

Further Help for Healing from Porn Addiction

by Rev. David L. Hatton, RN

*“ . . . in whatever measure we live as if lies are true,
to that measure we will continue to experience bondage to sin.”*
(from annotations to “The Chain” allegory on MCAG)

This independent supplement to the MCAG website is for those whose troubles with porn addiction stubbornly persist, even after they’ve already read the main MCAG articles and thoroughly grasp the concept of body acceptance. So, if you don’t fully understand the message of MCAG, please, go there now and study it with an open mind.¹ Although women who struggle with porn will benefit from the following material, these further helps were written with the male porn addict in mind.

When readers doubt the MCAG approach, I suggest they prayerfully restudy the material. One time through may not be enough. Nonsexual nudity stared me in the face for 25 years, before I did my homework. Only then did I stop believing and spreading lies about the human body. That intense time of research showed me why my experiences with hospital nudity were so normal.

Jesus said, *“I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”* (John 14:6, ESV). He also said, *“If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free. . . . So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed,”* (John 8:31b-32, ESV). New birth in Christ frees us from *sin’s penalty*, but when Jesus applies *“the truth”* to our lives, it can set us free from *sin’s bondage*. MCAG confronts the lies of *body shame* that empower pornography by presenting the truth about body acceptance. Yet each person’s journey into and out of porn addiction is unique. As an individual, your need for healing may reach beyond what MCAG has to offer.

Supplemental information and interventions in no way devalue the liberating power of truth itself. But some might face barriers to believing it or obstacles to embracing it. Impediments can reside in the understanding, the emotions, past traumatic memories, or even in some form of demonic oppression. The following suggestions may help clear the way for an obstructed truth to enter the mind.

Unrealized truth bears repeating, but even repetition can fail without the Holy Spirit’s assistance. As strange or extreme as these suggestions may seem, they can be avenues of divine grace. Many who have tried them felt God’s power in their application during the healing process. Some ideas simply clarify or affirm what MCAG teaches. Others may reach beyond a porn problem into deeper areas of spiritual need. All may take faith and courage.

If still plagued by porn addiction after trusting and trying traditional techniques to end it, be willing to lay them aside and use what has helped others. Even the most controversial ideas offered here were drawn from the laboratory of life. I share them not to stir up doctrinal controversy or theological debate, but to help dislodge persistent mental or spiritual hindrances to the truth.

¹ The MCAG website is at www.mychainsaregone.org. But, for the purposes of this book, a brief synopsis of its main articles—not a substitute for them—is available in Appendix B on p. 215.

Section 1: Resources to Clarify the Ideas from MCAG

These first three suggestions basically supplement the message of MCAG *intellectually, theologically, and emotionally.*

The Centerfold Syndrome

Soon after we launched MCAG, a lady wrote to congratulate us on our website, pointing out the similarity of our message to that of psychologist Gary R. Brooks. She attached an excerpt from his book, *The Centerfold Syndrome*,² photocopied from a college anthology. I was delighted to find that we were on the same page with this secular counselor.

Dr. Brooks' direct counseling experience, helping men change their sexually objectified view of women, has given him expertise in articulating this problem. His perspective may help you better grasp what we are sharing on MCAG. It certainly reinforces our message. For that reason, we contacted Dr. Brooks who graciously granted us permission to use a large excerpt from his book as a resource for our ministry.³ We encourage you to purchase and read the whole book.

The Theology of the Body

A Catholic reader surprised us by saying that our site was teaching principles from John Paul II's *Theology of the Body* (TOB).⁴ We confirmed this by our own research. Before becoming a pope, Karol Wojtyla wrote *Love and Responsibility*,⁵ a superb philosophical treatise on sexual morality. He later produced his TOB—probably the most comprehensive doctrinal work on human sexuality ever written.

Several Catholic teachers have tried to communicate Wojtyla's elevated theological concepts to average Christians. One of these is Christopher West, whose introduction to the TOB was given at a large church in my own denomination.⁶ A series of talks addressed specifically to a Catholic audience, is downloadable as MP3-files: "*Naked Without Shame.*"⁷

Whoever denies a physical dimension in our being made "*in the image of God*" should study this pope carefully. He explains how nothing in creation represents the Trinity more clearly than our gender-distinctive physical bodies in heterosexual marital union. He also shows how complementary sexuality symbolizes the human potential of union with God through Christ. By exposing philosophical falsehoods, past and present, this pope confronted the modern intellectual abandonment of the divine significance characterizing our fleshly, sexual embodiment.

John Paul II's theological work is not easy reading, but the concepts in it are a strong corrective for false ideas about the body popularly believed today. Despite elements in the TOB peculiar to Roman Catholicism, its message is crucial for Protestants who are unwitting captives

2 *The Centerfold Syndrome* by Gary R. Brooks, Ph.D. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1995). Used copies of this book are easily found online.

3 <http://pastordavidrn.com/files/centerfold.pdf>

4 See note #1, p. 36.

5 *Love and Responsibility* by Karol Wojtyla, translated by H. T. Willetts (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1981).

6 See note #2, p. 36.

7 See note #1, p. 37.

of mental porno-prudery.

