



See Me Naked: Stories of Sexual Exile in American Christianity

Amy Frykholm

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“A fascinating, troubling, and finally heartening book that subtly shows ways that Christians might reconcile their bodies with their devotion to God. Highly recommended for individual Christians but also for pastors and church groups.”—*Library Journal*, starred review

Stories of sexual scandals in churches throughout the nation have been downright routine in recent years, suggesting to many Americans that a deeply rooted problem plagues American Christianity—and prompting some to abandon their congregations altogether. In *See Me Naked*, Amy Frykholm takes us beyond simple indictments of, or blind allegiance to, Christian cultures to explore the complex, intimate intersection of sexuality and spirituality as it affects the lives of ordinary Christians.

Recounting with care and nuance the life histories of nine American Protestants, Frykholm shows us the harm done by the rules-based sexual ethic now dominant, which alternately denies and romanticizes sexuality. But she also points to how American Christians might otherwise access their spiritual tradition to heal the divide between religion and sexuality. One story examines the intricate relationship between a man’s religious faith and his sexual addiction. In another, a man defines religion as a wall that kept him from the discovery that he was gay. One young woman uses sex to defy her devout parents, while another seeks to transcend her body by going without food. Nearly everyone interviewed in *See Me Naked* remains a Christian, with some further on their journey than others. Yet each of them is working to understand the connection between their desires and their faith. Ultimately, their stories—stories of pain and violence, perseverance and courage—attest to the healing power of struggling through the wild and uncertain experiences of life.

See Me Naked explores the many ways that people work to recover from harmful beliefs and restores the notion that one of the key insights of Christianity is that the body, with all its struggles, pains, and difficulties, is a vehicle of the holy and can lead us into a more full relationship with God.

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