important to take precautions. But if you are going to be more accessible you need to take sensible precautions. Dogs are useful, as well as having gardeners and watchmen around the place, providing of course that they are trustworthy. Be sure you don't dress or undress in front of a window.
5. Children need to be taught the rules of safety, and taught them more than once.
6. In regard to targeted rape there may be signs to watch for. Is someone stalking you, turning up in different places? Ensure you keep a record – but report it to someone in authority without delay.
7. Remember males are also vulnerable and are advised to keep away from homosexual haunts. They should accept the fact that they are not immune and being big and strong isn't always a sufficient deterrent.