Visit the Porn Factory with New Eyes

If you're sick of how pornography has controlled your mind and ruined your life, hopefully the MCAG website radically increased your mental nausea. In that case, maybe it's time to finally *vomit!*

Just as the Internet is a vehicle for pulling people into porn, it is increasingly being used to expose the vile practices of the porn industry. Many ex-porn stars are broadcasting their horrific stories about what models undergo to create this dehumanizing form of entertainment. If you've spent countless hours visually consuming their performances, maybe it's time you listen to the violent abuse these models went through in the process. An inside view of how the porn business devastates their personal human dignity and safety might be what you need to help you properly *throw up*.

When I first searched for an exposé of the porn industry, I found a short documentary called "Pornography,"⁸ made in 1991 by the late Andrea Dworkin. It is dated, not the greatest video quality, but still packs a strong punch. Fiery feminists like Dworkin were loudly decrying the horrors of the porn industry—stressing the urgency of eradicating its porn mentality from our culture—while our pulpits merely preached, "*Don't look at it!*" Presently, Shelley Lubben—a Christian ex-porn star—is on a mission to expose the heartless brutality and personal tragedy inside the porn business. For anyone needing to *visit the porn factory with new eye*, her own testimony and that of others she interviews are painfully honest resources.⁹

By treating girls as objects for virtual rape and sexual violence, modern pornography drains them of personhood, defiling the *imago Dei*. This is cause enough for holy anger! But, in its downward trend, this progressive degradation has hit hellishly deep levels of depravity. Whether reportedly *consenting* or slavishly *compelled*, these models are physically assaulted and psychologically damaged to profit porn-makers and entertain lustful minds. To quench any remaining infatuation with porn, discover exactly how this form of sophisticated human trafficking hurts these models, whose average lifespan is only 37 years. Accurate knowledge of what's happening to them should cause permanent moral outrage and stir up a personal declaration of war against pornography to your dying day!

Section 2: God's Use of Various Means of Grace

"When once passion takes part in the game, the human reason, unassisted by Grace, has about as much chance of retaining its hold on truths already gained as a snowflake has of retaining its consistency in the mouth of a blast furnace."

— C. S. Lewis (1898-1963)

Time heals no wounds, but God can heal all wounds in time. He does so in various ways, as illustrated in Christ's ministry. Jesus frequently ordered sicknesses to depart. Sometimes he just prayed. Often He used touch. Once He smeared mud made with His saliva on a blind man's eyes

8 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L9j7-zZks08>.

9 Her site (<https://www.shelleylubben.com/>) has many ex-porn stars' stories.

and had him go wash it out. He straightened one woman's back by casting out a demon. Another woman grabbed His outfit to get the healing she needed.

In theology, we call these diverse patterns of divine blessing *means of grace*. To use them as Jesus did, we must have His attitude: “*Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise,*” (John 5:19 (ESV)). Which means of grace to use, and how to use it, must come on a case-by-case basis through the *seeing* of divine guidance.

This concept will be a stretch for some. Many Christians are so mesmerized by modern materialism that they entrust all aspects of health to science, technology, and the pharmaceutical industry. But behind the material world is a spiritual world, and each affects the other. This is especially true for humans, who are *body-spirit* beings.

All creation—especially the human body—reflects God's glory. God uses *the physical* spiritually, and *the spiritual* physically. He's not bound by the false dualism taught by Greek philosophy, which is often unconsciously adopted by the average Christian. Instead of dividing *body* and *spirit*, the following ideas assist with healing through a sacred, wholistic approach, based on the interrelatedness of the physical and the spiritual.

Prayer

Under guidance by the Holy Spirit, prayer is a means of grace, especially when it is spoken aloud, even when alone. Misguided prayers actually reinforce false thinking. For example, praying for normal attraction to the opposite sex to diminish is guided by a false view of creation and of God's procreative purposes for humanity. Having a creational, incarnational view of the body changes the prayer from “Lord, help me stop looking at porn,” to “Lord, help me start seeing the naked body as You do.” When God answers the latter prayer, the allurements of pornography will come to an end.

Prayers against porn addiction must arise from our praise to God for fashioning our beautiful male and female bodies in His image. This praise, coming from the heart, should be verbalized out loud. When His divine command to love others guides our praises and prayers, we assault the real problem of porn: the sin of misusing the sight of our neighbor's body to stimulate self-gratifying lust.

Prayer is *powerless* when shaped by lies. It is *powerful* only if anchored in truth. As you let the Holy Spirit guide your prayers, remember that He indwells your own naked body. All other naked bodies are either His present temple or targets to become one. You can get a taste of this reality by intentionally praising God in prayer for your own body while taking a shower or bath. As a labor nurse, I've prayed with this same holy awareness as I work with the nude female body. The only territory where prayer can help refashion a godly, wholesome view of the naked body is the realm of truth.

Scripture

By carefully restudying Genesis, David Martin of MCAG saw how our being created “*in the image of God*” had a physical aspect to it that most Bible teachers trivialized. This revelation of a fleshly dimension to the “*likeness*” we bear to our Creator helped him personally to be set free

from a pornographic view of the body.

