

## Queerology 74

### On Coming Out with Amber Cantorna

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- Matthias: [00:00](#) 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](http://matthiasroberts.com/support) to make a pledge and listen away.
- Matthias: [00:29](#) Hey friends, this is Matthias Roberts and you're listening to Queerology: A Podcast on Belief and Being. This is episode 74.
- Amber: [00:39](#) I feel like I came alive the day I came out and my family has missed the happiest years of my life.
- Matthias: [00:45](#) Amber Cantorna is an author, speaker, blogger, musician, and a leader in the movement of acceptance and inclusion for LGBTQ+ Christians. With a passion for helping LGBTQ+ people through their coming out process, she focuses especially on those that come from conservative faith communities. Amber was on the podcast in episode 20 talking about her book, "Refocusing My Family". It was her memoir of growing up as the daughter of an executive at Focus on the Family and her coming out story shattering the persona that her family had tried to uphold in the conservative world.
- Matthias: [01:27](#) As a result of that, she lost everything. Her world changed. That kind of makes her the perfect person to write her new book that is out today, available everywhere now, "Unashamed: A Coming-Out Guide for LGBTQ Christians". It is truly a guide for coming out for people who grew up in faith communities. It's the guide that I wish I had had. So we're talking about that today. I'm so excited to have Amber back on the podcast. It's always a pleasure.
- Matthias: [02:00](#) Before we dive in, like I mentioned last week, for Lent this year I've joined with the team over at Generous Space Ministries and Q Christian Fellowship, a bunch of other organizations for the Tell Your Pastor Campaign. We're asking people to commit to telling their pastors, or priests, or church leadership that they're

affirming sometime during Lent. This is especially for people who are straight, give up fear and silence for Lent. Tell your church leadership that you're affirming and start making some change in your faith community.

- Matthias: [02:33](#) For more information about that, there are links in the show notes. It's a really cool project. So go check that out. Okay. Let's go ahead and dive in. Amber. Hi, welcome back.
- Amber: [02:44](#) Good morning.
- Matthias: [02:45](#) It's so good to have you back on Queerology.
- Amber: [02:48](#) Always love talking with you.
- Matthias: [02:50](#) So you just, I mean, your new book just came out today. Congratulations.
- Amber: [02:54](#) Thank you. We're super excited.
- Matthias: [02:56](#) Yeah. We'll get into all that. But, I mean before we do that the question I ask everyone, even though you've already been on the podcast, sometimes these things change. But how do you identify and how would you say that your faith has helped form that identity?
- Amber: [03:12](#) I would identify as gay. My wife and I have been married for almost five years and I would identify probably as a progressive Christian at this point. I think that's something that's forever evolving for those of us that come from a conservative background. But I think that's probably where I most likely land at this point.
- Matthias: [03:31](#) I feel like that's so true. It's always evolving.
- Amber: [03:34](#) Always evolving and I think that that's okay. But it is definitely a process that I don't know that you ever truly arrive at.
- Matthias: [03:44](#) Yeah. I feel like your book taps into that a little bit. Your book is, "Unashamed: A Coming-Out Guide for LGBTQ Christians". Look, I'd love to hear a little bit about what has prompted you to write this book and then that idea of we're always becoming ... like things continue to shift as we go on. I feel like that ties in really well to this book.
- Amber: [04:10](#) Yeah. Well, it really was this book stemmed from the hundreds of people that I met when I went on tour for my previous book, "Refocusing My Family". I never dreamed to write a second book so quickly. It just all came together as I heard the stories of others. I heard stories that were very much like mine. It's, I don't

think your father has to have worked at Focused on the Family for you to be very indoctrinated by those beliefs and that culture. So I heard from people all over the world with similar backgrounds and similar stories that were very desperate for a story that they could relate to.

Amber: [04:52](#) So as I told my story and I spoke with people, I kept hearing the same questions come up over and over and over. Things like, "How do I know if I'm ready to come out? I know that I'm gay and I know that I'm Christian, but now what? What if I'm in ministry? What if my parents are in ministry? What if the person I'm dating isn't out yet?" It just was like this is revolving door of the same loop of questions over and over.

Amber: [05:19](#) As I heard those things, I realized we've got some great resources for those people that are coming from the conservative background in terms of being able to reconcile their faith with their sexuality. But then we don't have things to equip them of what to do from there, of where to go and how to navigate that process moving forward. That coming out process, that's something we never expected or anticipated to do. So this is that book of being able to take them further into that and talk about what that means to be an LGBT person of faith and how to navigate that journey.

