

## Queerology Episode 14

Justin Lee | The Power of Nuance and Listening

Transcript

**Matthias Roberts:** Hey friends, this is Mathias Roberts. You're listening to Queerology, a podcast on belief and being, this is episode 14.

**Justin Lee:** *"So we end up in these echo chambers where we only listen to and talk to people who already think like us and we're preaching to the choir and we're hearing what we're preaching echoed right back to us; how we lose the ability to understand people who are different from us which also means we lose the ability to reach them to change their life".*

**Matthias:** I remember the day that I got Justin Lee's book, "Torn" - Rescuing the gospel from the Gays-versus-Christians Debate" in the mail; I like ran to my mailbox, hold it up and I was in college at the time and I spent the rest of my day in my dorm room just devouring the book. It was the first book that I read; this is at a time when there weren't a whole lot of resources out there for Gay Christians and it was the first book that I read that actually told a story that deeply resonated with me. Justin's story felt like my story and reading the journey of his liberation from growing up with in a very conservative evangelical framework to holding on to his faith but finding a faith that is accepting and fully affirming of LGBT people, that book gave me hope for the first time. I am so excited to have Justin on the podcast today.

Before we dive into all of that, this weekend Kevin Garcia, he has a podcast called The Tiny Revolution, he blogs, if you're not familiar with him go to [thekevingarcia.com](http://thekevingarcia.com). He's a dear friend of mine; Kevin's going to be in town in Seattle and we're doing a Seattle meet up. So if you're in the Seattle or surrounding areas, you want to come hang out with us, it's just going to be a drop in event at drip City coffee in downtown Seattle, 4 o'clock to 6 o'clock, come hang out with us. The details are on my Facebook page- [Facebook.com/MatthiasRoberts](https://www.facebook.com/MatthiasRoberts) and we will see you on Saturday; I'm super excited.

For the last two decades, Justin Lee has been an influential Christian advocate for LGBT affirmation, I think he's best known for working across areas of theological disagreement to promote grace, mutual understanding. His book "Torn," the one that I mentioned earlier has been cited widely for his role in changing conservative Christian's attitudes and helping Christian parents accept their LGBT kids. Justin is the founder of the Gay Christian Network which he founded in 2001 and over his 16 years as the executive director of that organization, he grew it into the largest LGBT Christian Organization in the world.

Justin's been featured on Dr. Phil, Anderson Cooper, All Things Considered. He's front page of the New York Times; his work has been called "ingenious" by The Advocate. And today Justin

continues to speak around the world, working to change Christian hearts and minds and trying to create a better world for LGBT Christians. He and the Gay Christian Network parted ways earlier this year; Justin talks about that a little bit in this episode and also shares with us what he's up to now. He has a new book coming out next year, some great things in the work. Justin asked me to mention this at the beginning of the episode since he didn't get into it but he has founded a new nonprofit called "Nuance Ministries" and while he's still working on getting that off the ground, you can find out all the details about that over his website which is [geekyjustin.com](http://geekyjustin.com). Let's go ahead and dive in.

**Matthias:** Justin, how are you doing today?

**Justin:** I'm doing all right, how are you?

**Matthias:** I'm doing well, thank you. It's great to have you on the podcast.

**Justin:** I just said I was doing all right and then you're doing well, I feel like you're one-upping me already.

**Matthias:** [Laughs] That's the goal right?

[Laughter]

**Matthias:** So to start, how would you identify and then how would you say that your faith has helped form or informs that identity?

**Justin:** Dude, that's such a big question. How do you identify..? So many things, I'm a geek; I'm a white cisgender gay male; I somewhat tentatively used the word evangelical to describe myself and I say tentatively because I'm a Christian and my faith has been impacting my life for as long as I can remember, from a very young age. And the reality is the flavor of Christianity that I was brought up in, the flavor of Christianity that has most influenced me throughout my life is evangelical. At the same time, evangelicals have gotten a really bad reputation of late, at least in the US and for some really good reasons actually. And so I find myself on the one hand kind of wanting to distance myself from certain things and say I'm not like these folks and at the same time well I kind of am like these folks, and I would like to see these folks do some things differently. So yeah, that's why I sort of tentatively identified myself that way because I'm always afraid that people are going to immediately write me off.