My own vacillation between nudity in healthcare and its scandal in my religious training ended through taking a fresh look at God's Word after removing my culture-colored glasses. When I stopped reading today's swimsuits and private bathrooms back into Bible times, I got a new perspective on ancient society. Clothed cultures of the past didn't associate the body's occasional public nudity with shame. Today's porno-prudish attitude is certainly no improvement on former times. But by assuming modern cultural values to be 'holy' rules, many Bible teachers have led believers into legalistic misinterpretations of God's Word.

For instance, Genesis 3 never says why God clothed our first parents in leather, nor does it say that His action was intended to be a command or exemplary behavior. Some Bible scholars believe He was graciously providing leather outfits for protection and warmth. This view is in keeping with the real *need* of the naked, which is *warmth*, as spelled out in the Epistle of James.¹⁰ Other theologians suggest that these skins of slain animals were meant to teach us about the necessity to *atone* (*kaphar*)¹¹ for sin. Today, however, most preachers insist that God's intention was to hide their nudity—yes, even though it was that of a married couple!

This *majority* opinion appears loyal not to Scripture but to the cultural standards of Victorian prudery. Even though hiding the body as a moral necessity is totally absent in the actual language of Genesis 3, this dogmatic belief—that God was implying it—has effectively skewed all subsequent biblical studies on nakedness. It has led many to make their interpretations in this area by reading our modern cultural treatment of nudity back into Bible times.

God's Word can be instrumental in healing.¹² Those who seek freedom from porn addiction can find in Bible study a means of grace by reading Scripture afresh. In rereading the Bible, you will never find God withdrawing His evaluation of the naked body's "*very good*" status (**Gen 1:31**) nor calling only the hidden body His "*temple*" (**1 Cor 3:16; 6:19**). Visualize, as you read. See Jesus—in the manner of the nude slaves of His day—washing the feet of His disciples.¹³ Imagine watching Isaiah preaching God's Word in the nude for three full years.¹⁴ Contemplate the sight of 3000 new converts on the Day of Pentecost (**Acts 2:41**) being baptized in Jerusalem's many public *mikveh* pools, where naked immersion was strictly required. Meditate on Christ's admonition to surrender your entire outfit to whoever sues you for just one piece, so that you walk out of a courtroom *naked*,¹⁵ which is the logical implication seen by the early church fathers but missed by moderns Bible teachers through cultural blindness.

As you read Scripture, let the body acceptance practiced back in Bible times cleanse your

10 **James 2:15-16** (NKJV), *If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit?*

11 A Hebrew word meaning *to cover*, used for the idea of *making atonement*.

12 **Psalm 107:20** (ESV), *He sent out his word and healed them, and delivered them from their destruction.*

13 See **John 13:4** (NKJV) quoted in note# 3 on p. 33.

14 See **Isa 20:3-4** in note #3 on p. 33.

15 **Mat 5:40** (ESV), *And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. Chrysostom clearly saw what this verse meant:*

*"Do you grasp the excellence of a Christian disposition? After you give your coat and your cloak, even if your enemy should wish to subject your naked body to hardships and labors, not even then, Jesus says, must you forbid him." [Chrysostom, *The Gospel of Matthew*, Homily 18.3 in the *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, NT Vol. 1a, Matthew 1-13* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2001). p. 118.]*

mind. Your indoctrinated heritage of *body shame* may begin to dissolve, and with it, your porno-prudish view of the body.

Baptism and a Sacred Use of Water

Early church fathers considered removing clothes for the nude baptism ritual to be a symbolic divestment of worldly ways for entrance into the new life of God's Kingdom. It was a complete bath, a sacramental sign of sins being fully washed away.¹⁶ And just as we enter and leave the world naked, so new converts were stripped for baptismal burial with the nakedly crucified Savior. Coming naked out of the water, just as newborns do, signified not only new birth but resurrection with the naked Christ,¹⁷ Who left His grave wrappings behind in the tomb. This was some of the rich symbolism invested in nude baptism.

However, prudery infiltrated the church. The recorded attitude of early monks toward the tempting sight of the opposite sex seems to be the cause for popular monastic values eventually supplanting the officially prescribed nude baptism.¹⁸ This change robbed baptism of much of its symbolism and meaning as a means of grace. Perhaps pornography wouldn't be the problem it is today, if churches had maintained the heritage of body acceptance underlying nudity in the ancient baptismal ritual.

Baptism still represents a sacred cleansing from sin and identifies the believer with death to self and new life in Christ. Any unbaptized believer who is still struggling with porn ought to follow Christ in baptism. By its very nature, baptism blesses the body. It's a public statement of agreement that God's plan of salvation is for "*your whole spirit and soul and body,*"(1 **Thes 5:23**).

If you were led to faith in Christ by someone who failed to encourage you to obey this command of Christ,¹⁹ don't let that stop you from being obedient now. Baptism is still a burial and still a bath; use it as such. Approach baptism as a sacred death to your old way of believing and living. Use it as a symbol of cleansing from the stains of false, worldly thinking. Let your addiction to porn be buried with Christ. Then, rise up from the water clean and fresh and alive to the goodness and sacredness of your own body and that of everyone else. Wash away your porno-prudish mindset. Be clothed with the mind of Christ, and forever after see the bodies of others only through His eyes.