Matthias: [05:54](#) That's so needed because like you mentioned, all of these questions and I think these are questions that I think anyone who has come out and gone on this journey in any form of a public way, not necessarily having a podcast or a book, but just like on Facebook. I feel like so many of us get those questions of people who are still in the closet or trying to figure out what to do. I feel like your book has taken everything that I tell people and then and more. It's so good.

Amber: [06:26](#) Well I try to take a very holistic approach that starts with the idea of internalized homophobia, where that comes from, how it takes root in our lives, being able to dismantle that and then accept yourself. Because until you've done that, you really can't come out and you really can't get to a place of wanting other people to accept you if you haven't accepted yourself. So we talk about all those things.

Amber: [06:51](#) Then we talk about how to know if you're ready to come out and ways of doing that and then boundaries and what that looks like in a healthy way. How to grieve loss and rejection, how to avoid projecting that rejection on to God and really celebrate who you are and the place that you have in the family of God.

- Matthias: [07:07](#) You mentioned internalized homophobia and that I feel like, like you said, is the starting place of trying to figure out what is within me and how do I work with that and learn to accept and love myself. I'd love to hear a little bit more about maybe some of that process in your own life and what you've learned in working with this.
- Amber: [07:31](#) Yeah, I was actually a little intimidated to broach that topic because I feel like it's something that's not been discussed a lot yet and not done really well. So I felt like, am I the one to really take this on? Yet I feel like you really have to start there. You really can't go anywhere else until you talk about where that shame comes from. For most of us, that starts from our childhood because unless you're adopted, you see your family reflected in your physical traits, in your character attributes. Maybe you have your dad's eyes or your mother's laugh. So you see your family reflected and that's where you get your sense of belonging. But for LGBT people, the majority of us do not see ourselves reflected in that way in our immediate families.
- Amber: [08:24](#) So we see straight couples as the norm and therefore, whether it's spoken or subtle, those things that communicate to us that that is not okay, not an acceptable way to be or heard from the time that we were very young and we internalize that. Until we get to the point where we can start recognizing both subtle and obvious forms of homophobia in our lives and call it for what it is, we continue to accept that by default and it takes root in our lives and plant seeds of shame.
- Amber: [08:57](#) So it's really important to be able to recognize where that comes from and where it is currently even still in our own lives before we can really take steps forward to accepting ourselves for who God made us to be. So really it's a big topic, but I feel like it's one that's super important to really start at and have it's foundation in order to move forward in a healthy way.
- Matthias: [09:23](#) You mentioned calling it by its name. I feel like even though, yes, it's a starting point, internalized homophobia is something that I know I still wrestle with. It's something that continues on and it gets maybe more and more subtle as we go along. But like you said, it's sometimes really hard to name it as homophobia.
- Amber: [09:44](#) Right.
- Matthias: [09:45](#) I'd be curious, how are you defining homophobia? Then how do we learn to recognize it?
- Amber: [09:51](#) Yeah, I think you're right that it comes in both very subtle and obvious ways. It's not necessarily always maybe you're walking

down the street holding your partner's hand and somebody says a slur of some kind or says something derogatory towards you. It's not necessarily always that, right? Sometimes it's very subtle in the ways that maybe your family won't call you by your preferred pronouns or maybe they won't acknowledge your loved one at the holidays. Maybe you even bring them along, but they introduce them as a friend. Those are all ways of just very subtly communicating that who you are is not okay.

Amber: [10:35](#) In the book, I define homophobia as the unreasonable fear held by straight cisgender people towards the LGBT community. But then as we talk about internalized homophobia, I define it as that innate belief that your sexual orientation or gender identity makes you undeserving, or inferior, or unequal a place in society. That you're not enough and are instead rendered unlovable by other people and that you're unacceptable in the eyes of God.

Amber: [11:05](#) I think that, that is something that takes a root in all of us that come from that conservative faith background. Like you said, we continue to deal with that in even more and more subtle ways in our life, but it doesn't mean that it's not there. I think it's important to be able to recognize that in the instances when it does come up and name it, because if we don't, we continue to let that seep into our being, in the core of who we are, rather than if we're able to name it, we can reject it and say, "No, that's not who I am. That's not who God made me to be."