You know there's a thing recently where a bunch of evangelicals very publicly said I just can't identify myself as evangelical anymore and I totally get that impulse, I really do and part of me is afraid that people will say well, why haven't you also said that and there are a lot of reasons but one of those reasons is that I still feel like in many ways these are my people even while wanting the evangelical church to do better and I feel like in some ways it's easier for me to say do better from the inside but I also kind of cringe...

[Laughter]

**Matthias:** Yeah I think like that feels like a fairly common sentiment to me because I feel like I always kind of... I have that same kind of relationship with that word of like a feeling like these are my people and I like still feel like most comfortable in quote/unquote evangelical church worship situation and yet it's really hard to hold that tension.

**Justin:** Yeah. Well, I mean in some ways I would argue that some of the trends that I've seen at least in American evangelicalism in my life from my way of thinking essentially betray what I think of as evangelicalism; what I think that the faith is about or should be about and ultimately you know at the same time I want to say I think it should be about Christ and not about our own labels and so you know when we kind of segment ourselves off and say well I'm this kind of Christian, that can be helpful in some ways but it also can be unhelpful in others. And so ultimately what I care about is not the label at all, I mean what I care about is Jesus, is you know seeking God and that to me, that's really what's important not the label but yeah, it's a love-hate relationship.

**Matthias:** Totally. Yeah, that makes sense. I sort of kind of jump right in because I know that this is the question kind of on everyone's mind and I know this...

**Justin:** The velocity of an unladen swallow...

[Laughter]

**Justin:** Let that be it.

**Matthias:** Yeah that is it. I know that it's kind of... I mean I know there's like non-disclosure forms that have been signed and there's not... I would imagine there's not much that can be said but what can you say about GCN and kind of what has happened in the past few months and where you're at with that and what are you able to say?

**Justin:** Yeah well, so you know I started the organization 16 years ago, so I did that for a long time and I'm not with the organization anymore and obviously it's tough for everybody, it's tough for everybody involved and I know it's particularly tough for folks who really want to know what happened and you know you're right in saying that I can't talk about what happened which is tough for me because I'm... You know when it comes to other people's stuff, I believe in keeping confidentiality; if somebody says you know will you..? can I confide this in you? Will you keep this confidential, that I have no problem with but when it comes to my own stuff, I like to talk, I'm a blabbermouth and so it's kind of you to know, goes against my nature to be like I have answers to your question and I cannot talk about? But I will say that I'm not with the organization anymore but there's a public statement that's out there and you know people can catch up with me. I have a website JustinSpeaks.com that redirects to a section of my personal website that's sort of dedicated to this as much as I can say...

But I'll just say that it's not been easy being separated from something that was my life for 16 years, I mean I still catch myself you know wanting to introduce myself to folks as the executive director of an organization I'm not the (unclear 11:20) of anymore. I threw out my old business cards yesterday; so regardless of the sort of reasons for that parting of the ways that I can't talk

about, I can say that it is still an emotional thing but I believe that there is a lot of work to be done in this area. There's a ton of work there; there are lots of people who need support; the conversation needs to get bigger; people's voices need to be heard that have not been heard; there are a lot of folks who need to not get left behind.

You know one of the concerns that I have about the movement in general is that I think those of us who are somewhere in the LGBT plus plus spectrum and Christian who have reconciled ourselves and figured all that out and feel comfortable with who we are can forget that there are a lot of people out there who either haven't reconciled themselves or haven't gotten to where we are with regard to their church or their family or you know where what they ought to be doing as Christians to support LGBT folks. There are lots of folks who still don't get it and it is so easy to leave them behind and to say basically look, if they're not on board by now they're never going to get on board and so we're not going to bother trying to dialogue with them or reason with them or listen to them because we've moved on.