Because the Old Testament prescribed the use of sanctified water for ritually cleansing places, items and people,²⁰ some faith communions still practice a sacred use of water in their

16 **Acts 22:16** (NKJV), *And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.* / **Heb 10:22** (NKJV), *Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.*

17 **Rom 6:3-4** (NIV), *Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.*

18 Read "Hippolytus of Rome on Nude Baptism" in the Appendix A, p. 213.

19 **Mat 28:19** (NIV), *Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.*

20 **Num 19:17-18** (NIV), *For the unclean person, put some ashes from the burned purification offering into a jar and pour fresh water over them. Then a man who is ceremonially clean is to take some hyssop, dip it in the water and sprinkle the tent and all the furnishings and the people who were there. He must also sprinkle anyone who has touched a human bone or a grave or someone who has been killed or someone who has died a natural death.*

prayers for spiritual cleansing. Houses, rooms, closets, computers, and other things and places—even though they are physical in nature—can become spiritually “*unclean*” through the presence or depiction of evil things, such as pornographic pictures and videos. These defiled locations may need cleansing prayer with the symbolic application of *water* ritually dedicated by prayer for this special use. Sacredly applying water on a person’s body can become a strategic symbol of spiritual cleansing similar to that pictured in baptism. I heard one evangelist instruct people receiving this kind of ministry to “let this holy water put you in mind of your baptism.”

Another ritual use of water is *foot washing*. Oddly many Bible teachers and church communions ignore it, even though Jesus clearly enjoined it: “*If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you,*” (John 13:14-15, ESV). With some special instruction, a foot washing ritual could be joined with cleansing prayer as a powerful, sanctified use of water.

The sacred application of water—in praying for houses, rooms, and people—has often proved an especially effective means of grace in confronting spiritual strongholds. If there is any indication of demonic activity in your porn addiction—which is highly likely because of the way pornography perverts nature and truth—try using *holy water* in conjunction with your prayers.

Holy Communion

Early church fathers saw the Eucharist as a continuation of baptism. Baptism declared the death of our old life in the world and our new birth in Christ. Holy Communion repeats this theme by inviting our participation in the ongoing ministry of death and life through the Bread and the Cup, which represent the work of the Cross. Not only does it remind us that we died with Christ and are alive in Him²¹—replicating baptism’s symbolism—but it provides “*a participation*”²² in His sacrificial death and bodily resurrection for our ongoing spiritual nurture. All Christians should know this and meditate upon it, when they take Communion. But what they might not see is how it can serve as a powerfully effective means of grace for many spiritual needs in our lives.

First, we *bring to* the Table and *leave with* our crucified Lord those things in us that need to die. Then, we *take from* the Table the fruits of His Cross and His Resurrection, and as the *Book of Common Prayer* exhorts, “feed upon Him in our hearts by faith with thanksgiving.” There’s still much of the world in us that needs death, and much in us that needs death to the world,²³ to make room for more of Christ’s life. Communion is a sacred rendezvous where God enables this ongoing death-and-life process to take place.

We must bring more of ourselves to this Table and take more of Christ as we leave it. *Eucharist* is a transliteration of the Greek word *thanksgiving* and has as its root word *charis*, or “*grace*.” As a physical means of grace, how much closer to the Cross can we get than to the Body that hung there or to the Blood that was shed on it? No matter what our church affiliation’s

21 Gal 2:20 (NKJV), *I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.*

22 1 Cor 10:16 (ESV), *The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?*

23 Gal 6:14 (NIV), *May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.*

theological conceptions of how Christ is manifested *as, by, with, in, or through*, the elements displayed, He directly instructed us *to feed upon Him*,²⁴ which we do by faith at each celebration of His Table.

The Communion Table represents Christ's Cross quenching sin's penalty and His Resurrection breaking through sin's power. Together they divided historical time, ended the Old Covenant and began the New, answered the Law's demands with grace, and drew an eternal line between death and life. Nothing gets past the Cross without death, and nothing rises up from that death without the power of Christ's Resurrection.

This is why His Table—which sets us before Christ's work on the Cross as a physical means of grace—is a place of divine deliverance and edification. Whatever has wounded your soul sexually can find healing here, even the self-inflicted damage of yielding your heart to pornographic lust.

Bring and leave *on* the Table all your years of porn addiction, then *from* the Table take only the new life in Christ's Body and Blood. Leave *on* the Table any lie that resists the exorcism provided by rational truth, then *from* the Table feed upon Him Who is "*the Way, the Truth, and the Life*." Discard *on* the Table any defiled mental images from the past that haunt your memory, then *from* the Table feast upon "*the express image of God*" in the Body of His Son. Approaching this sacred Table, bring to it whatever in you needs death. Then, with all your heart, feed upon "*the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world*." Drink the Blood that Christ passionately poured out for the Church, His Bride, Who—in the one-flesh relationship manifested by this Meal—is also called His Body.²⁵ Don't let theological fears or this Table's mystery keep you aloof from its grace and power.

Confession & Anointing with Oil

Avoiding the clarity of Scripture can rob God's people of two crucial practices that are taught in the Epistle of James: *confession of sin* and *anointing with oil*. Calling for "*elders*" (recognized so by age or office) to "*pray over*" and "*anoint. . .with oil*" is a clear exhortation to employ oil as a means of grace.²⁶

Critics of this consecrated use of *oil* often pray that God *anoint* their sermon preaching. Ironically, it's *oil* that gives *anointing* its symbolic meaning in relationship to the Holy Spirit. This passage also highlights the role that *confession of sins*—and the absolution of them, authorized by Jesus²⁷—can play in the healing process.