Matthias: [11:39](#) You're mentioning, God, you have a whole chapter on learning how to not project rejection onto God. Because I think that that's something, especially for those of us who grew up in conservative worlds. We're told ultimately that it's God who doesn't approve of us. So the projection starts from other people first. Then so we have to unlearn that and then relearn stuff about who we believe God is. That's such a huge thing to do.

Amber: [12:15](#) It is. I think too, the biggest thing I tell people is that you have to be able to decipher what people do to you and say to you in the name of God from who God is and put a defining line between those two. You have to be able to separate who God really is from what people are doing to you in the name of God. Not that that's always easy to do, but I think the more that we put ourselves in a healthy place and surround ourselves with healthy people that are on a spiritual walk similar to our own, I think that's what really strengthens us.

Amber: [12:55](#) Which is why it puts such an emphasis in this book on finding an affirming community because I think that really grounds you.

You're not going to grow and rediscover who you are in the family of God if you're surrounding yourself by people who tell you that God hates you and you're going to hell. You have to surround yourself with people who are affirming you, who are loving you, who are helping you discover all that God wants you to be.

- Matthias: [13:20](#) I know for me when I was first coming out, I was really scared of affirming communities because I was afraid that they would lead me away from God. That they had accepted what I call it at a time, wishy washy interpretation of scripture that I'd love to hear maybe from your personal story, what that ... I know you got into it the last time we talked, but just a little bit about that journey for you of finding an affirming community made a huge impact in your life.
- Amber: [13:54](#) It did. I think you're right, because I held that same fear. I think a lot of us do because we're taught that anything other than what we've been raised in is bad. So we're thinking that, well, if we get into an affirming community, maybe they water down the scriptures, or maybe we're just justifying our way of life, or reading the Bible the way we want to read it.
- Amber: [14:16](#) So all those things were a huge part of my own fears in my own heart. Yet for me, I got to such a negative place about the story I was telling myself about who I was, that it was just leading to very negative things in my life. I was very depressed. I had a lot of anxiety. I was having nightmares. I was using self-injury as a form of just survival and it was just a very dark place. That is not good fruit.
- Amber: [14:51](#) When you talk about good fruit and bad fruit in your life, the bad fruit that was happening in my life was far outweighing the good fruit. So I had to look at that and say, "This is something that I have to wrestle with. I can't just ignore it. It's not going to go away. I have to really look this in the face because if not, it's going to be the thing that kills me." That was terrifying for me because I didn't want to justify my way of life. I didn't want to just water down the scriptures. I was just as afraid that I would find out that God was not affirming of same sexual relationships as to find out that God was, because I knew that either way my life was going to change and that it would never be the same again.
- Amber: [15:36](#) I think that, that fear of the unknown was what really scared me. But I just reached this point where I had to do something different than what I was doing. So for me, I just got on and did this Google search of gay affirming churches. I didn't even know if that was possible at that time because I was so sheltered. I

had never been exposed to something like that, that was credible. So, I didn't know if that even existed and yet I knew I had to try. When I did, a church in Denver, which was about an hour away from where I lived at the time, popped up and I just reached out to the pastor and poured out my heart because I didn't know what else to do and sent it off into cyberspace.

Amber: [16:27](#) I never expected to actually get a response, I don't think, because I came from a 14,000 mega-person church that you just, you send stuff off into cyberspace and you never get it back. But it was only a couple hours later before I heard from the pastor, the warmest, most welcoming response and just inviting me to come, to visit, to check it out and letting me know I was welcome there and saying, "I'll connect you with other people, that I'll sit with you and take you to lunch and show you around." And he did.

Amber: [16:58](#) So I went and I was so terrified because I didn't know what I was going to fight when I got there. But when I showed up, everybody looked just like me. I think that was really surprising to me. I had this like, I don't know what I envisioned in my head, but there was no drag queens or people making out in the foyer or these preconceived notions that you build up in your mind. These people were just normal people that were very much like me and very much wanting to love God and love their partner.

Amber: [17:35](#) I met people that had done that for 25, 30 years with their same sex partner or spouse, and there was no conflict between their love for God and their love for their partner. I just remember thinking this is the most beautiful thing I've ever seen. It was a turning point for me that day. I came home and I wrote in my journal, I've reached the point of no return. I could feel like I had reached that point in my spirit where there was no going back.

