

SIDE A, B, Y, X

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written by Josh Proctor, edited by Aubrey Spears

One of the main approaches to capture the nuances of current perspectives regarding sexuality within the Western Church is the “Sides” terminology. No system of belief categorization is perfect, but a good system can help us better communicate nuances within the conversation.

- These Sides *only* address issues of sexuality. Do not assume a person’s beliefs on sexuality communicate a specific view of gender or the trans* experience.
- There is diversity within these views. If a person says they adhere to one view or the other, that does not automatically mean they agree with everything stated here. This is simply an overview of the general beliefs.
- The goal of the Sides terminology is neither to pit Sides against each other nor to minimize their differences. Many, not all, people across each viewpoint find themselves in community and fellowship with people of other viewpoints. The goal should always be to help improve communication within a complex conversation.

A New View (1960s–Present):

A P P R O V E **Side A** – God intentionally created queer people to have sexual attractions to members of the same sex. God blesses sex between members of the same sex within certain boundaries. It’s important to recognize that not everyone on Side A is the same. Some hold a high view of Scripture, submit to its authority, embrace the gospel, love Jesus and genuinely want to submit to him, hold to the apostles creed, the divinity of Jesus, the virgin birth, etc. In other words, other than the issues around sexuality, they are solidly within the historic Christian orthodox world. (E.g., Justin Lee, Matthew Vines, Alicia Johnson). Most people on Side A deny the authority and inspiration of Scripture along with many other fundamental Christian doctrines.

The Historic View (~2000 BC–Present):

C A R E **Side B** – God intends for sex to be reserved for the lifelong covenant of marriage between one man and one woman. Christians who are sexually attracted to others of the same sex should resist same-sex sexual activity. Queer identity is a healthy way of communicating one’s experience and desires. Sexual orientation typically does not change.

C A R E **Side Y** – God intends for sex to be reserved for the lifelong covenant of marriage between one man and one woman. Christians who are sexually attracted to others of the same sex should resist same-sex sexual activity. In addition, they should resist the concept of sexual orientation and the use of sexual identity language. That is, they should replace LGBT+ labels with non-identity ways for explaining their experience. E.g., *I am a Christian who is same-sex attracted*. Efforts to change a person’s sexual attractions are generally not supported but not always denounced.

A Failed Experiment (1973–2013):

C U R E **Side X** – While continuing to hold the historic Christian view of sexuality, evangelicalism in the West shifted from a positive vision for gay people who turn to Jesus, to a focus on “curing” homosexuality. In this approach, being oriented toward or sexually attracted to members of your own gender is sinful, a spiritual sickness that must be repented of and can be ‘cured.’ Same-sex attracted people should work toward becoming heterosexual in their orientation, attraction, and desires.

	Side A	Side B	Side Y	Side X
Is sexual intercourse between two people of the same sex blessed by God?	Yes	No	No	No
What should be the goal for a Christian with same-sex attractions?	Find a spouse/partner of the same sex	Live celibate or in an opposite sex marriage	Live celibate or in an opposite sex marriage	Change their attractions and find a spouse of the opposite sex
Is being attracted to the same sex in and of itself sinful?	No, it is blessed by God	No, it is not sin in and of itself	No, it is not sin in and of itself	Yes, and the Christian should renounce it and pursue opposite sex attractions
Can and should a person with same-sex attractions pursue changing their attractions through therapy or interventions?	No, it is harmful and dangerous	No, it is harmful and dangerous	It is not endorsed, but it can be an option	Yes, it is encouraged
Can people with same-sex attractions identify as LGBTQ+ while being a Christian?	Yes	Yes	No	No
Prominent Authors	Justin Lee, Matthew Vines, James Brownson, Colby Martin	Wesley Hill, Eve Tushnet, Preston Sprinkle, Laurie Krieg, Gregory Coles, Greg Johnson, Nate Collins, Mark Yarhouse, David Bennett, Ron Belgau	Sam Allberry, Rachel Gilson, Ed Shaw, Kevin DeYoung, Becket Cook, Christopher Yuon	Joe Dallas, Robert Gagnon, Leanne Payne
		Jackie Hill	Perry Rosaria	Butterfield
Prominent Organizations	Q Christian Fellowship (qchristian.org) The Reformation Project (reformationproject.org)	Revoice (revoice.us) The Center for Faith, Sexuality and Gender (centerforfaith.com) Spiritual Friendship (spiritualfriendship.org) The Sexual and Gender Identity Institute at Wheaton College Posture Shift (postureshift.com)	Harvest USA (havestusa.org) Living Out (livingout.org)	Exodus International* Restored Hope Network (restoredhopenetwork.org)