24 **John 6:53-57** (ESV), *So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever feeds on me, he also will live because of me.*

25 **1 Cor 10:17** (ESV), *Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.*

26 **James 5:14-16** (NIV), *Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.*

27 **John 20:22-23** (NIV), *And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."*

If your faith communion shuns these practices, don't fear to look elsewhere. Searching outside your denomination, to find those who understand the value of these means of grace, doesn't mean you must quit your church. There are certainly groups of Christians around who take this passage in James at face value and practice it literally. Unless you are Catholic, you may have to seek out a Lutheran or high-church Episcopal priest who honors this Scripture literally in order to have your confession heard and absolution pronounced. To get anointed with oil, you may have to find a mature charismatic believer who knows that oil, prayerfully applied "*in the name of the Lord*" can mediate healing in mighty ways.²⁸ But don't avoid any of these means of grace that God offers merely because your church leaders or their tradition overlooks them.

Section 3: An Iconic Use of the Physical *Imago Dei*

"If anything is sacred, the human body is sacred."
— Walt Whitman (American poet, 1819-1892)

The non-Christian poet Walt Whitman had insights on creation that many church leaders failed to see. I use his quote to introduce these next suggestions, because it succinctly expresses the truth on which they are based: *nothing in the created universe is more sacred than the human body*. Why? Because God chose it to embody *His image* and to become the *temple of the Holy Spirit*.

The preceding section shows the value and significance of God's use of various means of grace. This next section is perhaps the most logical means of grace for helping to defeat porn addiction. It teaches body acceptance by directly confronting *body shame*. Some ex-porn addicts call it the "turning point" in their struggle. Personally, it's what porn-proofed me as an RN.

Because a pornographic view of the body dominates society and the church, the following methods I'm suggesting might be harshly criticized and unjustly slandered. But they're so logical and effective that, at the risk of alienating some readers, I feel morally obligated to share them. If your heart is open for God to use this last means of grace, it can bring a freedom found nowhere else, and it can do so thoroughly and almost immediately.

Pornography and *prudery* both perceive the naked body as a stimulus for lust and sexual gratification. Those who experience ordinary nudity in healthcare, art classes or naked cultures, see a more wholesome picture. Which perception is right? A simple trial easily wins most observers to the perception of nakedness found in those latter contexts. Frank exposure to normal, nonsexual nudity sabotages the arguments of porno-prudery, but more important, it is *lethal* to porn addiction.

A common protest is, "*You can't teach old dogs new tricks.*" But remember, we're people, not dogs. If it was impossible for our old mental habits to change, God wouldn't tell us to *repent* [Greek for *change the mind*]. When He does tell us to *change our minds*,²⁹ He gives us grace to do it, especially when it comes to how we view the body. In fact, *God instills the human body with more grace than He's placed in any other part of physical creation*. The supreme example of this

28 **Mark 6:13** (NKJV), *And they cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick, and healed them.*

29 **2 Tim 2:25b** (GW), *Maybe God will allow them to change the way they think and act and lead them to know the truth.*

fact is in human body of God's Son—when “*the Word became flesh,*” (John 1:14, ESV).

A profound awareness that our bodies are “*fearfully and wonderfully made*” (Psa 139:14) will help us treat them with sacred dignity. Both prudery's exclusion of the nude body as obscenity and pornography's exploitation of it as entertainment distort the value of God's image in the human form. To unlearn body shame and relearn body acceptance, we must recapture a holy view of nakedness, whether we find it on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel,³⁰ on the walls of an art museum, in the convalescent care of a loved one, or on the sands of a clothing optional beach.

The nude can serve a grace-filled role as holy *iconography*. A holy icon is art that portrays Scriptural themes or saintly attitudes. For centuries, Orthodox churches have used sacred icons as guides to focus the mind during prayer. The Bible's literal description of the *imago Dei* in sexual terms³¹ makes the gender-distinctive bodies of men and women the epitome of instructive icons. Rather than affirming the sordid suspicions of prudery or extending the lewd corruptions of pornography, a God-honoring meditation on the naked “*image of God*” in its “*male and female*” forms can restore our minds to the sanity and sanctity of body acceptance.

No humanly crafted piece of artwork can mediate this purifying contemplation as well as the naked Self-portrait sculpted by our Creator in the Garden of Eden. For centuries, sacred portrayals of the nude by Renaissance artists served this contemplative purpose in old European churches. Unfortunately, many zealous reformers, fearing a religious use of images, purged them from their churches, as well as abandoning a sanctified view of the naked body. In fact, the long history of banning images from Protestant sanctuaries has crippled modern attempts to bring any kind of artwork back into the service of worship.