Amber: [18:01](#) So it was really a defining time for me to find that affirming community. It really was what carried me through the months ahead when I came out to my family and the loss, the devastating loss that I encountered and all that. It really was that affirming community that held me through that time, which is why I advocate so strongly for people to have that, because it makes such a huge difference in how you navigate that process of coming out and how you handle the loss.

Matthias: [18:35](#) Yeah. Because, I mean, that feels so crucial because I think coming out, I know one thing, you mentioned this in your book and this is something that I tell people often when they're wanting to come out, it's like make sure you're safe and make sure you have a community around you before you come out. Because the potential unfortunately in this church world is you

will lose a lot. You have a whole chapter on this idea of I love you, but ... The response that is so common from a lot of churches, a lot of parents, a lot of people within faith communities that "loving" response. We love you so much, but ... Could you talk about that? Because that's a response that feels warm and fuzzy, but at the same time just like a really heavy blow. It's such a weird position to be put in getting that response.

Amber: [19:41](#) Yeah, and I think what it really boils down to is conditional love. We're taught that God loves us unconditionally and that my parents would say, "Well, we love you unconditionally." But when it came down to it, there actually was conditions and caveats attached to their love. "We love you but, I don't support your marriage." Or "We love you, but agreeing to disagree is the same as condoning your behavior and that's something I will never do." I'll let you know, all these buts attached, the door will or if they would say, "The door is always open if you ever want to come back to Jesus and come back to us." So those caveats of like, "We love you, but there's something about you that's not right and you need to fix this."

Amber: [20:28](#) So it's not truly unconditional love. There really is conditions attached to that. I think accepting that is one of the hardest things because it's so painful to think that there's something so bad with you are so wrong about who you are that you're unlovable. Grappling with that conditional love, I think is something that a lot of us have to do if we come from a conservative faith background. That's again, why that affirming community is so important to kind of buffer that and say, "We love you unconditionally no matter what. No matter what your background is, no matter who you love, no matter how you identify, we love you, we embrace you, we celebrate you."

Amber: [21:14](#) I think that's why this last week's decision on the UMC church was so devastating to so many people too because it was just reinforcing again who you are is not acceptable in the eyes of God or really what they projected on God. But really it's in the eyes on us too, we don't accept who you are. So I think that's been so devastating to so many people because they call that their home and they were hoping for movement forward and this feels like a massive blow backwards. It's just very, it's a hard thing to grapple with, with feeling unlovable for who you are, or for who you love.

Matthias: [21:57](#) Right. I feel like that highlight some of the complexity in that because I think with our parents, with our faith communities, we have experienced love from them. A lot of us know what that love feels like and it's so hard to then name that love isn't



enough, that love isn't what I need. To take that step and to almost, it can feel like we're betraying them by saying, "No. You say you love me but this isn't love." It's so hard to hold that tension.

Amber: [22:34](#) Yeah, because it ends up feeling like lip service. There was times that my mom would send me a birthday card, but instead of the really sweet written note of how proud we are and how much we love you, it would just have their signature and there'd be no return address. So it almost felt like they were like checking off a box on their to do list of like, "Well, I did my part and now it's on her to come back to us." That was really hard to grapple with too. It's like, what do you do with that? Do I want them to send me their card? Would I rather not get anything? The mixed emotions that come with that of the feelings that it brings up, it's so complicated as well.

Matthias: [23:15](#) I feel like that brings us to this idea of grief. The idea of aching hearts is what you call it. The deep pain that comes alongside some of these choices we have to make in order to be able to live healthy and thriving lives. They also hurt really deeply.

Amber: [23:36](#) Yeah. I can't say that we're the only ones that are hurting. Our families are hurting too, and yet you do have to protect yourself. I think the most important thing throughout the theme of this whole book is safety. Physical safety, emotional safety, spiritual safety. So many of these things, the reason I advocate the way that I do is because these people are not only being pushed out of ... they're being pushed out of the church, but it's not only causing physical suicide, but it's causing spiritual suicide.

Amber: [24:18](#) So many LGBT people are walking away from the church and from God all together because of that conditional love, and that ache in their heart that they just can't get over and can't reconcile and some of them never return. I can't blame them for that. You can't blame them for walking away from something that's been so harmful. So grief is a huge part of that process and the letting go and the coming to terms with what may never be.

