

Queerology: A Podcast on Belief and Being

Episode 44 – Rachel Held Evans

Transcript

Matthias: If you enjoy listening to Queerology, then I need your help. Here's why, I create Queerology by myself on a shoestring budget, recording and editing every episode in my tiny closet. How's that for irony? That's where you come in. Will you help keep Queerology on the air by supporting it financially? By tipping as little as \$1 a month, you can help me improve and keep making Queerology every week. All you have to do is jump over to matthiasroberts.com/support to make a pledge and listen away.

Hey, friends. This is Matthias Roberts, and you're listening to Queerology: A Podcast on Belief and Being. This is episode 44.

Rachel: People have been through excruciating pain because of some of what the church is teaching about gender and sexuality, and so, you coming out as affirming just doesn't require the same courage as coming out as gay.

Matthias: Rachel Held Evans is a New York Times bestselling author who writes about faith, doubt and life in the Bible Belt. She hails from Dayton, Tennessee, which is home of the famous Scopes Monkey Trial of 1925 and she's been featured in the Washington Post, The Guardian, Christianity Today, Slate, Huffington Post, CNN Belief Blog, and on NPR, BBC, Today, and The View.

Rachel served on President Obama's Advisory Council on Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships, and she keeps a busy schedule speaking at churches, conferences, colleges and universities around the country. I'm so excited to have Rachel on the podcast today. Before we dive in, a couple of announcements first. If you are in the Calgary Lethbridge area in Alberta, Canada, I am going to be leading a couple of workshops at Unabridged Lethbridge on May 5th. It's a free event for LGBT people, at those intersections of faith and queer identities, come, hang out with us all. The conference is May 4th and 5th. I will be there both days but my workshops are on the 5th. For more information about that, head over to unabridgedyql.com. That's unabridgedyql.com.

Second, I launched my new website redesigned this past week and with that, my LGBTQ+ Christian Reading Guide has been launched as well. It's a brand new guide for people who are like, "I want some resources but I don't know where to turn," and has sections on theology, has sections for parents, has sections on like history for faith leaders. There's a bunch of resources in there both for sexual minorities and for gender minorities as like an all-in-one here are some of the best resources, I think that are out there. It's my opinion.

Go, check that out. Head over to matthiasroberts.com. Check out the new website. Get a copy of my new LGBTQ+ Christian Reading Guide. So, Rachel and I are talking about allyship. I've thought for a long time like maybe we should do an episode on how to be a good ally. I thought it could be kind of cool to get an ally to come and join me to do the episode.

Rachel is someone who, I think -- there's that conversation out there about how the word "ally" is never a word that you can really claim for yourself. It has to be given to you by others. I talked about that in episode 3 with Dr. Robin DiAngelo, a really good conversation around that especially in regards to racial justice. But I think Rachel is a good example of someone who is an ally to LGBTQ community.

She's one of the first like major evangelical bloggers that put her neck out on the line for LGBTQ people and she has consistently shown that she's in it. She's in it. We talked about allyship. We talked about her new book. Let's just go ahead and dive in. Rachel, hi, welcome.

Rachel: Hi. It's such an honor to be here. I'm excited about jumping in on this podcast to listen. I'm a listener.

Matthias: Oh, thank you.

Rachel: Now, I'm a guest. It's an honor.

Matthias: Well, I'm so excited to have you here. Thank you so much for joining me. To start the question I asked everyone, how do you identify and then how would you say that your faith has helped form that identity?

Rachel: Well, I'm a straight cisgender ally who is also a mother and a wife and a doubter. I'm a follower of Jesus and I guess, how has my faith informed that identity. I mean, identity is like so many different things. I also am white. I'm an Alabama Crimson Tide football fan, the important stuff.

I'm an Episcopalian but I guess, my faith has informed my identities in the sense that because identities are always changing and identities, for me, are in a lot of ways fluid in the sense of yeah, as your life changes, your roles in that life change and how you relate to other people change. My faith informs that because my faith provides sort of the insights into what's most important and how I ought to be relating to people in my life.

