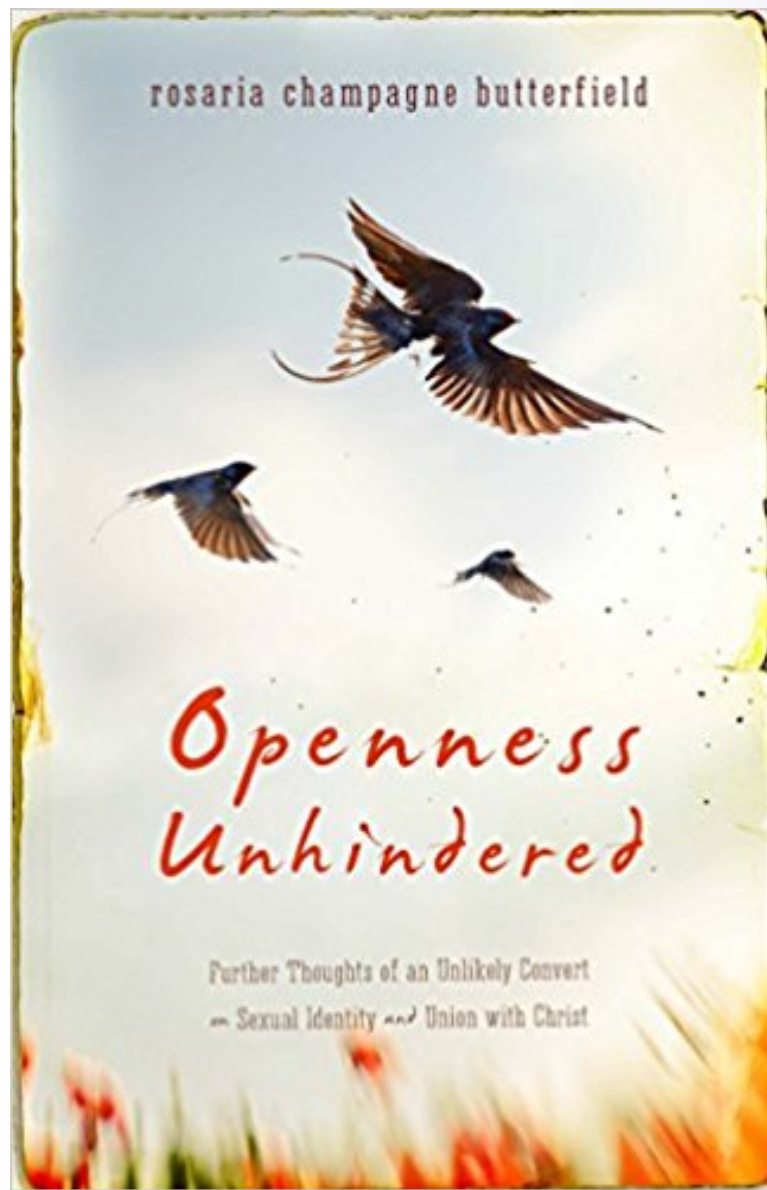
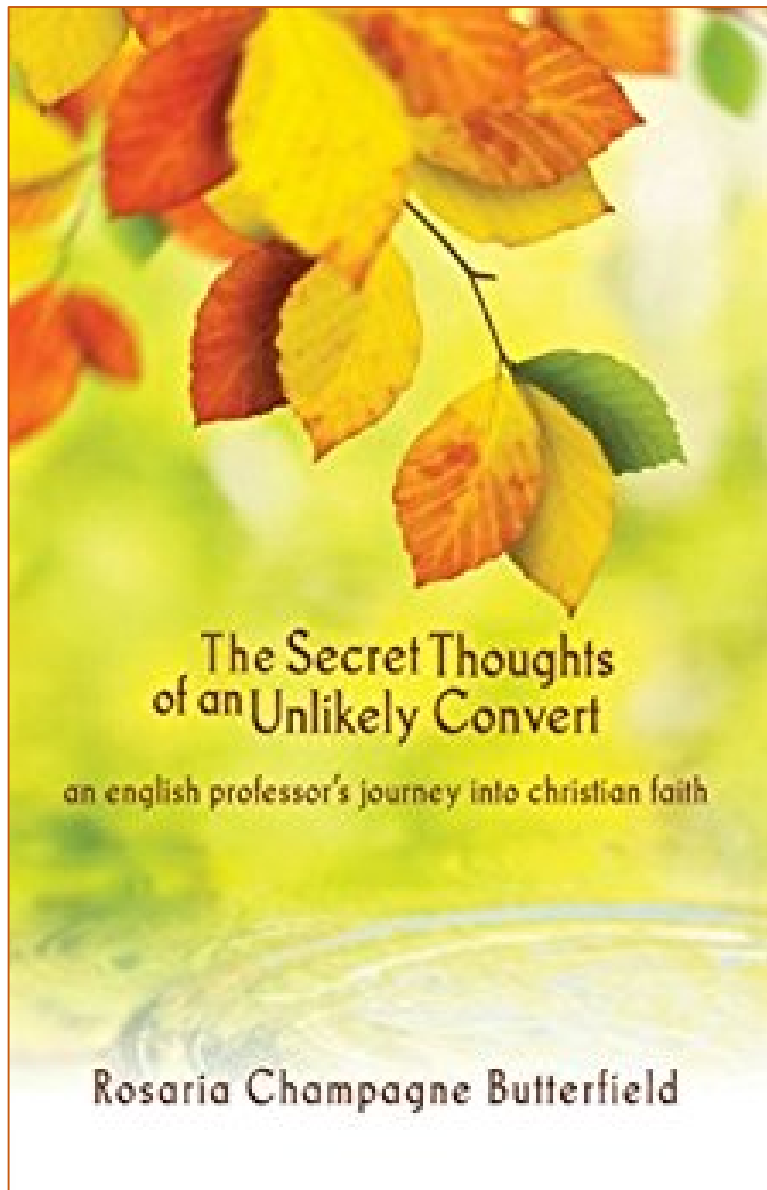