And you know what? That's easy for you but there are still people in those churches, there are still kids in those families who need us to be there for them and who need us to not just try to provide a new bubble for them but to work to help their churches and their families and their communities understand them. I think that work is still very important and I think that work as well as the support work, it's not about me, it's not about any one organization, all of us are standing on the shoulders of those who came before us and other folks will stand on our shoulders and that's the way that it's always worked in history and in the church. So you know this particular split is difficult for me as it is for everybody else but I think we shouldn't blow it up into something more than it is.

**Matthias:** Yeah. To piggyback on a little bit like are you like what is next for you because it sounds like you have been doing this work for the last 16 years, I would imagine you're probably not going to stop, well what's next?

**Justin:** Yeah. I don't think I have it in me to sit down; I've never been... So a few years ago when I lived in North Carolina and I live in Orlando now, I love Orlando; when I lived in North Carolina I was like three hours from the beach and I had some friends visiting who didn't have a beach near them and they really want to go to the beach and so we drove out to the beach and my friends put their beach towels out on the sand and so I put mine down and we all lay down on the towels and you know I was lying there for like two or three minutes and I was like so, what do you guys want to do now? They're like we want to keep lying here; I'm like okay, for about how long?

I don't do the rest and relax thing very well; I like to be active; I like to do new things and right now I think there's so much that we need. I am really... well, for one thing, I'm still very passionate about this LGBT Christian work. I am continuing to have conversations with influential Christian leaders particularly in evangelical spaces although not only evangelical spaces to work to increase understanding to help them become more supportive of LGBT folks; to work to change hearts and minds, I think that work is so important and I think there cannot be enough of us doing it.

So if anybody's listening to this and is wondering whether that's something they ought to get into because they kind of feel a calling in that direction I would say please listen to that because we need those conversations happening, we absolutely need them. So I'm continuing to do that; I'm working on some new content and some videos and such that I'm going to put out as soon as I can. And also I'm really interested, a little bit more probably, in conversations about and with Nuance.

We're living in this world right now where it feels like all the nuance is gone. In the LGBT Christian conversation as well as more broadly around politics, around race, and gender, and identity, and social groups that were in it and everything else, we're losing our willingness to listen to people who are different from us and we're losing the nuance. And so you get this us-versus-them mentality or the flip side of that which is equally dangerous that everybody is equally wrong, equally to blame kind of mentality was also not helpful because there are rights of wrongs in the world.

A part was leading to this I think, is that we in an Internet age, we can connect so quickly to folks who are like us, which is wonderful particularly for me growing up as a gay teen in the evangelical home being able to connect to other gay Christians was hugely important and yeah, because social networks allow us to build these giant networks of friends, it becomes really easy when somebody disagrees with us on something or does something we don't like to just unfriend them, just cut them out rather than trying to work through the disagreement.

And so we end up in these echo chambers where we only listen to and talk to people who already think like us and we're preaching to the choir and we're hearing what we're preaching echoed right back to us and we lose the ability to understand people who are different from us which also means we lose the ability to reach them, to change their minds; and if we don't learn how to have those conversations and find a way to have those conversations, I'm really worried about where we're going to go as a country, as a world, as a church. So what do we do to fix that? I mean that's really what I'm interested in right now.

**Matthias:** Yeah, because I mean that I know for me that it's such a temptation of that kind of echo chamber because in some ways, an echo chamber almost feels like it's a safe place; like I know I find myself on my Facebook like hiding people that I don't necessarily agree with simply because I feel like I don't have the capacity to engage. But the flip side of that is what you're saying, that kind of being completely closed off to anyone who doesn't agree exactly with me and I know for me like there are even feelings of hostility that come up when approached by people who don't agree with me. And curiously I've had this conversation with other people as well who kind of have similar feelings like how do you work with that? Like in your own life when you're feeling kind of those things, are there temptations to block out or even that like I can't engage with this right now? How do you work with that?