It informed the fact that I identify as an ally just because just following Christ and the example of Jesus Christ led me to become somebody who imperfectly supports and tries to rally around and encourage my LGBTQ friends and family members because it's the right thing to do. Jesus looked out for people and support the people and surrounded himself by people and learned from people who were often shoved to the margins by the religious leaders. That informs how I relate to people who identified differently than I do when it comes to gender and sexuality and that sort of thing.

Apparently, like sometimes people on the internet think that I'm gay because I hang out with you all and I was like, "Well, that's very nice. Thank you for believing that about me but I'm afraid that I am in fact straight as an arrow," because apparently, just being gay for Penelope Cruz does not count as actually gay. So, it's too much to fit in the acronym. I am pretty hopelessly straight and happily married and the mother of a toddler and a little girl on the way.

Matthias: That's such a real thing though because I think ... I know when I wasn't out of the closet, I was terrified to hang out with LGBT people because of that association of like if they think if I hang out, even if I'm nice to gay people like they'll think I'm gay too and I didn't want people to know that.

Rachel: Right.

Matthias: It's so real. It's so real.

Rachel: It happens. People make that mistake all the time and I try to take it as flattery but-

Matthias: Yeah. Like I'm curious about allyship. You're the second straight person that has ever been on this podcast in, what, this is episode 44. In 44 episodes-

Rachel: Thanks for inviting me to this party. I know I'm not out of place. I appreciate it.

Matthias: You and your blog, your writing, your work, I know has played such a huge part in so many LGBT Christians kind of journeys in their lives. I know in my journey in life like your blog was ... It was still pretty dangerous to read but it was safer than like queer blogs. And the way that you've opened up this conversation, I think, for so many people has had a huge impact.

I'm curious like maybe to start, what has your personal journey been like in ... You mentioned it a little bit but in becoming an ally like I was combing through your blog. It looks like your first post is about LGBT stuff was in maybe in 2008 is what I could find.

Rachel: Oh, gosh, please don't read that and please do not quote it. Let's just pretend whatever that said, it does not say that.

Matthias: But 2008, that's 10 years go. You're one of the first to really bring this topic up. I'm curious. What has that journey kind of been like for you?

Rachel: Yeah. Well, like a lot of folks who I was raised very conservative, evangelical in a pretty grace-filled home though which gave me room to wrestle with some of what the culture was teaching me. But I was raised typically that people who identify as LGBTQ ... I mean, back when I was first thinking about that, we didn't even use those terms correctly.

I was raised to believe that folks like that just were rebelling against God and had made sinful lifestyle choices. I was immersed in that very non-affirming world like a lot of folks who have the same background. But then it's just how so many people's stories go. As I

begin to actually encounter real LGBTQ people, as I begin to ... As some of my friends and acquaintances from high school in their college years came out, yeah, I began to see that the stereotypes that I'd been presented with just were not reflections of reality and that a lot of these folks or most of these folks since I live in Bible Belt were deeply committed Christians who love Jesus and who most of them, because they had shared some more background to me were really struggling with the reality of their sexuality or gender identity and what they too had been told about what it means to be gay or queer or transgender.

I guess it was getting to know people and watching that trajectory like for so many people that moved my heart and changed how I thought about things. And then, having grown up as like [inaudible 00:10:56] being a religious girl, literally, I was the president of the Bible club. That's how I just-

Matthias: Yes.

Rachel: I was a Homecoming Court representing the Bible Club.

Matthias: Yes, yes, yes.

Rachel: That was just how cool I was in high school. Also, like president of the True Love Waits Group-

Matthias: Oh, my gosh.

Rachel: I was in it. I did feel like I had to make some sense of this with what I had been taught and what I encountered in Scripture. I did study quite a bit study what the Bible had to say about gender and sexuality even though my heart was ... It would be unfair and not really true to say that like I came in objectively. I didn't. Nobody comes into that objectively. I wanted to believe that LGBT people were created in the image of God and beloved by God and just as they are and that they didn't have to change, that the therapy that I had seen them go through that was so destructive was not the way of God.

