

Queerology 77 Episode Transcript

Gattison is Not #OnceGay

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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 to make a pledge and listen away.
- Matthias: [00:29](#) Hey friends, this is Matthias Roberts and you're listening to Queerology, a podcasts and belief and being. This is episode 77.
- Gattison: [00:39](#) You have these mentors and these people telling you that just like God healed the person with cancer, he can heal you. It's really hard not to club your sexuality in with cancer.
- Matthias: [00:55](#) Born and raised in the San Francisco Bay area pop artist Gattison began playing the piano and singing at the young age of 10 years old and composed his first song at the age of 12. He successfully worked as a worship leader for years until he came out which ended his marriage with his wife Allie and left him searching and deconstructing his faith.
- Matthias: [01:17](#) Jumping forward a few years, Gattison is the founder of the Innovative Love Coalition, which is a group of Queer and affirming Christian creatives who are reintroducing God's love through creative experiences, justice initiatives and acts of service.
- Matthias: [01:32](#) They just launched a Kickstarter for a brand new worship album created by LGBTQ people of faith and allies supported by Grammy Award winning artists and producers. Gattison talks about this project in this episode near the end. It's so cool. It's like the first big worship album, like fully produced, fully like Bethel/Hillsong style worship album produced by queer people. We also talk about Bethel on this episode too, which is great fun, so wait for that.

Matthias: [02:05](#) In his personal career Gattison's new single Picture Perfect debuted on the Billboard breakout charts and he lives in L.A. co-parenting and his two kids and making music. I'm really excited to have Gattison on the episode today. His story is incredible. We get into a lot around living in a mixed orientation marriage and then what it was like coming out and going through a separation and how that ties into a lot of the messaging that is researching in a lot of churches today. This idea that you can pray the gay away, that you can marry the gay away. We talk about that a whole lot. No big announcements this week other than Queerology is going to be back for a live episode at Wild Goose Festival of this summer, so if you're in the North Carolina area or wanting to go to a Wild Goose Festival, go ahead and get tickets for that.

Matthias: [03:01](#) I will be sharing more details about that as I have more details. We literally just confirmed this last week. And also again, like I mentioned this last week, Rachel Held Evans is still in a coma. And so if you're the praying type, continue to pray for Rachel, for her husband, Dan for their kids and we can hope and pray for a miracle.

Matthias: [03:25](#) Okay. Let's just go ahead and dive in. Gattison hi, welcome.

Gattison: [03:30](#) Hey, how you doing?

Matthias: [03:31](#) I'm good. Thank you so much for joining me.

Gattison: [03:34](#) Absolutely. Thanks for having me.

Matthias: [03:35](#) Yeah, super excited to have you on. So to start the question I ask everyone, how do you identify and how would you say that your faith has helped form that identity?

Gattison: [03:45](#) Oh my gosh, it's such a good question. Wow, so I would say that I identify as an extreme creative. I identify as a person of color. I identify as a Jesus follower and I identify as a gay man and I don't don't know, I think my faith really it's interesting. That's a really interesting question. Oh, my faith has at times been in conflict with, I think a lot of those things. And I think some of how my faith has shaped it has been just really me grappling with the areas of conflict that faith has had with some of those identities and kind of just wrestling through. How I feel about those things? What the Bible has to say about some of those things. Because I feel like in most of those areas, the church in some era has been against those things.

- Gattison: [05:19](#) From creativity to person of color to I think obviously being a gay man. So, yeah, I don't know. I think I've been... I think my faith has kind of formed that through some hardship, through some pain, through some struggle. It is not been easy to reconcile some of my faith with some of the things that I identify as. So I think in some ways I'm still, that faith is still being... I don't know, it's still a process, it's still happening. It's still there forming and shaping.
- Matthias: [06:03](#) I would love to hear about what some of that journey has been like. Because, I mean you have... I was reading through some old blog posts like you've been through a lot over the last few years and is definitely been a struggle from what I can see just from all looking in.
- Gattison: [06:24](#) Yeah, absolutely. It's definitely been a struggle. So I mean it's like where do you want me to start? It's like, I mean, there's so many things that I could talk about. I guess I can... What some people would know about is that I used to be married to a woman and she is a beautiful woman. I consider her to be my best friend. This woman is the mother of my two beautiful children, the most gorgeous humans I know on this planet. And we live right next door to each other. We raise our kids together but to get to this point has been a complete journey that has been mostly filled with a lot of valleys. And in some ways we're standing on the mountain top now. But I mean it was tough. And so we were heavily involved in ministry.
- Gattison: [07:36](#) We built our life around ministry. I grew up in the church, she grew up in the church. We met at a Bible College program type thing. And she knew that I was attracted to men and everybody else around me knew I was attracted to men but we were under the assumption that you can pray the gay away. And so when Allie and I, when we decided to be a couple and date people were so excited because we immediately became kind of this flagship for see God can heal the attractions, the struggle of being gay. God can heal it and it can go away. And here's proof. And so, I mean, yeah, there's so many things I could talk about, but long story short is after just shy of nine years, Ellie and I came to the conclusion that you couldn't pray the gay away. And it wasn't something to be prayed away that it was something to be embraced. And something to be authentic about and love made room for all of my humanity.
- Matthias: [08:59](#) I mean my mind is going to like the new campaign that Bethel church and Redding just released.
- Gattison: [09:08](#) Yes.