# GENDER SEXUALITY & THE CHURCH

Understanding and Ministering to Those  
Who Struggle with SSA



# Questions we need to answer:

- Is SSA the same as a gay orientation?
  - Freud rooted identity in sexual desires.
  - “‘Sexual orientation,’ or any other term that seeks to define humanity without recognizing our fallen nature, and the redemptive grace offered in Jesus Christ, can only misrepresent humanity in the long run.”

(Butterfield, *Openness Unhindered*, 106-107)

“And no one in the LGBT community from which I emerged would have ever claimed to have been ‘born this way.’ We believed that sexuality was fluid. We claimed psychological proof that gender and sexuality were social constructs, and as such, matters of personal expression that can be changed, resisted, or shaped as our own individual sense of personal integrity and desire allowed.”

(Butterfield, *Openness Unhindered*, 108)

- Is SSA the same as a gay orientation?
  - All of us have a sinful orientation, and all of us have our own ways of expressing our sinful orientation. How our sin nature manifests itself is going to be different from person to person.
  - “Desires for things God has forbidden are a reflection of how sin has distorted me, not how God has made me.”

Sam Allbery, *Is God Anti-Gay?* (32)

# Questions we need to answer:

- Is SSA the same as a gay orientation?
- What is the difference between gay attraction, identity, and lifestyle?
- Is SSA a product of nurture or nature or both?
- Does the Bible condemn sinful desires if we don't act on them?
- Can SS-Attracted Christians change? What does that change look like?

# What is a church to do?

- We, as the church, should attract not merely those who *agree* with us, but those who *need* us.
- What if the reason a family leaves our church is because one of the teens is struggling with SSA, and the parents think that if it comes out, they would be rejected and ridiculed?

# What is a church to do?

- How would we respond if a gay couple came to church with two children in tow?
  - Would they be shunned? Would we invite their kids to VBS with our kids?
  - Would they be invited over for dinner, to a softball game, a SS picnic, etc.?
  - If not, why not—assuming they are not trying to make a statement?