I went in with a bias, but I did my work. Definitely, as things progressed, I read Matthew Vines' work. Well, first, it was probably Justin Lee's book, Torn, and then articles and whatnot online. Matthew Vines' book was also pretty influential in kind of nailing down how I thought about it. But really the thing that really turned me around and that solidified my views was reading ... This is random, The Civil War as a Theological Crisis by Noll. I know, yeah, I'm a weirdo but it showed ... Because I realized that when it came to prove text, the people with the most, the people with the queer reading of Scripture where the folks arguing that slaves obey your master should be taken at face value.

That book just in looking at the way the arguments on both sides of the slavery debate which is a very real debate, real theological debate in American history, looking at the way those debates were formed and had and engaged in, I just saw a stark startling

similarities. Slavery obviously is a completely different injustice than injustices against LGBTQ people.

The injustices are different but the way that people navigate Scripture around them is actually pretty strikingly similar. That kind of pushed me over the edge to say that just one verse that seems clear really should not be enough to justify oppression and injustice and that sentence you to step back and look at the art of Scripture instead of getting lost in the mire of a verse here and a verse there in a very difficult to translate word here and one there.

That kind of is what brought me to the place that I am and then it was just spending lots of time with LGBTQ people and getting to know better what was important to them. I hope that has made me a somewhat reliable ally. I'm still learning. Every time, I will probably learn something from this conversation and I try to keep that posture of learning as best I can. I think the best allies are people who know that they haven't got it figured out and who are willing to make mistakes and get called on their mistakes. That's hard, I hate that but I think that's an important posture to keep.

Matthias: Yeah. I think about that because I think in one way or another, we are all allies in our world. Even for LGBT people, like for me, gay, white cisman like I can only consider my ... Well, an ally is one of those words that I have a complicated relationship with but ally like for my trans siblings, those kind of things have ... That posture that you're talking about is one that I think we all have to adapt in some ways in our lives and it's so important to realize that it's not really for us to decide even which is frustrating and hard sometimes.

I'm curious about like as you kind of made this journey, as you've done this theological work and then you just kind of started to step out and publicly ... You kind of paved the way in some ways like there were some other people before you but it's like the first major evangelical blogger to really take these steps. What have you learned from the push back and the church like you carried a lot stepping out-

Rachel: Yeah. Really though I think because I had been so transparent from the beginning about the fact that I wasn't comfortable with where I was to start but this, nobody was surprised like there wasn't one day where it's like, "Rachel Held Evans is affirming. Let's [inaudible 00:16:15] way drop all her books." I mean, they drop my books over other things, basically my feminism. I didn't have this sort of Jen Hatmaker moment where it was like, "She's an ally. She's affirming. Everybody freaked out."

Also, I tried actually to, I think, the moment where I made it most clear that I was affirming was just in going through Matthew Vines' book with my readers. We went chapter by chapter by chapter. I tried to shift the focus off of me and more on to like these are the reasons to be affirming and this is from the perspective of a young gay Christian. There wasn't all ... Yeah, I guess, I just feel like all of those things together made that step not like one step, and not big deal like nobody was surprised when I started speaking more honestly and speak worldly about where I stood because I've always tried to be honest with my readers even the honest answer to the question is, "I

don't know. Here's what I'm reading. Here's what I've encountered in my experiences with other people. I'm still trying to figure it out. I'm not sure how to articulate it."

It seems like readers appreciate that. Yeah, nobody was surprised and frankly, I didn't face the same pushback that like Jen Hatmaker has received. I didn't lose contracts or speaking engagements. I might have maybe one or two, but because I think people saw this coming for a while and so yeah, I hadn't really built much of the ... I never really built my platform on the conservative evangelical columns. It was [inaudible 00:18:10] and just doing my own thing.

I think that ended up serving me pretty well. I cannot lament how terribly I was treated because I actually felt like I came out of that pretty well. And of course, even the worst things people have said to me is just like nothing compared to what I have witnessed firsthand thrown at my gay friends, gay couples that I love. It kind of puts in perspective like some angry dude on Twitter calling me names. It's just whatever, like I can block him. Whereas folks who live with this day in and day out where it's affected their relationships with their family, with lifelong friends, you can't as easily block that out.

