

I don't pretend to even begin to imagine the intense feelings that were going through her mind as she searched for the words to tell her story. Her air of, "I'm going to be just fine" was betrayed by the tears she was desperately trying to hold back. Finally the words exploded from her lips as she said some of the most dreaded words a young lady could utter, "I've been raped!"

As her story unfolded the extreme injustice that had been done to her became painfully clear. She had been both an alcohol and drug abuser, had been in trouble with the law in the past, had been through rehab several times, had seen a lot of the ugly side of life for such a girl so young, but was now clean and sober.

She was determined to overcome the demons that had plagued her throughout most of her teenage years. This time she was going to make it. She had enrolled in college and was doing well. She had traded in her friends who were such bad influences for new friends who were trying to do right and who were encouraging her to do so as well.

She was not only attending AA and NA meetings, she was doing so well that she had been asked to be in charge of some of the meetings. It was in that setting that she became acquainted with a man who was also struggling with his demons. When he asked to talk with her privately, it didn't seem out of order at all.

Normally she wouldn't have considered meeting with him privately, but in her eagerness to help she paid little attention to the bad vibes she felt for a fleeting moment. The AA meeting was over, everyone else was gone and before she knew it he had overpowered her and raped her.

She had not been doing anything that would have caused him to think this kind of advance was welcome, she just wanted to help him. He took immediate advantage of the circumstances, overpowered and raped her. He then let her go with a sort of ominous warning, "No one will believe you, it will be your word against mine," and simply walked out the door.

Even though she was badly shaken and humiliated, she had the presence of mind to call the police. She was taken immediately to the hospital for an examination, the police took her statement, charges were filed, and in a few days the man was tracked down by police and arrested. Another case of justice prevailing? Not quite!

Today, less than a month later, **he** was a free man. The prosecuting attorney and even her own lawyer agreed, there was no case, it was simply "her word against his." Besides she had been a doper and an alcoholic, she had been

in trouble with the law before, and frankly she wasn't high on their priority list. **She** has been left violated, humiliated, hurting, and seriously doubting if there is justice in this world. Is it any wonder, according to national statistics, that many cases of rape go unreported?

How different would the attitude and action of Jesus been in this situation? Jesus didn't look down on people because of their past, he provided them with the opportunity for a new beginning, a fresh start, a clean slate. In fact, Jesus was so involved in the lives of people who failed miserably he was accused of being one of them. He was even called the friend of sinners. No doubt the statement was intended as a slur, but don't you think Jesus took it as a complement? Jesus was much more concerned about helping people who really needed it than he was about the people who claimed to be religious but wouldn't get their hands dirty.

Peter says, "Jesus left us an example that we should walk in His steps." (I Peter 2:21) Perhaps we need to think about this the next time we are tempted to look down our noses at people who have been in trouble and aren't what we would call the cream of society. Jesus said he didn't come to call the righteousness to repentance but sinners. (Matthew 9:13)

If we are really trying to walk in the steps of Jesus we will get our hands dirty. "Righteous" people may even talk about us. But the bottom line is, if it isn't a Christians job to reach out, to love people and to help them, whose job is it? Jesus said, "By this shall all men know you are my disciples, if you have love one to another." (John 13:35) Maybe we should remember this the next time we are tempted to turn away from someone who is struggling with their demons and desperately needs to feel the love and compassion of Jesus.

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