It's a sad commentary that, instead of coming from rational Christian thinkers, a holy rebuke for evangelical prudery must flow from the secular pen of an art historian who wrote an exceptional book on the history of the nude in art:

Before the Crucifixion of Michelangelo we remember that the nude is, after all, the most serious of all subjects in art; and that it was not an advocate of paganism who wrote, “The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us . . . full of grace and truth.”³²

In contradiction to society's porno-prudish views, a nonsexual sight of the naked human body has proven to be a powerful means of God's grace in confronting porn addiction. David Martin's words, in his summarizing of MCAG, bear repeating:

. . . you will need to retrain your mind about nudity. Culturally, we have defined it as a sexual condition. You may need to find ways to experience it outside of a sexual context, even if only with your spouse or alone. The lies are really a house of cards. You'll be amazed how quickly they fall.

“*How can I go about giving this a try?*” is a legitimate question. Churches no longer practice the naked baptism ritual nor paint nudes on their ceilings and walls. It seems that all the readily available avenues for seeing the naked body—strip joints, smut shops, web porn—are sexually defiling. Where then can the average person find a nonsexual, non-exploitative view of nudity?

I have a few suggestions, but none will work, unless your mind is open to the possibility that

30 Go to http://www.vatican.va/various/cappelle/sistina_vr/ for a view of it.

31 See Gen 1:27-28a (ESV) quoted in note #1 on p. 63.

32 Kenneth Clark, *The Nude – A Study in Ideal Form* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1956), p. 29.

the naked *imago Dei* can actually serve as a holy, *iconic* revelation of the glory of God. On the other hand, without any religious or spiritual effort at all, many non-Christians have had their perspectives automatically transformed merely by experiencing *the naked truth* itself. This well-verified fact raises another obvious question for the Christian: *Shouldn't believers have even more success finding healed vision by learning to see the nude body through the eyes of its Maker?*

Using a Large Mirror

Some were led into misusing the nudity of others by misusing their own bodies as a stimulus for unholy sexual fantasy. If this is how you began to see nudity as synonymous with sexual expression, then even disrobing for a shower can bring on lustful thoughts. Practicing holy meditation in front of a full-length mirror can help break this unwholesome pattern.

With the mind and eyes of Christ, take a sober look at your nude body. Your naked skin is the garment you were born in and will die in. The Original Artist, Who handcrafted the first copy of what you're carefully and prayerfully staring at, pronounced it "*very good*" (**Gen 1:31**) after creating it. While you observe your bare body, meditate on Isaiah's call to preach for three years in the same outfit you're looking at.³³ Imagine being on the fishing boat with Peter,³⁴ who was just as nude as you are in front of the mirror.

Our society associates genitals with sexual activity and shame, but physiologically they're magnificent! If you have trouble seeing their beauty in form, then learn to appreciate their beauty in function. God designed their anatomy specifically for procreation through sexual union. Society's exaltation of the pleasure they can give during that union trivializes their true purpose. We place them on holy ground by focusing on the awesome gift and responsibility they represent as instruments of continuity in physically duplicating the *imago Dei* through sexual reproduction.³⁵

Meditate on the fact that the genitals of Jesus visibly defined His gender. Ponder how His circumcised penis was often seen at public bathing areas throughout His life, even at His baptism, before it was mockingly displayed to the crowd as He hung on the Cross. God intentionally chose circumcision of the penile foreskin as a visible sign, reminding Israelites of the Abrahamic Covenant every time they saw it. In contrast, naked genitals are a major taboo of modern *body shame*. But, if we take God's words in **Genesis 1:27-28**³⁶ about physical gender and sexual union literally, then to insinuate that the genitalia are indecent or obscene is to slander the *imago Dei*.

Beyond prayerful lingering at the mirror, there are other ways to change the way we see our own personal nudity. Short periods of private nude sunbathing tend to erode a false view of our naked selves, as well as to replenish our all-too-frequent deficiencies of Vitamin D. Also, try sleeping naked. A return to this common habit in human history—that is, giving the body a nightly break from clothing—is both healthy and restful. These activities can help to disassociate mere nudity from an exclusive sexual focus. Learning to see our own normally naked bodies in a godly way is essential if we are to treat the nudity of others properly.

33 See **Isa 20:3-4** in note #3 on p. 33.

34 See **John 21:7b** (KJV) quoted in note #3 on p. 33.

35 **Gen 5:3** (ESV), *When Adam had lived 130 years, he fathered a son in his own likeness, after his image, and named him Seth.*

36 See **Gen 1:27-28a** (ESV) quoted in note #1 on p. 63.

Using the World of Art³⁷

“*The nude alone is well dressed.*”
— Auguste Rodin, French sculptor (1840-1917)

Not everyone excels in doing art, but all can learn to appreciate it. We’re made in the image of the Almighty Artist. That’s why there’s a degree of creativity in each of us, even though it may never find an avenue of *fine-art* expression.

If you think you don’t like art, push yourself. Go to a museum or gallery where nudes are depicted. The use of nudity in art is rarely associated with direct sexual activity, as it is in porn. Closely examine each painting or sculpture to discover the various elements that make the composition attractive or interesting. In admiring the skill of these figurative artists, remember that their nudes are only copies of the original artistry of the Master Sculptor.