Amber: [24:52](#) In some ways, I feel like I'm still doing that. I've been out for almost seven years and I feel like I'm still having to grieve the loss of what could have or should have been. I have a hard time saying I actually miss my parents because I've been so hurt by how I've been treated and yet I do. There's things about our time together that I miss. I miss the holidays. I miss the things that used to make our relationships special. It just still is complicated of trying to mourn that loss of what could or should have been and yet may or may not ever be. How much do you

hold onto that hope, how much do you let go, how much do you just hold space and that tension?

- Matthias: [25:43](#) Yeah. That idea of hope and holding on to hope, it can feel almost sickening to try to hold that hope and accept reality. You don't want to give up on it and yet it doesn't seem like it's actually ever going to happen and yet you don't want to close off the possibility. Yet sometimes you have to set boundaries in order to be able to function. It's so complicated.
- Amber: [26:15](#) It is. It's so complicated and boundaries are very important. That's a huge part of safety for you. Sometimes physically, but sometimes just emotionally and spiritually to set a boundary and say, "I can't do this anymore. This is not okay. The way that you're treating me, the way that ... the things you're saying to me." You have to set that boundary in order to be able to live your life and move on and to be happy. Otherwise, you just stay perpetually in that cycle of grief and trauma and you never get out of it.
- Amber: [26:45](#) Setting boundary gives you some space between that and between being who you are as a child of God and being able to thrive in that and find joy and to, you know. Yes, I lost so much when I came out. I do still grieve that loss in different ways, and yet I would never trade where I am now for anything. I would never go back to that life. I have never felt more free. I have never felt more joy. I've never felt more alive than living out who I was actually meant to be. I feel like I came alive the day I came out and my family has missed the happiest years of my life. I just, I feel like I finally arrived into who I was meant to be all along.
- Amber: [27:39](#) So I would never go back to where I was before. I felt so suffocated and stifled. Being here has been so freeing, even though it's been hard and I've had a lot of loss, I've had to work through a lot of that deconstruction of my theology, I still wouldn't change it because it's made me a better person. It's made me stronger. It's made me think differently. It's helped me to meet people that are so real and authentic themselves. You don't arrive at that place without having gone through some stuff.
- Amber: [28:16](#) So the people that you meet on this side have really been through a journey and that has been a really rich and rewarding experience for me too, is to meet those other people that have walked similar paths.
- Matthias: [28:26](#) So, something that just came to mind is an email that I actually got from a listener just a couple of days ago, yesterday actually.

Who I won't give any details because this person isn't out, but I know there are a lot of people who listen to Queerology who have these same questions. So I'm going to read just a little chunk of this to you.

- Matthias: [28:47](#) “I know nothing about the LGBT community. I have no clue where I stand. It's like every time I decide being gay is okay in God's eyes, I start to doubt it. Every time I decided, isn't okay in God's eyes, I doubt it. I want to be able to live like myself, but is that what God wants? I feel so lost and I keep getting back to square one because I don't want to do the wrong thing.”
- Matthias: [29:09](#) That idea of doing the wrong thing, I feel like rings so true to where I was 10, 15 years ago. That utter fear of what is the right thing to do?
- Amber: [29:24](#) I really want to please God, how do I do that? What is the right thing? It's so heartbreaking because I, we've all been there. You genuinely want to do the right thing. You genuinely love God. You genuinely want to please God with your life. So it's such a terrifying place to be. You feel stuck almost like, I can't go back and I can't go forward and I don't know which way is out.
- Amber: [29:52](#) When you're coming from that conservative place and you don't know anything of the LGBT faith community, you don't have any people to really connect to or to ask questions of. So you do feel very isolated in that struggle, I think, because you're afraid to reach out and be found out by the wrong person. So it's a very scary and isolating place to be.
- Amber: [30:18](#) I think one of the guiding things that is important to look at is the fruit that's producing in your life. Is being in the closet producing good fruit for you or is it producing bad fruit? Most often time, it's not producing great fruit. You're feeling very conflicted, you feel a lot of fear, you're depressed, you're anxious. All these things are not good fruit. There certainly is a period of time walking through that journey where things aren't going to feel great because there's a lot of stuff to deconstruct and work through, but there is good fruit waiting for you on the other side.
- Amber: [31:01](#) There is joy, there is freedom, there is connection with healthy individuals that'll celebrate who you are, there is love from an unconditional God that does not have boundaries or labels or conditions. I think those are important things to look at and also to look at the ... I also talk in the book about weighing real fear versus false fear and trying to break down the barriers that people feel around this fear of God isn't going to love me if I'm gay. Because there are legitimate fears in the midst of coming

out. You may face legitimate loss in your family or in your job or in these different areas of your life.

