

# Nathan Murray, Survivor of Childhood Sexual Abuse



As a middle schooler, I became friends with my church youth pastor, Dan. Even though he was 10 years older than me, we developed a friendship outside of church. As I entered high school we began to hang out more, and Dan began grooming me by exposing me to pornography. His abuse began to escalate, and although he never touched me, he would frequently expose himself to me, among other things.

During the season of abuse, Dan talked often about wanting us to have a deep Biblical relationship, much like David and Jonathan. At the time I was unable to realize the gravity of what was happening to me or the spiritual manipulation that was taking place. It wasn't until I graduated college and sought professional help that I began to process what a healthy relationship even was. Even now, I have trouble developing friendships with other men. As soon as someone tries to get close to me, I have this sinking feeling of what are they wanting from me.

Following the years of abuse I became addicted to pornography. Luckily, my addiction came to light and friends encouraged me to seek professional counseling. It was sitting in my counselor's office on a weekly basis for over one and a half years that I began to realize Dan had sexually abused me. That was a decade ago, and thankfully I am now beginning to heal and process what happened to me as a child.

Several years ago I learned that Dan was teaching Sunday school at a local church. I contacted the head pastor to let him know about my abuse and warn him about Dan. The pastor made it clear that this was a matter he didn't want anyone to know about, because he didn't want anyone to be "embarrassed."

I was crushed. How many other kids had been hurt by Dan? How many more would be hurt in the name of keeping up appearances that everything was alright in our churches?