If direct observation is unavailable, find books of artwork in a library or search for galleries on the internet. Don’t just look. Read information about the works. Within an artist’s personal thoughts, you may find a healthy view of nudity that can help correct a lingering unhealthiness in your own. In one book, which contained many nude works, the modern painter Steve Hanks wrote:

I believe that the pinnacle of art is in the nude. I always return to painting nudes in order to keep up my abilities in figure painting, but there is more to it than that. I also took a lot of art history classes which gave me a great respect for the nude, especially the way the nude has been treated throughout Western history. If you go back to Florence, which I’ve done, and look at the churches and government buildings that were built five hundred years ago, they are all adorned with beautiful sculptures and paintings of nudes. These nudes were seen as an expression of pride in humanity and as heavenly incarnations. Nowadays we couldn’t do anything like that.

This makes me wonder, “What has changed?” The simple fact is that we are now bombarded with pornography. Now, more often than not, nudity is seen as a sexual, pornographic image. This is sad to me because when I studied the nude in school it was a celebration of life, a form of respect for people and the most difficult artistic challenge there is for an artist. There is nothing negative about it. I could give in and say “I won’t do nudes because people will view them as pornographic.” If I do that, I would be giving no voice to a respectable way of viewing the human body.³⁸

Porno-film makers have prolifically abused the video arts, but if movies were your doorway into porn addiction, they might be a doorway out. Unfortunately, Hollywood usually exploits nudity sexually. However, films like *Schindler’s List* show how video drama can use nudity in nonsexual ways that send a different message.

In the heyday of traditional nudism, a small number of films wove nudism’s counter-cultural lifestyle into their plots. One low-budget example from 1961, *Diary of a Nudist*—a 2-star in my

37 The partnership of marriage requires openness and honesty. If you are married, tell your wife of your need and desire for healing before you use this last means of grace. Show her the MCAG website. Most women appreciate how it confronts the sexual objectification of women. Let her read this article, too. If raised to see her body as a sex target, she will need healing from that lie. But if she doesn’t see how body acceptance can defeat porn addiction, she might suspect these next suggestions as mere extensions of your porn habits. If she is resistant, stick to the previous suggestions. Focus on rebuilding her confidence in your love for her, even as you prove your determination to be healed of porn addiction. On seeing improvement, she may want to explore these other suggestions herself.

38 *Moving On - The Art of Steve Hanks* (Seymour, CT: Greenwich Workshop Press, 2007), p. 114.

opinion, and mentioned here only because of its online availability from a public domain archive—has no sexual message in its story or its nudity. A more realistic, superbly directed French film from 1991, *La belle noiseuse* (I give it 4-star), shows a woman's personal transformation as she models for an old, frustrated artist; lots of nudity and tedious melodrama, but no sexuality.

Focusing on the nonsexually naked *imago Dei*, displayed in films and other artwork, is extremely therapeutic. It disentangles nudity from popular sexual illusions and reconnects commonly exploited body parts to the personal identities of their owners.

Think of it. Living nude models posed unashamedly as references for the paintings and sculptures we enjoy. The people in movies like *Schindler's List* knew that millions of viewers would see them in their God-given birthday suits. These naked models and actors have names and souls, even if they've already left this life. The Bible says we and they will all spend eternity in physically resurrected bodies. Believers, above all others, should see their nude bodies as a normal dimension of their individual personalities. Clothed or unclothed, they bear in their flesh the dynamic and sacred *imago Dei*. When you learn to apply that truth automatically each time you see the naked human form, your addiction to porn will meet its death.

There's an even more direct way to extinguish a false view of nudity through art. Sign up for a life-drawing class or attend some open figure-drawing sessions. Don't laugh at this idea! Anyone who can write can draw stick figures. That's where I started at age 55. Granted, I was serious about learning art, but hopefully you're serious about getting free from porn.

You've squandered many hours indulging in pornographic fantasies. Why not spend a mere fraction of that time on the rewarding task of drawing real nude person? You fed your eyes on falsehoods. In this endeavor, you must feed them on God's reality. You'll be forced to stare at nudity, forced to study every curve and line of the naked body; forced to capture on paper a semblance of the Maker's design in the unclad *imago Dei*. Whatever unrealistic ideas you've imagined about figure drawing, they will quickly disintegrate in the stark presence of a nude model.

There's always a fee involved to participate for these sessions, but it's an investment in guaranteed therapy. All you need is a pencil, a pad of drawing paper, and a mind ready to learn a new way of praising the Creator for His awesome handiwork. Even if you can't carry a tune, you sing hymns and praise songs at church. So, don't let poor drawing skills stop you from extolling God for His creative masterpiece by trying to copy from it! You'll quickly find this challenging exercise to be an effective means of grace! You may even decide to take up art as a hobby, as I have.

As a transition to the final suggestion, I'll mention another practical way to participate in the art of the nude: become the naked model yourself. I'm not necessarily suggesting that you become a paid model for art classes, although that would offer you some valuable lessons. Rather, I'm thinking about opportunities where you can join a crowd of other volunteers to pose for massive art projects. Spencer Tunick has orchestrated this kind of photographic composition on a grand scale in major cities around the world. Jack Gescheidt has done the same on a smaller scale with his Tree Spirit Project of voluntary nudes. There are probably others.