- Amber: [31:45](#) So there are legitimate fears and things to take into consideration, but I contend that the way that God sees you and loves you is not one of them. The point of this book is helping them get to that place where they realize that God does love them exactly as they are and there's nothing they have to change or do about it. Once they can settle that for themselves, then they can make steps forward into what the coming out process might look like for them in their own journey.
- Matthias: [32:15](#) That leads to the big question of the book is, how do people know when they're ready to come out? Because that can be a hard decision too of when is it the right time? Because sometimes you just want to come out, but other times it never feels like the "right time". Yeah.
- Amber: [32:37](#) Yeah. I think that's certainly a process as well. It's different for everybody and you can't give one blanket answer that's the right thing for everyone. Everybody's story is different. Everybody's circumstances is different. Everybody's process is different. But I love the quote and I have it in the book that says, "And the day came when the risk to remain tight in a bud was more painful than the risk it took to blossom." I think you reach that point where staying closeted or coming out, the risk that ... it tips the balance and the risk becomes worth it and worth walking into.
- Amber: [33:20](#) But I do think it's important to take a holistic inventory before you get to that point and look at, am I physically ready? Do I physically feel safe to do this? Do I have a safe place to live? Do I have the financial means to take care of myself? All these things of, are you physically ready and safe to be able to handle it? Are you emotionally ready? I encourage people to go to therapy and see a therapist to walk through these things of ... to work through their theology, to work through the conflict they're feeling inside, to work through these things that may have come up in their childhood or that they're dealing with now.
- Amber: [34:01](#) Therapy is a great way to emotionally prepare yourself for what is to come. Are you mentally ready? Have you done the theological work to know what the Bible really says about you and be able to accept yourself? I think that's a huge thing and we've got lots of great resources for that now to be able to help guide you to be able to be mentally ... bridge that divide between your head and your heart of what you've been taught to believe in what's actually true.

- Amber: [34:33](#) Then I talk again about are you emotionally ready? Do you have the strength, the community support, the people around you that will be there to walk this journey with you as you go through it. So I think that's really the ... chapter four really deals with a lot of that holistic approach of looking at all four of these aspects in a little bit deeper way and giving just practical examples, practical questions to ask yourself to know if you're ready in a place that is the time for you.
- Matthias: [35:03](#) Yeah. I feel like when we come out before we're ready, or before we're safe, or before we've done some of that work, that it's not necessarily a bad thing, but it can make it that much harder. It can make it that much more difficult.
- Amber: [35:23](#) The collateral damage is greater.
- Matthias: [35:25](#) Yes, exactly.
- Amber: [35:26](#) You're not adequately prepared. Not that we can ... sometimes you can't control it. Somebody outs you and there it is and there's nothing you can do about it. But when it is in your control, I recommend that people take time to adequately prepare rather than rushing into it because it will lessen that collateral damage and the mess that you have to deal with post coming out.
- Matthias: [35:45](#) Yeah. I think there's that idea of once you realize you're queer, any of those things, there can feel that pressure to then come out and almost a shame of being in the closet. I feel like I'm constantly telling people, "No, there's nothing wrong with being in the closet."
- Amber: [36:04](#) You will know when you're ready. If you don't feel like it, then you're not ready yet. If you're feeling that intimidation, that fear, yeah, then you're not ready. Take your time. People so often try to rush this or people try to rush you. The peer pressure of, well, this should happen now and you need to tell this person and this. No you don't. This is a very personal part of your life that you don't have to share with anybody until you're ready. Nobody else has to pay the cost except for you. So you wait and you do it when you feel ready, when you feel safe, when you feel confident and not before.
- Matthias: [36:42](#) Yeah. You mentioned the fact that there are so many resources out there now for people who are trying to wrestle with the theology and figure out all of these things. Just off the top of your head, what are a few of those resources, obviously besides this book which I would recommend to everyone whether

you've come out or not. It's so good, some of those resources for people who are maybe looking for some added help?

Amber: [37:09](#) Yeah. I am so grateful that we have the resources now, because those, I'm sure you wished you would have had those resources 10, 15 years ago. I know I wish I would have. This stuff wasn't around when we were coming out. I'm so grateful now that so much of this is available. I will say that in my book, it's not only for ... I mean it's primarily for the LGBT person, but at the end of every chapter, I do have a section for allies and parents as well to help them know how to help your loved one navigate this particular season in their coming out process. So there is that as well.