It really wasn't a lot of drama for me. It was, I think, people saw it coming and I hope that I kind of shifted the focus over to the people who helped me arrived at this position not just my arriving there.

Matthias: I remember watching you along this process as I was going on my own process and seeing like Jennifer Knapp and Justin Lee, Matthew Vines. You kind of brought in all these people around you who were doing ... That you could point to who are informing you and-

Rachel: Well, I'm grateful for the work that those folks have put in and more recently, Austen Hartke who just ... I think you just interviewed him last week or a couple of weeks ago. Most recently like his book is so good and I'm so grateful for the work that he does and that so many people do, you included, around ... And just the length of time he spent just explaining terms in that book and the accessibility of it, the readability of it. I know that that represents generosity, that he doesn't have to do that. He doesn't have to lock people through this when it's something that he knows so well and I appreciate the hard work that that represents and I try to honor that and be grateful for it.

Matthias: Yeah, Austen's book like my gosh, it's so good.

Rachel: When he's such a raging Bible nerd, I love this folk.

Matthias: Yeah, I do too. Yes. I know there are a ton of LGBT people who listen to this podcast but there are also a ton of allies and kind of my thought process around this episode has been like let's talk to and with allies for an episode. I'm curious like what are some of maybe the mistakes that you've made and what advice would you give to people who are maybe from the journey that you've been on and from learning this being an ally that you would give to other allies that maybe I wouldn't be able to give as a gay person.

Rachel:

Yeah, I've made a lot of mistakes along the way. I think the biggest mistake that allies tend to make is to speak for people instead of to amplify other people's voices. This can be a little tricky because I do think there is a place for allies to articulate to people who are maybe not affirming. Here's why I'm affirming and here's how I got here. There's a place for that but you want to make sure that when you do that, you're also pointing people to actual LGBTQ people who can ... And their stories.

I think just a common mistake is sort of speaking on behalf of another group of people and then basking in your awesome allyship because of that and kind of like, "Look at me being edgy," yeah, kind of wearing as a badge of courage like, "Oh, I'm an awesome heretic." People have been through excruciating pain because of some of what the church is teaching about gender and sexuality.

You coming out as affirming is not, I don't know, just doesn't require the same courage as coming out as gay. Sometimes there's a little bit of that sort of like patting oneself on the back and enjoying sort of the edginess of it that seems kind of exploitive and kind of commodifies LGBT folks. I've faced that impulse myself so I tried to correct that.

Another thing I would want to say to allies is do not be afraid of making mistakes, like don't let the fear of making a mistake keep you from speaking out and trying to be an ally because I know like Twitter is a tough place because I like to say that conservatives will bludgeon you to death, but liberals will nitpick you to death. It's like I'm convinced that my tombstone will read, "But she had that one problematic tweet that went out." It is an unforgiving place.

And I think because a lot of the conversation around gender and sexuality and Christianity happens there, and I've learned a lot from Twitter. I do know there are people who want to be allies and want to be outspoken about their affirming position but they're scared to enter to the fray because they're afraid if they say something wrong, they'll get dissected and picked apart and thrown to the wolves.

And I've had that experience and I tried to keep in perspective that pushback on Twitter is not the same as being persecuted or nailed to a cross and that actually, frankly everybody forgets about it in a week. If you make a pretty disastrous mistake and people are over it in just a matter of days. I would encourage allies ... I do think sometimes progressive Christianity, we do sometimes have a tendency to fight each other sometimes in ways that are not necessarily productive. But you can learn so much more if you go into it with some humility and if you get called out by a lot of people who you respect, chances are you said something wrong or you came at it with a posture that wasn't helpful and that it's just worth listening to that and having humility to apologize.