**Justin:** Well, I mean I think and this is where the nuance comes in, it's not an all-or-nothing proposition. I mean the reality is like the minute I say we need to talk to people who think differently from us, we need to listen to them; you know somebody's going to say well, no. I'm in this situation where or I know of this situation where this person's doing damage and it's

really important to cut this person off, so they stop doing damage. Well okay, yeah, absolutely. Sometimes that's the reality; I don't think it's one or the other, I think there are times when for your own mental health, your own well-being, you do need to cut somebody out of your life or at least take a break from them and it depends on the situation. But I think that can't be the only way that we respond to disagreement. You know it's one thing to say that sometimes you have to resort to extreme measures because sometimes you do but that doesn't mean that you know, it's like if all you have is a hammer everything looks like a nail; like not every situation where we have political or religious or social disagreements has to be resolved by cutting the other person out of your life.

And sometimes you have to do the really difficult work of sitting down with somebody and being the bigger person, being the one to say even though this person by all rights should be the one asking to listen to my perspective, I'm going to be the one to listen to them first and try to understand them, so that I can understand what it is that's motivating them, so that I can have a conversation with them. And is it fair that you should have to be the one to do that when perhaps they are the one who wronged you? No, it's not fair. But as a Christian I have to say nobody ever said that following Christ was fair; you know Jesus is all about somebody strikes you on one cheek, turn to him the other cheek and you know if somebody asks for this much, give them even more.

There is this sense in Christianity that doing the right thing means sometimes you give up what you are entitled to, what you by all rights should have for the sake of the gospel and it's not easy. But again you can't approach every situation as sort of "one size fits all," there are always exceptions and maybe... I say there are always exceptions, maybe there are situations where there aren't exceptions, so there's even an exception to there always being an exception, I don't know.

But I do think it's worth having these conversations; I'm writing a book about this right now because I think this is really important and so what I'm trying to do with this book is to take all of the things that I've learned in terms of what's worked and what hasn't worked in like 20 years I guess of doing this kind of LGBT Christian conversation and talking to people who I don't agree with and say how do we extrapolate from this you know? What does this look like in other conversations? And I don't think there are hard and fast answers all the time but I do think that their principles that we can operate by.

**Matthias:** Yeah, because like, I mean this is kind of the work you have been doing for a good chunk of your life, like talking to people who disagree with you and I think for so many of us who were just kind of starting to step into that work we kind of stumble and fumble along and don't really know exactly what we're doing; we also have like our own identities at stake it feels like at times. What are some of those principles that like you would say have worked for you or maybe haven't worked for someone who's just stepping into this or like just starting to come out in a non-affirming Church or something like that, what kind of initial advice would you give?

**Justin:** Well there are a lot of things; I mean one of the things that I'll start off with is you... I want to say this in a nuanced way, on the one hand, I do think that there's some truth to the idea

that you need to get the support for yourself that you need to like be emotionally okay before you try to like enter the lion's den. You know, it's okay to say I am not in a place to have this conversation with this person right now because I'm still so emotionally raw on this subject; that like this is not... I couldn't have this conversation in a healthy way and even sometimes in the middle of a conversation, sometimes I have to step away and just say I just am not in a good place to continue this right now. I find myself getting really emotional and I don't think I'm going to be able to continue to have a gracious conversation with you right now and let's continue this another time. So I think you have to be willing to say that.

At the same time, I also think that sometimes you have to push yourself, so that's the nuance there, it's a little of both. I think about folks who are working out, doing you know physically difficult things in order to build muscle, lose weight, whatever, that is hard work and anybody who's ever tried to lose weight or build muscle knows that you don't get it easily, it's hard; and when you're in the midst of that, when you're at the gym on that treadmill lifting the weights, whatever it is you're doing, there are lots of points along the way where you want to give up and you push yourself to keep going because you know that it's worth it in the end. And I think if we are willing to push ourselves physically to improve our physical selves, we have to be willing sometimes to push ourselves emotionally to improve our emotional and mental and spiritual selves.

The conversations that I have are not easy and people say well, I don't know how you talk to those people, I just can't talk to them; I just... I get so frustrated. Yeah, you know what? I get frustrated too and there are lots of times that, over the last 20 years, that I've wanted to give up and there are times like I say, you have to be able to step away but I also think sometimes you got to push yourself and sometimes you get say this is a really uncomfortable place for me to be; I don't want to be in this room with this person; I don't want to be having this conversation right now, this is awkward, it's uncomfortable, I don't like it but I believe that if this goes well something good can come out of it and so I'm going to push myself and see what happens.

