

“If this is your issue (and I suspect it is, given that you’ve picked up this book), then this is the place to start for clear, helpful, practical, gospel-motivated wisdom. It’s going to be what we use with the guys at my church who, like me, struggle to get to grips with our ungodly desires.”

Richard Perkins, Senior Minister at Christ Church Balham, London and Director of the Antioch Plan; member of London Men’s Convention committee

“Here is a timely, punchy book, filled with biblical truth, that will give fresh hope to the significant number of Christian men who have lost their assurance, usefulness and joy through a lack of self-control.”

Paul Rees, Senior Pastor at Charlotte Chapel, Edinburgh

“All of us men struggle with self-control; and we seem to struggle with losing it in many of the same areas. This book reminds us that self-control is not only a gospel project, it is a church-wide project in which we all must play a part. So, if your desire is to struggle less and look like Jesus more, then you’ll want to gather your friends and read this book together.”

Juan R. Sanchez Jr, Senior Pastor, High Pointe Baptist Church, Austin, Texas, USA; Gospel Coalition Council member

“*A Man’s Greatest Challenge* is no silver bullet when it comes to temptation and self-control. But neither should it be. Our help comes not from man’s wisdom or experience, but from the Lord Jesus Christ. Dai Hankey points us very clearly to this powerful gospel. No silver bullet—but genuine hope for changed lives.”

Dave McDonald, Senior Pastor at Stromlo Christian Church, Canberra, Australia, and Chaplain to ACT Brumbies; author of “Hope Beyond Cure”

“The smouldering ruins of a great city, walls breached and overthrown, is how the Bible pictures a life without self-control. Using this biblical picture, *A Man’s Greatest Challenge* speaks Christ-centred challenge and hope into lives wrecked by a lack of self-control. This is an issue I face, as do my friends and church family. The combination of close biblical study and Dai’s frank honesty makes this book that is both biblical and useful—a real-world guidebook full of grace and hope.

John Hindley, Pastor of BroadGrace, Norfolk, UK; author of “Serving without Sinking” and “You Can Really Grow”

“Men, read this book! In tackling the challenge of self-control, Dai shows that lasting hope lies not in will power but gospel power—its comfort and its call.”

Gavin Peacock, Missions Pastor at Calvary Grace Church, Canada; former Chelsea and Newcastle midfielder

“Dai has done it again—managed to write a book that is both simple and hard to read ! Simple, because it is not long or complex; hard, because it is challenging to download into our lives. But that’s a mark of a good book. It will help to identify your flaws and weaknesses, and discover a Christ-shaped, grace-filled response which leads to self-control.”

Peter Baker, Senior Pastor at Lansdowne Baptist Church, Bournemouth, UK

“Dai Hankey has written an extremely helpful book for men and their struggles. Focussing on the core issue of self-control, this book has the capacity to set a man free from nagging sin and shame. I would recommend it as a book to be read by all—from teen through to senior.”

Jamie Rasmussen, Senior Pastor, Scottsdale Bible Church, Arizona

A man's greatest challenge

How to build self-control that lasts

Dai Hankey

*To Andrew Rees, Nick Davis,
Chris Street and Peter Baker.*

*You guys have helped me get a grip on my lifestyle,
marriage, ministry, testosterone, temper, family and
finances, and I am beyond grateful.*

A man's greatest challenge: *How to build self-control that lasts*

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1. Introduction

Have you ever done something for someone else, only to discover that in the process you got more out of it than they did?

That's pretty much the story of this book. What began as the discovery of a single Bible verse that I thought might be helpful for men who struggle with self-control went on to become a book-writing adventure that has, quite literally, changed my life. I am not the man I was when I first sat down to write this.

That might sound extreme, but it's true.

The battle for self-control has been the greatest challenge of my life. The faces of the issues I have sought to gain control over may have changed over the years, but the roots have remained and the struggle has never subsided. Looking back, my deepest regrets have come from losing control in one way or another. And my greatest frustrations have come from believing that I'd finally conquered certain sins, only to find my self-control failing as I messed up once again.

Perhaps now would be a good time for me to lay my cards on the table—to lift the mask of the man who is speaking to you. At the end of each of the chapters, you'll hear from different guys telling their stories of self-control struggles (and I want to thank them here for their courage and humility in sharing them).

Well, here's some of my story. I am a man who, at various stages in my life, has been wickedly and wildly out of control:

- I have deprived my family of hours of attention and affection, due to my inability to peel myself away from my smartphone.
- I have been that driver slamming his horn, cussing out other road users who dare to get in my way (if it was you, I'm sorry!)
- I have been the guy sitting in front of a screen, seduced and enslaved by lust and seemingly powerless to hit the "Off" button, as gratuitous sex scenes inflicted grievous damage upon my psyche and my soul.
- I have smashed up, torn down and punched through more things in fits of rage than I dare to remember.

However, I am writing this as a man who is now in control. The truths I have grappled with and the grace I have received in the process of writing this book have been truly transforming, both for myself and for those around me. Don't get me wrong—I am still very much a work in progress. I am not immune from losing control, and I stand in as much need of grace as I ever did. But I have found myself changed. I am no longer mastered by impulses that I cannot control. I am no longer a slave to my sin. I have found fulfilment and freedom—and self-control—in the gospel of Jesus.

I don't know you, and I don't know why you've decided to read this book (or, at least, to give the Introduction a go). But I do have a hunch that your greatest challenge, in one way or another, is to have self-control. And I'm guessing that you've found yourself thinking:

"I mustn't do that again. Right, I'm deciding: I won't do that again."

"Aaargh, I can't believe I just did it again. I hate feeling like this. OK, that's it. No more."

“It’s been weeks now. This is going well. I’ve got this area sorted.”

“I can’t believe it. How can I have done it again?”

This book is about self-control: wanting it, and building it. But crucially, it’s about self-control that *lasts*. That works. That changes your life, and changes the lives of those closest to you.

I want to tell you that building a life of lasting self-control is possible, though it is a challenge that requires honesty, sweat, tears, humility and faith. I’m praying that the gospel truths in this book would change your life as you read it as much as they have changed mine as I’ve written it.