It's worth the risk of making the mistake to still be part of the conversation and to still be an advocate because any ally, whether you're trying to be an ally to Black Lives Matter, you're trying to be an ally to LGBT folks, if you come at it with privilege whether that's racial privilege or any kind of privilege, you're probably going to make some mistakes. You're going to have some blind spots and people are going to call you out

and that's part of it. I just would encourage allies not to look at the fear of that getting in the way.

We're so afraid of being criticized. Don't be more afraid of being criticized than of speaking the truth and helping people and coming alongside people and working towards justice. If you're going to do that work in any way, you're going to make mistakes. Have grace for yourself, have grace for the people who were challenging you. It's not easy because I don't like to be criticized but it's so worth it and it's the right thing to do.

Matthias: I think that's such an important point of that line that you mentioned at the beginning of kind of the answer like that there's a place for allies to speak and then there's also that wisdom of knowing when to highlight other voices. But that place to speak is what I was thinking about was like not being ... This is all coming together in my head ... Not being afraid to speak out as an ally. Because I think for so many people, for me as a queer person at least, to watch straight people be brave enough to speak out.

Because I think I still at least at the beginning of my journey, I still had this idea like straight as default, straight as unbiased, which just is not true but like in the world that I grew up in, I was so scared to read anything from anyone queer that to have the straight people who were speaking up and saying, "Hey, like look at this." "Hey, I think this queer person is saying some good things." It gives permission to start exploring, and that is so important and so needed for so many people.

Rachel: Well, you just have to know whose ear do you have. If you're a pastor in a conservative tradition but you're affirming, allyship is going to look different for you than it does for me, than it does for Jen Hatmaker, than it does for you being an ally to, say, trans folks. You have to kind of know like whose ear do I have and how can I best speak to those people while also not centering myself all the time and also being aware that I've got some blind spots because of my privilege.

I think one thing that I feel like is a common mistake people make when we talk about privileges, they think that it's like a permanent label. They don't realize that it's relative, that like, "Oh you're saying I'm privileged," like privilege is just this place that you exist. Well, you might be privileged when it comes to race as probably the most significant if you're white, that comes with significant privilege. But you might be less than privileged when it comes to your economic background or perhaps you're gay or in some cases being a woman puts you in a position of not being as privileged as the next person.

Understanding that privilege is somewhat relative, I think, helps sometimes because there seems to be a lot of misunderstanding, like people see it as an insult like, "Calling me privileged?" It's like, "I grew in a small house," like people can kind of go through the litany of the ways in which they feel they're underprivileged.

That's something too I wish people understood better and it was kind of an aha moment for me was realizing that there are a lot of situations that I carry privilege into these situations and there are some where I'm more underprivileged and it's not an insult. It's

just something to be aware of and something to check and something to be honest with yourself about. We can't really be honest with ourselves about that privilege if we're not clear on what that means, that it's not ... A privilege isn't just a static identity. It's sort of who you are in relation to others. Yeah, that's something too. Once you get some clarity on that, I think it's helpful.

Matthias: Yeah, I think so too. I know it was a huge lesson for me of being like, "I'm gay. I'm so oppressed," and when people are like, "Well, no. You still have a lot of privilege," like Twitter world. I was like, "What are you talking about?" That journey of realizing like, "Wait a second," like just because I'm oppressed in one specific way doesn't mean that I don't have privilege in other ways. That was a huge lesson for me to learn, a hard lesson for me to learn. But so important for doing-

Rachel: Yeah, and that it's not an insult. It just something to be aware of. And I think people just get defensive as soon as they hear that it's really hard to be honest about your privilege if you're being defensive about your privilege. But that was a hard realization for me to have, and I think it's a hard one for potential allies to have too sometimes.

Matthias: Yeah. This is a bit of a transition and a shift, but you have a new book coming out that sounds so incredible, *Inspired: Slaying Giants, Walking on Water, and Loving the Bible Again*. I love that title. Could you tell us a little bit about the book and what brought you to it and this whole idea of loving the Bible again is something that I feel like I know I yearn for. And I think I get that feeling from a lot of people of like, "What do we do with this text?"