I think one of the biggest tips that I can give anybody who's starting out trying to have difficult conversations is listening; it is the opposite of what we want to do. When you are in a conversation with somebody where you don't agree with them and this is true, this doesn't have to be a big social issue, this could be just like you're having a fight with you know, your significant other or your best friend or your mom or whatever, our temptation when we have these disagreements is to talk first. We want to be heard, we want them to hear us and then once they've heard us then we're willing to hear them out you know, but the problem is they're operating the same way and so we end up yelling at each other and neither side is listening.

And it seems really counter-intuitive to listen to somebody if you know that they wronged you; why should I have to listen to them? But part of it is as a Christian I think it's the right thing to do but also it's the most effective thing to do. If you want someone to be willing to listen to you, the most effective way to get them there is to listen to them first and make sure that you get to a point where they know that they've been heard and they feel heard by you because once someone feels heard then they calm down and then they're much more willing to listen.

I had a friend who worked in customer service and his company trained him when dealing with an angry customer don't ever say "calm down" because if you tell someone to calm down, they're just going to get madder; nobody wants to be told to calm down. What you do instead is you listen and you empathize and you sit you know, you say gosh, that must have been really frustrating! I'm so sorry that you had to go through that and then once they feel like they've been heard, then they calm down and then you have a chance to say what it is that you want to say to them. And of course like anything, it's not that easy all the time you know. But I think it's a good place to start.

**Matthias:** That's such a difficult practice to cultivate because it...

**Justin:** Yeah, no kidding.

**Matthias:** It goes against like everything and for me, what's coming to mind especially around like LGBT issues is like they're so core to our identities that I think it can be really hard to separate ourselves from that in these conversations, which is I think some of the reason why they get so emotionally charged.

**Justin:** Yeah

Matthias: And I think often times, I know I read pushback as an attack and I know I get really worked up sometimes when someone is pushing back especially around issues of identity and I think I'm curious about when it does feel like an attack or when it does feel like it's hitting so close to the core of Who I am, what does it look like to still engage with that person? Um-that is so hard.

**Justin:** Yeah, I think it depends on the situation, like everything. This is why I would be a terrible politician because I'm always like well it depends and it's so much easier and in a click bait age it gets more clicks to put things as strongly as possible and be very definite. This is always the case and this is never the case and you know but I don't think it's helpful um so there are times, when- for me when something gets really personal and I just have to say maybe I'm not there, maybe I've done as much as I can, maybe I'm not the person to have this conversation, maybe because this is so personal for me, maybe this is a situation where it would be helpful for somebody who's an ally to come in and have this conversation but the same time I think if we don't want conversations happening about us without us, if we don't want the allies to be the only ones having the conversation and I think we don't and that's true.

Whatever issue of identity you're talking about then I think we have to be willing to engage at some point. And I also think often there's something we can bring to the conversation that somebody who is now can't bring you know our personal experience right. For me I try to remind myself of- and this doesn't work in all situations, this works very uniquely in my situation you know as a Gay Evangelical that I had; a lot of negative stereotypes about gay people before I realized I was gay, a lot of stuff that I heard growing up was stuff I believed. And so I try to put myself back in that situation as much as I can and in that mindset and say

“Okay, well how did I feel when I was there” What did I think was true and what did I say or might I have said in a situation like this when I had that mentality “And that helps me to not take it so personally when somebody says something hurtful because I think “Gosh I might have said that because I didn't understand, right”.

Now that doesn't always work, there are situations where you know maybe you've never been in a position of not knowing what it's like to be who you are. But that can help I think the other thing is to realize that this person is not seeing more generally, this person is not seeing the world the way you see it; they don't have the benefit of your experience, there's a lot they don't understand and yet often one of the most dangerous things is we think we understand things that we don't know, that we don't understand. So, when somebody is talking to you about your identity, they're really not talking about you even though it seems like they are.