# Who are we talking about?

- Richard—desired relationship with a caring man
- Sheila—desired relationship with someone safe
- Ty—desired to gratify his lusts anyway possible
  
- So what is going on here? How are we to understand this? Are others to blame for the choices of these children? Does your concept of how to treat homosexuals change when you know the stories? Should it change?

# What Does God Say is Going On?

A Brief Primer on the Human Heart

James 1:14

But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust [strong desires], and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

# What Does God Say is Going On?

A Brief Primer on the Human Heart

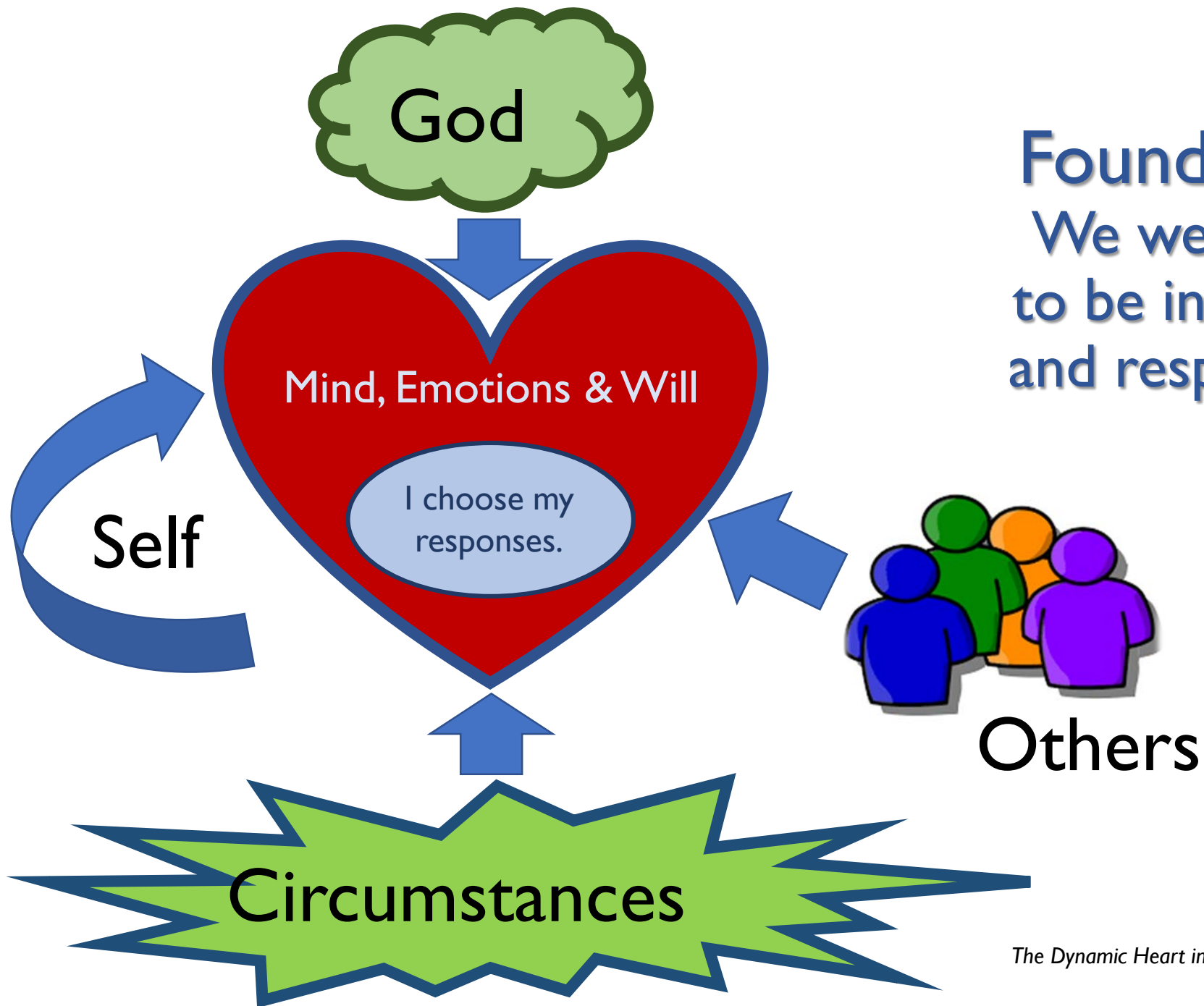
Ephesians 2:3

Among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

**Our beliefs about our experiences customize bodily desires. At the same time our flesh corrupts those desires to pursue them in violation of the Law of God.**