Rachel: Right. Yeah, that was it for me too. It's like because I think a lot of us, we are raised to read the Bible one way, we realized that we have perhaps been reading it wrong. We don't really know how to get back to it. We don't really know where to go now, and we especially sometimes, I think, lose our love of Scripture and our fascination with Scripture and just the joy of engaging Scripture. What I wanted to do with this book, with *Inspired*, was to take people's doubts and questions seriously take biblical, good, decent biblical scholarship seriously but introduce a little bit of fun too and intrigue and imagination into my own journey and to other people's journeys of reencountering Scripture.

It's different than any book I've written before because it includes like poetry and short stories, a short screenplay ... Gosh, what else? Soliloquies, choose-your-own-adventure stories. I had a lot of fun writing this because I wanted people to be able to engage their imaginations in Scripture again and to invite that. I was very much informed not only by the scholarship of folks like Peter Enns, Walter Brueggemann and also like Delores Williams and some womanist, Wil Gafney. Oh, my goodness, her book, *Womanist Midrash* is everything. But also by Jewish interpreters of Scripture and Jewish Midrash which is sort of like this creative, almost like fan fiction way of engaging in biblical interpretation.

The Jewish posture towards the Scripture is, I believe, so healthier than the way a lot of Christians approach Scripture and that they really welcome wrestling questions. There's not this desperate need to make everything in the Bible resolved. There's just this

willingness to let the tensions exist, to let the questions inform us and to just love it, to love the stories even when they can be troubling and when they raise troubling questions and issues.

Yeah, this book was definitely influenced by Jewish interpretation which really changed how I engage the Bible. And I hope that it just sort of invites people to love the Bible again for what it is, not what we try to make it.

Matthias: That's so real. I think for so many of us who move into these kind of more progressive spaces and especially when the Bible has been used as a weapon especially for so many people who listen to this podcast. When the Bible has been weaponized, I think we tend to step away from it for our own health and so be it. We need to do that and I am a full advocate for like if you need to step away from the text for a couple of years, do it. Give yourself a break.

But at least for me growing up in such a deeply conservative evangelical space, there was the love for Scripture that I miss and to reclaim that, I kind of relish the idea of reclaiming it but maybe doing it in a much different way. I'm excited for your book.

Rachel: Yes. It's kind of one of those ... It's definitely like if and when you're ready, here's how I found my way back to the Bible. And different people are ready at different times. For folks who the Bible has been used as a weapon against them, it takes a long time if ever to want to come back to Scripture and to come back to the Bible. And it's a loss that they grieved in many ways but if and when they're ready to come back, I do think there is life there. There are stories that connect to our own stories in surprising ways and that's true for people who have had Scripture used against them.

I look at, in particular, womanist interpretations of the Bible which were really influential in my work on this. And those interpretations are coming from black women for whom the Bible has been used very viciously against them and yet, they find in the stories of women like Hagar, the woman from Song of Solomon, these threads of justice. They hear a little of their own voice in those characters and in those stories. And so, tracing it with them can be really enlightening and tracing biblical interpretation from folks who belong to oppressed groups, you just see it in a brand new way.

They identify with characters and with instances and stories and even turns of phrase that I just never even noticed before which is why one of the most important things we can do when we do come back to the Bible is to read it in community with people who are not like us, with people who are going to pick up on things that we would never pick up on and whose life experiences informs how they see things like Austen in his engagement of the stories of the eunuchs throughout Scripture. I never even thought to pay attention to how often we see eunuchs appear in the Bible and the significant roles that they played but Austen noticed that.

Yeah. I tried with the book to introduce a lot of different perspectives, but this is one of those books that could have been like 500,000 words.

Matthias: Oh, my gosh.

Rachel: But luckily for everyone involved, I had a child right in the middle of writing it, so it ended up being 60,000 words. The presence of procreation definitely helped edit this book to a reasonable size. And hopefully, it's accessible to people.

Matthias: Oh, gosh. Maybe to close, this is kind of a question that I feel like I've already asked. The question that I was coming with is like what advice would you give to allies but I already asked you that.

Rachel: I could ask you a question.

