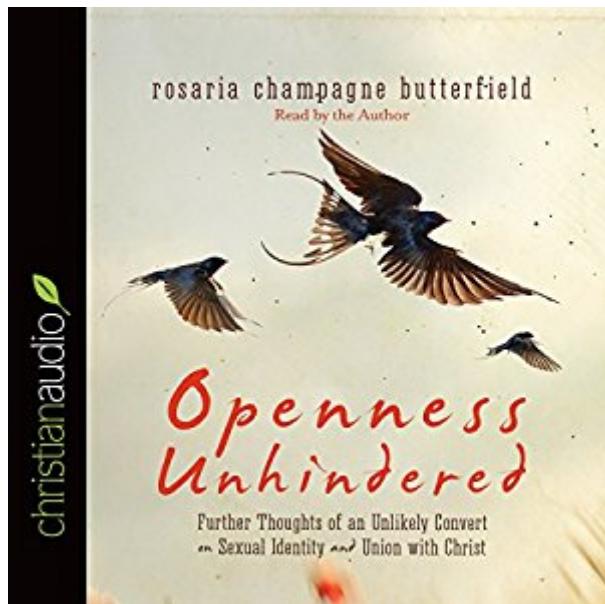


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Openness Unhindered: Further Thoughts Of An Unlikely Convert On Sexual Identity And Union With Christ



Synopsis

Before you can resolve the issues of our day, you must be able to clarify them. Terms like same-sex marriage, sexual orientation, gender identity, and gay Christian are parts of daily discourse, yet enormous controversy surrounds them. They are the stuff of news headlines and vitriolic social media posts. But they also reflect stirrings of the heart in real people with real questions and concerns. Rosaria Champagne Butterfield, once a leftist professor in a committed lesbian relationship and now a confessional Christian, but always the thoughtful and compassionate professor, has written a follow-up to *The Secret Thoughts of an Unlikely Convert*. This book answers many of the questions people pose when she speaks at universities and churches, questions not only about her unlikely conversion to Christ but about personal struggles that the questioners only dare to ask someone else who has traveled a long and painful journey. Dr. Butterfield not only goes to great lengths to clarify some of today's key controversies; she also traces their history and defines the terms that have become second nature today - even going back to God's original design for marriage and sexuality as found in the Bible. She cuts to the heart of the problems and points the way to the solution, which includes a challenge to the church to be all that God intended it to be and for each person to find the true freedom that is found in Christ. Chapters include: Conversion: The Spark of a New Identity Identity: The Flame of Our Union in Christ Repentance: The Threshold to God and the Answer to Shame, Temptation, and Sin Sexual Orientation: Freud's 19th-Century Category Mistake Self-Representation: What Does It Mean to Be "Gay"? Conflict: When Sisters Disagree Community: Representing Christ to the World

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Customer Reviews

Openness Unhindered is a sequel to Rosaria Butterfield's book Confessions of an Unlikely Convert in which she details her conversion to faith in Christ after being deeply into the lesbian, feminist life style as a tenured English professor at a university. This book is quite different from her first book in that Butterfield goes deeper into the philosophical and theological roots of sexual identity versus the truth about a Christian's identity in Christ. This is a book that must be read slowly to grasp the deep Biblical truths all Christians need to recognize, learn and digest. Butterfield has profound chapters on Conversion, Identity and Repentance followed by two equally profound chapters on Sexual Orientation (Freud's Mistake) and What Does it Mean to be Gay? Essentially she shows that our identity comes from God not from what we do. A final chapter on Community explores the need for all Christians to reach out to neighbors and minister to them. Butterfield and her husband have found unique ways to do this. This book will inform anyone looking for a biblical reasoned discussion of the issues of gay sex and the church. It will help those struggling with sexual sin or guilt-ridden about the past. It will enlighten run of the mill Christians about the fact that we are all sinners. We need to repent daily and cling to our identity in Christ. Butterfield writes with warmth, wit and wisdom.

This is the most important book I have read on Christian doctrine of how grace works on our lives in general, but especially as applied to the struggle with unwanted homosexual desire. The intense inner battle between the authority of the Bible and the appeal of what the culture would have strugglers believe about who they are is clarified. A final outcome of reading this book for the individual struggler offers profound inner peace and faith-affirming hope. Rosaria's book does NOT offer false expectations or reflect a shallow understanding of homosexuality. As someone who has lived intensely on both sides of this issue, she is expertly situated and verbally gifted to address this difficult issue. She shows the historical roots of Freud's definition of personal identity in sexual terms and contrasts it to the Biblical definitions of who we are in Christ. Although OPENNESS UNHINDERED has a much broader application to how the Christian life can be lived through God's power, it is the most important Christian book written on homosexuality since the closing of Exodus International, and maybe ever. Hopefully it will give all who call themselves Christians, a deeper, more compassionate and accurate understanding of this issue from which to approach both personal interactions and relationships and institutional and governmental policies.

Ms. Butterfield shows exceptional theological understanding and a heart of compassion and mercy throughout this book. She does not seek solutions through politics or a culture war but focuses on what the Bible says is true and the heart of the gospel. The last chapter on community blew my mind as she makes a powerful case for church membership and hospitality and its crucial role in spiritual growth. I do hope she writes another book expanding further on this topic of hospitality. Her writing is honest, discerning and poetic. I was very refreshed, inspired and even more ashamed of Christians who spend more energy condemning others than looking at their own sins. We all struggle with sin and desperately need God's grace. If we don't get this we have no business proclaiming what the Bible says regarding sexuality to the secular culture. First things first.

Okay, Rosaria is a pretty intense lady, and I don't agree with some of what she says, but her book is definitely thought provoking, passionate, deeply thought out, theologically rich, and challenging. It's worth reading just to make you think and open up your mind. Whether or not you agree with her, her perspective is valuable and interesting. Also, although this book sort of seems like a sequel to her first book, *Secret Thoughts of an Unlikely Convert*, you don't have to read that book first in order to get a lot out of this one. In fact, I liked this book a LOT better than *Secret Thoughts*. If you only read one, I would recommend reading this one. And just be warned, it's not easy reading. Rosaria is an intellectual, a PHD, a scholar... and it shows. This isn't bad, just be ready for some pretty intense reading at times.

Very well researched and well argued case for the whole question of identity. But more than that it is a book that encourages us to compassion without compromise. Dr. Butterfield continues her story begun in her first book. Some sections while requiring slow and thoughtful reading and reflection, are well worth the effort. If you are serious about engaging in missions in today's cultural landscape, this book is a must read. But as Rosario will herself say, knowledge without love will lead to pride. Take the truths embed them in love and then when it comes to building bridges you will find that you have a platform to present these life-changing truths.

By far the best book written on sexuality and theology from a woman who has seen the good and bad in two drastically different worlds. Her personal experience and understanding add volumes to her compassionate, yet never unwavering, resolve to speak truth to a restless generation.

I don't just mean homosexuality/lesbianism (the author's background), but sexual sin in general. Much of what is discussed would be helpful I. Dealing with a handful of other sexual sins (pornography, heterosexual lust, promiscuity, an affair, etc.). Butterfield is a great writer and proves to be more than an adequate theologian.

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