Amber: [37:41](#) But I really, I mean there's as far as books on theologically to help reconcile your faith and sexuality, I often recommend, "UnClobber" by Colby Martin. I recommend "God and the Gay Christian" by Matthew Vines. I recommend "Changing Our Mind" by David Gushee. Those are all really great ones that will help you deconstruct some of what you've been taught to believe about the Bible.

Amber: [38:04](#) I loved that podcasts like Queerology are available. I think that has been so helpful to so many people because not everybody can just pick up a book and read. Some people need something to listen to or need the community that is there. So I recommend Queerology and Kevin Garcia's podcast a lot. I recommend even musicians like Tash Holmes and Benjamin Grace that are creating new spaces for music in ... that are outside evangelical realm.

Amber: [38:37](#) I think as far as organizations go, Q Christian Fellowship is doing fantastic work with giving us space for LGBT people of faith to come. They do an annual conference every year and it's the largest LGBT faith gathering in the world. People come from all over the world and it's a great place to ... it's a great starting point for people that are just needing to plug in with the community and figure out where to go because the spectrum of workshops offered and things that are presented that weekend cover pretty much all the bases from parents to allies to people coming out to marriage and sex and ethics. Really anywhere along that spectrum you'll find something at that conference for you.

Amber: [39:22](#) So I love recommending that to people. It's a great way for them to realize that they're not alone and be around other people that have walked similar faith journeys to theirs and have ... and also engage with parents who are affirming, pastors who are affirming, and allies that maybe you've never met somebody like

that before. And to walk into a space where it's so welcoming and that love of bounds it's really life changing for a lot of people. I know it was life changing for me the first time that I went. It was very eye-opening and life changing to realize I was far less alone than I thought and that was very healing for me.

- Matthias: [40:02](#) Yeah. I know that the first time I went, I was in tears like pretty much the entire weekend. Yeah. It was so powerful.
- Amber: [40:14](#) It is. There's really no way to describe it until you've experienced it. I mean, it's really is very life changing. So, I mean, on my website I have a pretty extensive list of books I recommend, podcasts, musicians and organizations that are very helpful. I try to bridge across a pretty wide spectrum of places for people to get plugged in so they can always check that out on my website as well if they're looking for additional resources.
- Matthias: [40:41](#) So how can people get a copy of your book and how can people find you?
- Amber: [40:45](#) Well you can order it now. It is out today on Amazon, so you can certainly grab it there or certainly off of Barnes & Noble or at your local bookstore. You can find me on social media @ambern as in Nicole, @amberncantorna across all platforms. Then my website is [ambercantorna.com](http://ambercantorna.com).
- Amber: [41:08](#) I encourage people to check it out. We are launching our tour and tour dates are being released today for our national Unashamed tour. I will be coming hopefully to a city near you and we'll be discussing some of these topics more in depth than doing Q and A and all that. So certainly check out my website for event listings as well and what areas I'll be in when.
- Matthias: [41:27](#) That's so exciting. Yes, everyone, if Amber is near you, even if she's far from you, it's worth driving. Thank you so much for joining me and for writing this book. It's so needed and is one that I know will be a go-to recommendation for me to so many people because it's needed. It's needed.
- Amber: [41:50](#) Thank you so much for having me. It's always a pleasure.
- Matthias: [41:52](#) Yeah, likewise. Be sure to pick up your copy of "Unashamed: A Coming-Out Guide for LGBTQ Christians" wherever you get your books and checkout Amber over on your website, [ambercantorna.com](http://ambercantorna.com) and across social media @amberncantorna.
- Matthias: [42:06](#) Queerology is on Twitter and Instagram @queerologypod. Or you can tweet me directly @matthiasroberts. Queerology is

produced with support from over 230 patriot supporters. To find out how you can help keep Queerology on the air head over to [matthiasroberts.com/support](https://matthiasroberts.com/support). A really easy way to help support Queerology is by leaving a rating and a review. You do that right in our podcast app, or go to [matthiasroberts.com/review](https://matthiasroberts.com/review) and it'll take you right there.

Matthias:

[42:36](#)

As always, I'd love to hear from you. If you have ideas of what you want to hear on the podcast or just want to say hi, reach out. I'll get back to you. Until next week you all, bye.