**Foundations:**  
We were made  
to be influenced  
and responsible!



**Foundations:**  
We were made  
to be influenced  
and responsible!

QUESTIONS	Attractions (7-14) - <b>not a choice</b>	I am different. How do I make sense of what I feel?
EXPLORATION		
CONCLUSIONS		

Attractions (7-14)  
- **not a choice**

I am different. How do I make sense of what I feel?

EXPLORATION

CONCLUSIONS

<p>QUESTIONS</p>	<p>Attractions (7-14) - <b>not a choice</b></p>	<p>I am different. How do I make sense of what I feel?</p>
<p>EXPLORATION</p>	<p>Behavior (16-17) - <b>choice</b></p>	<p>Should I delay or refrain from sexual behavior? Should I experiment?</p>
<p>CONCLUSIONS</p>		

<p>QUESTIONS</p>	<p>Attractions (7-14) - <b>not a choice</b></p>	<p>I am different. How do I make sense of what I feel?</p>
<p>EXPLORATION</p>	<p>Behavior (16-17) - <b>choice</b></p>	<p>Should I delay or refrain from sexual behavior? Should I experiment?</p>
	<p>Identity Label (17-18) - <b>choice</b></p>	<p>How do I name my reality? What kind of a person am I?</p>
<p>CONCLUSIONS</p>		



QUESTIONS	Attractions (7-14) - <b>not a choice</b>	I am different. How do I make sense of what I feel?
EXPLORATION	Behavior (16-17) - <b>choice</b>	Should I delay or refrain from sexual behavior? Should I experiment?
	Identity Label (17-18) - <b>choice</b>	How do I name my reality? What kind of a person am I?
	Disclosure (17-18) - <b>choice</b>	Who can I trust with what I am going through?
CONCLUSIONS		

QUESTIONS	Attractions (7-14) - <b>not a choice</b>	I am different. How do I make sense of what I feel?
EXPLORATION	Behavior (16-17) - <b>choice</b>	Should I delay or refrain from sexual behavior? Should I experiment?
	Identity Label (17-18) - <b>choice</b>	How do I name my reality? What kind of a person am I?
	Disclosure (17-18) - <b>choice</b>	Who can I trust with what I am going through?
CONCLUSIONS	Relationship (15-18) - <b>choice</b>	How can my desires for intimacy be met?

# The Gay Narrative (their interpretation)

1. Same sex attractions reflect real differences between types of people (that is, gay, straight, bisexual).
2. These attractions accurately reflect your identity—your sense of self.
3. If your identity is gay, it makes sense to follow through and act on what you feel because you are merely expressing and enjoying who you are.


**ERROR:** ATTRACTIONS ➡ IDENTITY ➡ BEHAVIOR

# The Biblical Narrative

1. In a broken world I am always going to experience losses.
2. There are other important matters that are a part of my life—salvation, gifts, and opportunities. I dare not limit my identity to an experience or a desire (accident, marital status, socio / economic / racial / grouping) or give it an unbiblical weight.
3. Who God says I am lies at the core of my being — I am a gendered, fallen, but redeemed child of God forever loved by God. “I live in chastity with unwanted homosexual desires.”
4. No matter what my desires, I don’t have to act upon them. I can always do what God commands with His help and can find fulfilling intimacy with God as I walk with Him.

# The Path to Change (Eph. 5)

- Repent of coveting what we don't have and thank God for what He has given (1-4).
- Reject all forms of darkness, walk in light, and begin bearing spiritual fruit (5-10).
- Reject hiding and welcome accountability (11-14).
- Reject foolishness (living as if there is no God) and pursue wisdom & walking in the Spirit (15-18).



# GENDER SEXUALITY & THE CHURCH

[core.bju.edu](http://core.bju.edu)