**Matthias:** Uh-uh.

**Justin:** They're talking about their image of what this identity stands for politically, socially, theologically, whatever, based on the limited information that they have and so that's not about you at all, that's what's in their heads. So, when I'm talking to somebody about being gay and this person you know has this idea about gay people, what they're arguing about is not about my experience as a gay man, what they're arguing about is their image of what gay means and sometimes it can help to ask some questions and try to figure out what does this person actually believe this is about.

**Matthias:** Yeah.

**Justin:** What does this person believe that it means to be Gay or Bi or Trans or Queer or Gender queer or you know whatever else you're talking about? And sometimes you might be surprised what they think that you mean- I mean like James Dobson, who used to be with Focus on the Family and no longer is has said on multiple occasions that the B in LGBT means orgies. [Chuckle and sighs.] Now, I know a lot of LGBT folks who sort of laughed at this and said: “Oh, you know how stupid” and thought that he was trying to exaggerate to make a point. I don't think he was

**Matthias:** Hmm

**Justin:** I think he genuinely believes that when somebody identifies as bisexual that what they mean is that they are just constantly having sex with men and women and that's not what bisexual means.

**Matthias:** Right.

**Justin:** And so you know when James Dobson argues about that identity he's not arguing about someone's actual bisexual identity, he's arguing about the image of what bisexuality means in his head and if you don't know that then you're going to take it personally when it's not about you at all because you're not what it is that's in his head.

**Matthias:** Right, yeah it sounds like a very intentional choice to kind of cultivate and hold to a curiosity around what the other person perceives and what they're actually talking about.

**Justin:** That's such a great way of putting it, let's just edit out everything I said and just put that one in. [Laughing] but that's like- I mean and you're talking about it but it's so much easier said than done in the moment.

**Justin:** Yeah, okay. [Laughs]

**Matthias:** My goodness but that choice to continue to be curious, I'm just imagining how different the world would be if we all did that.

**Justin:** Yeah, I'm so afraid that people who have really been hurt and a lot of people have been- I've been hurt, I know how much this stuff can hurt and I also recognize that I have a tremendous amount of privilege and so there- I know how much I've been hurt but I don't know how much other people have been hurt in many other ways. And so, there's always a part of me that I'm afraid that when I talk about this stuff, that people will think that then I'm suggesting that this is an easy thing to do, that this is something that anybody can just sort of do it and it's going to have magic- immediate results and it's not that simple. In the reality sometimes you can do everything right and somebody still doesn't listen to you. Sometimes you can be really disappointed by what happens, sometimes it's really hard and sometimes it's just too much.

**Matthias:** Hmm.

**Justin:** And so please don't hear me as treating this as if it were a simple thing.

**Matthias:** Right

**Justin:** The reality is it's like talking about you know working out physically; no matter how much I exercise, eat right, work out, whatever, there are things that some people can do that I will never be able to do.

**Matthias:** Right.

**Justin:** I just don't have the genetics; I just don't have whatever takes. You know it doesn't mean I can't still work and improve myself but I have to do it within the confines of what I can realistically do in a situation. So, yeah it's not easy, it's not easy but you know as you say I think if we all did this, we would be in a really different place than we're in right now. And just because it's hard and just because sometimes it doesn't yield results; I think it's not a reason to give up and hide in bubbles. A bubble can be important when you need to regroup when you've been really hurt but we can't all live our lives in bubbles...

**Matthias:** Yeah.

**Justin:** ...Because there is a whole world of people out there who don't see things the way that we do and they have power and they can make life difficult for other people even if they're out of our lives.

**Matthias:** Yeah, I think that's a really important point of acknowledging still our capacity for that curiosity and how situational that can be and contextual it can be based on the amount of harm or experience or whatever is in our own lives because I think otherwise it can kind of come across as this almost glib or just surface, just be curious when that's not what you're advocating at all, it's a much deeper practice that takes a lot of work and some people can choose not to do that work for the sake of their own well-being.

**Justin:** Yeah. It's also not the same thing as legitimizing another view. I think a lot of people are concerned that if they are willing to listen to somebody that's essentially legitimizing and then they immediately- I mean "are you suggesting that I legitimize..." You know nutty or you know...