Tunick's work is well-known, and you can see many examples of his fine-art projects online. Thousands travel great distances to be in his photo shoots. You may not care about his concept of art, but being surrounded by the nudity of so many normal people will instantly cure you of a distorted, fantasized view of the human body. Posing in a project of this nature takes energy,

money, and time. Although perhaps only a once-in-a-lifetime event, it would provide a strong dose of reality therapy to undermine a stubborn, pornographic view of the human body. However, there's an easier, less expensive way to obtain a similar lesson.

Visiting a Safe, Clothing Optional Location

Some people have had the good fortune to stumble accidentally into nonsexual, mixed-gender, clothing optional situations. Maybe along a secluded beach, perhaps at a hot springs resort, or even when on vacation trip abroad, they came across a picture of nudity that didn't fit in their mental frame for it. Such an episode happened to Paul M. Bowman while hiking in Idaho:

When I entered the clearing, there were probably forty or fifty people scattered about, soaking in the pools. As I neared the first pool, an attractive college age girl looked up at me, smiled and simply said, "Hi, how are you doing?"

She was stark naked—and completely comfortable and at ease with it. All the hillside pools were occupied by groups of naked people, and all totally at peace, as if they were a permanent part of the natural environment. . . .

The scene didn't seem to make sense. I had been taught that when naked men and women got together they became so full of lust that all kinds of licentiousness took place. Yet, here was a scene totally contrary to that notion. There were groups of college friends, some families with their children, and even obvious strangers, about evenly divided between males and females, all mixing together enjoying the sunshine and the warm pools with no sign of anything sinful taking place. . . .

. . . a hillside full of innocuous naked men, women, boys and girls seemed so contrary to what I'd learned in church about nakedness that I knew that I would have to study to see exactly what the Bible really did say about nakedness. . . . I was completely mystified at how what I had been taught could be so at odds with what I saw in actual practice.³⁹

A similar, less dramatic discovery was made by a Christian friend of mine. While traveling alone, she stopped for a few hours at a mineral-bath retreat center and learned that one section of the complex was clothing optional. On a whim, she bravely chose to join others who were sunbathing and spending pool-time without swimsuits. Her experience, which she described as *exhilarating*, immediately changed her previous ideas about the naked body. She told me she hoped she would be able to do it again.

When I began massage therapy courses, it was at a school that rented facilities from a hot springs resort where accommodations were co-ed. A hostess led me into a dressing room near the Watsu training pools and assigned me a cubicle for my belongings. Men and women were showering and changing in and out of swimsuits openly, as if it was completely normal. There was no disrespect, no gawking, no sensuous activity. Everything was aboveboard.

This same unashamed attitude about nudity reigned in the massage classes. As an RN, I knew social nudity only in a one-way direction. Here, the tables were turned. To trade places during practice sessions, the students just disrobed and climbed under the sheets. No one had qualms about getting undressed in front of each other, and I got used to having none either.

At the resort's pools and saunas—which students were allowed to use during free time—

39 From the Preface to *Nakedness and the Bible* by Paul M. Bowman (Ferndale, WA: Amity Marketing Service, 2001), v-vi.

clothing was optional. A sign was posted alerting guests to report inappropriate sexual behavior, but I never saw any. Families with children were there skinny-dipping, and I decided to join them. One elderly Slavic lady I met told me how much she appreciated this resort because it reminded her of similar places in her homeland. During my years of massage training, I met several Christians swimming naked without shame at those pools.

These wholesome experiences with non-sexual social nudity stamped body acceptance indelibly into my thinking. Before this time, I was completely comfortable seeing others naked in the hospital environment. After wards, I felt totally at ease being seen in my own naked skin.

If such a setting would serve as a means of grace to help break your addiction, it would be foolish to wait until you stumble onto skinny-dippers at a secluded riverbank. At the same time, it's dangerous to assume that all places waving 'clothing optional' banners are therapeutic and safe. Our pornified culture has wedded nudity with sexual promiscuity. So, be cautious in pursuing this path for finding freedom from porn addiction.

Many resorts, like the one where I attended massage school, uphold morally high standards. But all of them cost money. Public locations that are clothing optional may be distant or hard to find. Also, some places are sexually indulgent rather than body-friendly. Careful research and planning are essential, if you want to find a morally sound atmosphere for calmly meditating on the *imago Dei* in the naked bodies of yourself and those around you. Such a safe context can be a strong tool both for erasing mental porno-prudery and for dissolving the allure of pornography. For many, it was at just such a place that they finally won their battle with porn.

If this is what you need to bring your own problem with porn addiction to extinction, then pray for God's guidance, and don't go without it. The naked truth can set you free, whether you follow this last suggestion or not. But if God wants to use a wholesome experience of nudity as a means of grace in your life, then seek His wisdom in how, when and where it should happen. You may be surprised at how rapidly His guidance comes. I believe this is because God knows that, if you haven't discovered the truth yet in intellectual ways, you won't be able to avoid recognizing it in this very practical way.

God may use other ways to help the truth of body acceptance sink in and liberate you from porn addiction. These 'further helps' are not ultimate remedies but various means by which God's grace can help remove mental or spiritual hindrances that block truth from transforming your thinking. Again, Jesus declared that the truth alone sets us free. So, if a careful and thorough reading of the MCAG articles have not brought that freedom, then pray about using one or more of these suggestions I've presented.