Matthias: That would be great. Yeah, okay.

Rachel: Okay, I'll just start by saying something like, "Hey, Matthias. I have a question for you."

Matthias: Yeah, okay.

Rachel: Okay. It could be ... Well, let me see if that's what I want to ask you. I'll ask you that question like what can allies do better? That's so good. All right. Hey, Matthias.

Matthias: Yeah?

Rachel: Since we're wrapping up, I was wondering there's a few things that I always like to ask folks and one of them is how can I be a better ally, and how can other people who have similar platforms as I do, how can we be better allies? What would you like to see us doing more of? Less of? That sort of thing.

Matthias: Thank you. For me, I think one of the biggest things in that I try to be aware of is like there are so many of us out there and there are so many of us who have built platforms and who are doing this work. But I'm aware and starting to become hyperaware of all the people who don't have the big platforms and who are like writing in their little blogs that have like 10, 20 readers and who are doing really incredible, beautiful work but aren't getting the "recognition" for it.

The number of things that I feel like I've learned from those people and from those blogs that I'm like, "Oh, these are the voices that we need to pay attention to." And so, I think, you mentioned this but taking the listening posture but that also like the work of ... I'm speaking to myself here too ... the work of like searching out those voices that we haven't heard and actually searching. It takes some effort.

I've noticed how much effort it takes for me to get outside of my circles and find people who are doing similar but such a different work, it's hard to find these people and yet they're everywhere and then to highlight those voices. That's something that I try to do with this podcast. I don't do it as well as I could but that's something I think for everyone. I was just where are all of the voices that I'm not hearing? How can I find them?

Rachel: To support them financially too, like "Hey, allies. Like you've got a couple of bucks to spare to throw at this podcast or at the reformation project," or just whatever project folks are working on. You don't have to be a big donor to just lend a hand. Because a lot of folks like you are literally doing this out of their closet. And I'm always so impressed with the work that I see, the creative work and the networking work and the teaching work that I see, Christian LGBTQ people doing. If you can spare a little bit when it comes down to think about how you want to give, do you think allies can do a better job of putting some money where their mouth is?

It's easy to write a tweet, but just taking a few minutes to share a few bucks via PayPal, that can make a big difference actually. That really adds up, so I would say, "Folks, step up," which reminds me I have some donations of my own that I really need to make. Now, great, I just talked myself into donating money. But I do think that that's also just something to keep on your radar if you're an ally.

Matthias: Yeah, that's so true. Again, all of these people who don't have the platforms are doing this work of where even like a \$5, \$10 donation means the world of just the encouragement of that is like, "I see you doing good work. Here is something for that," like something tangible like that's huge.

Rachel: Yeah, definitely. I also have to say I know you all are making a big impact on me because the other day, I'm at a baby shower. And this always happens, I've got a little boy, a toddler. He's two years old. He's running around, and the mom next to me is like, "Oh, my gosh. I have a little girl. You have a little boy. Maybe they'll grow up and get married." And I was like, "Or, maybe my little boy will marry her little boy, or maybe he won't get married at all, or ... " As I'm talking there, faces get blanker and it's like ... You all have made me the weirdo at the baby showers. Thank you.

Matthias: That's good. We need that. Tennessee needs that, doesn't it?

Rachel: Yes. Tennessee needs it real bad, you all, real bad.

Matthias: Gosh. Rachel, it has been such a pleasure.

Rachel: Well, thanks for having me. It's an honor to be one of the allies on here. Like I said, it means a lot that you've invited me to the party.

Matthias: Well, thank you. It's an honor to have you here.

You can find Rachel's work over on her website, rachelheldevans.com. Keep an eye out for her new book, *Inspired: Slaying Giants, Walking on Water, and Loving the Bible Again*, which releases on June 12. Rachel is across the internet on social media @rachelheldevans. Queerology is on Twitter and Instagram @queerologypod or you can tweet me directly @matthiasroberts. Queerology is produced and supported from Natalie England, Christian Hayes, Tim Schraeder and other Patreon supporters.

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