**Matthias:** Right.

**Justin:** And first of all, no! I mean there are some groups- like hate groups, for instance, I don't even have any interest in sitting down and listening to because I just don't think you know anything's going to come of it. But again, I think it's important to be able to discern the difference between someone who just is being intentionally hateful and somebody who is saying things that may be deeply harmful but they don't truly understand the harm that they're doing. Sometimes, it's really easy to put somebody in the camp of hate when they don't think that they're being hateful and education would help. But also listening is not legitimizing it's a tool that you can use to help you have a better conversation but there's a goal ultimately; I mean the goal is you want this person stop doing harm and there are lots of people I've sat down with who I think that the views that they started with were deeply harmful- I'm not at all suggesting that the views they started with were okay, but that's actually why I sat down with them and ultimately I was able to see them shift their views as a result of being able to hear from someone who they were hurting or someone on behalf of those who they were hurting.

**Matthias:** Mm-hmm

**Justin:** But again, every situation is different.

**Matthias:** Right, so when can we expect this book?

[Both laughs]

**Justin:** 2018.

**Matthias:** 2018?

**Justin:** Yeah, I don't have an exact publication date yet but it'll be in 2018, it's coming from Penguin Random House...

**Matthias:** Nice!

**Justin:** So, they've been really supportive and I'm excited so far as of the recording of this podcast, I finished my first draft of the manuscript and the editors got it and then I know she'll send it back to me with all sorts of red markings all over it but you know I hope it's good. I mean I'm certainly not going to set myself up here as the infallible expert, but I have made mistakes that I can say "Don't do this" I've seen things work that I could say "Hey this has worked for me" And mostly, I want to encourage us to be thinking about this stuff, sharing our best practices with one another.

I would like to be part of that conversation as we all seek to do a better and better job, particularly those of us who are Christians; as Christians, I think we are called to lead the way when it comes to that kind of nuance, that kind of grace and love. Remember one of the core pieces of the gospel is this idea that God has forgiven us over and over and over again for much greater things and then we could ever repay and that because God has forgiven us, we're expected to then show grace to others. I mean that's core to the gospel, and so we've got to take that to heart, I mean it's so easy to just get angry about the ways we've been wronged and we would be justified in doing so, we're not for this gospel that says that actually, we have to show people grace even when they don't deserve it. That's when grace is needed; when it's not deserved.

So, anyway, 2018 for the book and I will be posting updates on my website, I have a- I mentioned at the beginning I'm a big geek so I have a website that I just recently set up [geekyjustin.com](http://geekyjustin.com)

**Matthias:** Okay. [Chuckles]

**Justin:** Because that's me and it's in my social media and it's got my blog and it's got-I'll be posting updates about the book and other stuff that I'm working on in terms of LGBT Christian stuff and more general kind of nuanced conversation stuff as well as geeky stuff because now that I'm sort of out representing myself and I'm an organization...

**Matthias:** Yeah.

**Justin:** I can be [Unclear word] like if I want to be and it's okay. So, if I want to geek out about a board game or the fact that I live right next to Disney World or something, then I'm just going to do and not care what people say.

**Matthias:** Great, good [laughing] Justin, thank you so much for taking the time to do this, it's been a pleasure.

**Justin:** Thank you, it's always good to talk to you. And let me let me say for the record I have appreciated your nuance on a variety of issues for a long time and I appreciate your willingness to talk to people from different backgrounds and let people speak for themselves and I think on a number of occasions I've witnessed you putting things into words in a way that was really needed. So, I'm just very appreciative of you and the work you do and appreciate your

willingness to have me on even as I'm; I've been a little sick this week my voice is a little bit shot but I'll do it all right and thanks for this opportunity.

**Matthias:** Yeah, yeah thank you, thank you. You can keep up with Justin over at his website: [geekyjustin.com](http://geekyjustin.com) he'll be posting updates about his new book, about the new ministry- nuance ministries and all of his social media links are over there as well, [geekyjustin.com](http://geekyjustin.com).

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Hope you'll have a great week and we'll talk to you next week.

Bye! [Music]