

1. Be Committed

How good of a climber are you? You're staring at a thousand-foot cliff. Jagged rocks jut out of the mountainside, all the way to the top. You can't walk up. To get to the top, you must climb straight up. It's just you and the bumpy rocks. Grab hold of one, and make sure you've got a tight grip, or you'll tumble to your death. Are you ready? Can you take this on?

If you're hesitating, that's a good thing. It's a daunting challenge. A reckless person would rush up this mountainside without much thought. You're smart. You know that there's risk involved. You pause and evaluate if you've got the stamina and motivation to reach the top.

A TALE OF TROUBLE: DON'T LIVE LIKE DANIEL

Your battle with pornography is like scaling this mountainside. Stare up and consider what you're endeavoring to do. It's a long, grueling

climb upwards. How many days do you feel like you don't have the stamina or motivation to fight your porn addiction? At any moment, you might slip and tumble back down. You claw your way out, only to fall yet again.

If you've made it this far on the page, it's because you're facing a formidable foe. *Pornography has overrun your life.* You need help. You've tried to overcome this enemy but it's pesky, and it won't leave you alone.

Daniel called me yesterday. He's a junior in high school. Daniel loves soccer and baseball. He's good at math and science, though he doesn't study much. He prefers playing Nintendo and hanging out with his friends.

Pornography has overtaken Daniel's life. Daniel confessed to Brandon, his youth pastor, and Brandon put Daniel in contact with a godly older man, Matt. The very next day, Daniel ventured into porn again and his feelings of guilt and shame hit him like a sledgehammer. He rushed to get Matt's help. Daniel genuinely wanted his addiction to go away.

They met up once, had a good conversation, and then whenever Matt texted Daniel again, Daniel didn't respond. He ghosted Matt. Like water slipping through his fingers, Daniel's

motivation for accountability vanished. Doubt, shame, and self-condemnation kept Daniel at arm's length from Matt. Daniel wasn't ready to seriously battle his pornography problem.

Can you relate to Daniel's story? Do you feel trapped in an endless cycle of addiction, and have you grown weary and hopeless? Do you feel stuck?

I've seen men gain considerable victory over their addiction to porn. You don't have to live like Daniel. *You can enjoy lasting freedom.* No shackles. No shame. No porn anymore. Real joy and robust hope.

A CRUCIAL QUESTION YOU MUST ANSWER

Let's assess if you're ready to fight your porn problem. Daniel wasn't ready. Are you?

Our first crucial question: **Are you committed to working on the problem?** Daniel doesn't have the godly motivation to go the distance. He desires to fix his problem. Yet, he's not committed to God's process of change.

There's a lot to overcome with an addiction.

Daniel is isolated. He has a few friends, but the friendships don't go deep. He is a lone ranger, fighting on his own. No community.

He's had accountability at times, and often it's been mediocre and inconsistent.

Daniel is hiding. He hasn't been honest with friends, family, and mentors about his porn problem. His fear and shame drive him away from others.

Daniel has unfettered access. He doesn't have any barriers to getting ahold of illicit material. There are no blockers on his phone, computer, or tablet. He rationalizes: "Those types of tools don't help me much, so I don't bother."

Daniel feels powerless. He's given up and feels defeated. He doesn't know his way out of this problem.

Daniel's genuinely confused. He desires to date, but so long as he's battling an addiction, he's not sure if it's okay. He rationalizes: "The apostle Paul says I shouldn't burn, so that must mean I should date." But is that what the apostle meant?

Daniel's stressed. He's not doing a good job handling the demands of his life and the ups and downs of his relationships. He needs help managing his stress.

Daniel is wrestling with unbelief. When we choose sin, we turn our backs on God. Though Daniel professes to be a Christian, he

temporarily gives himself over to functional atheism. "God doesn't care." "God doesn't have my back." "God won't help me overcome this problem." Satan's lies invade his mind. As his hunger for God's Word wanes, unbelief takes over. He says, "Yes," to porn and, "No," to God.

Can you relate to Daniel's experience? That's a lot to take on. As long as Daniel doesn't honestly deal with these problems, his porn addiction won't get better. It'll only get worse.

But there is hope. In Christ, Daniel can conquer his cravings for pornography. God can bring real, concrete change. What's involved? Genuine repentance and faith. Being brutal about access points. Venturing into his heart. Understanding *why* he looks at illicit material. Growing more holy desires. Engaging a church community. Ditching his terrible and inconsistent accountability. Finding more reliable helpers. Setting his eyes on larger hopes and dreams. He can't just fight porn; he must also grow in faith.

Strugglers will often do a few of these things, but they won't tackle their problems in a comprehensive way. They don't have persistent motivation to keep going.

Ask yourself: Am I ready to confront this problem? Am I willing to work to overcome it? Will I persevere and be committed?

As you pause and consider these questions, it's likely you're staring up at the steep cliff again. If you're hesitating, that's good. There's a lot to overcome.

Here's what you need to know: You are not alone. At the top of the mountain, a man drops a rope down to you. It's tied securely at the top around a large oak tree, and he's going to anchor it for you. He will supply the motivation and strength you'll need to keep going all the way to the top. The man's name is Jesus. Orient your life towards Christ, and a group of mature Christian friends. Be willing to commit and stick with God's plan for change. There is real hope in and through Christ.

You might be convinced you'll stay stuck like Daniel. But, with Christ's help, you can overcome your porn addiction. You will make mistakes. You will stumble and slip back down the cliff. You'll have good days and bad days. Yet, with the strength Christ provides, change is possible.

I can name dozens of men who have overcome their porn struggles. They're

walking by faith, and years removed from this problem. Christ helped them climb the rocky mountainside. Jesus can also help you.

MAIN POINT

There are a lot of obstacles to getting rid of your porn addiction, but with Christ's help, change is possible.

APPLICATION

- **A Practical Step:** Your journey starts with a prayer. Take a moment and ask Jesus to grant grace and strength for the battle.
- **Reflection:** Because pornography addictions are so common, you might not be convinced it's a problem. You might have thoughts like: "It's not really hurting anyone" or "Everyone is doing it." If this describes you, pray for insight to see why this is a problem and how it hurts you.
- **Lies or Truth:** You might believe that Jesus can't change you, but that traps Christ in a box. Jesus is much bigger and stronger than your tiny box. He is powerful. He's mightier than you can ever imagine. He *can*, in fact, change you.