Matthias: [09:08](#) I honestly can't remember what it's called. And that's not shade but I kind of wish it was.

Gattison: [09:18](#) Yes. Exactly. Yes.

Matthias: [09:18](#) But that idea that you can kind of pray the gay away, marry the gay away it's having a resurgence, especially with that campaign. I'd be curious as someone who's kind of lived through that and lived through the different iterations of that. What comes to mind when you see people who are still kind of espousing that message?

Gattison: [09:40](#) You know What's so interesting about this is that we did a Bible program at Bethel, so I'm very familiar with Bethel and so to see this is not a surprise because I think it has always been there. It's just kind of a new shiny rollout of what they have already had. And it is just sad on one hand where I'm like, this is just, it's horrible. And it causes so much emotional, psychological damage and it's just horrible. It really is.

Gattison: [10:28](#) And on the other hand, if I'm being super honest, I get it because that was me. And I get how when you have grown up in the church your whole life, when you have had these experiences with God in this specific place and you have these mentors and these people telling you that God can heal just like God healed the person with cancer, he can heal you.

Gattison: [11:07](#) It's really hard not to clump your sexuality in with cancer. It's really hard not to clump your sexuality in with whatever type of... Looking at porn, right? All these things that the church has said are sinful and should just be done away with, it's really hard to not clump in with that because if I'm being honest, because of the theology that I ascribed to my sexuality felt like a cancer. If felt like if I could just take the pill and be done with it, I would have. I don't believe that now. Now I've embraced all of who I am, but growing up in church, that's just the way it felt.

Gattison: [12:01](#) And so I feel kind of stuck in between these worlds of like, I know that it's completely damaging. I know that it's completely wrong and I would never ever ascribe to anything like that or promote anything like that because hello my story, I've went through nine years of that way and quite frankly it's just bad fruit. But I get it, I get why people are there. I get why people who are "ex gay" are trying to go that route.

Matthias: [12:42](#) Yeah, I hear the complexity in that sense of... And going back to you talking about how much you love Allie and yeah, like I

would imagine there was probably such goodness in that right along the pain and the hardship and the stuffing down of sexuality, what would you say that that did to you?

- Gattison: [13:07](#) I think this is the thing, it really creates this separation of self, right. Compartmentalizing myself, right? Where it's like, Hey, there is this side of me that loves Allie, like loves Allie. Right now when I think about Allie, I think about this beautiful kind woman that is my best friend, that is the strongest woman I know. I can tell you story after story about this woman where you would be in shock and awe of how strong she is before we decided to end our marriage and after, right? Like she's been strong the whole time. At the same time there's this part of me that is not sexually attracted to her in that way and I think kind sight is 20/20 and I think I didn't understand that because also to bring context is I didn't date before Allie.
- Gattison: [14:28](#) She was the first woman I had ever dated. And so it was like when you don't know what love is, when you have those feelings and there's strong as far as like, hey this is my best friend. She's awesome. I mean, I know now that really what it was, I want it to be her gay best friend, right? I wanted to have late night chats and I wanted to hung out and talk about everything. But when you have people who are telling you that your sexuality is wrong and that's not an option. And matter of fact, not only is it not an option, but it's an abomination and not only is an abomination, but if you choose to act upon this thing, it's going to send you to hell in a hand basket. And then it's like, okay, well that's not even an option. So I might as well, and I also heard that if you have sex with a woman, then all those feelings will just go away?
- Matthias: [15:37](#) Yes. Did they?
- Gattison: [15:37](#) Oh yeah, I mean I will tell you, I stories of like, Oh my God, this is horrible where people will say. But you learn how to compartmentalize and you learn how to say I was just actually, I was talking to somebody the other day about that idea of not every thought is your own and that sounds cool on the surface, but then you learn to attribute your sexuality that's not me, that's just thoughts that are running through my head. So I can just keep pushing those things away. And that's not me. And it becomes really psychologically damaging. It becomes emotionally damaging. And at the end of the day, I think after when we were in this mode of like trying to figure things out, I was depressed. I didn't really even know that I was depressed because quite honestly, I'm a very positive person. And so I

didn't really... It's easy for me to be like you know what? It's all good.

Gattison: [16:45](#) The sun is shining today, we're going to figure it out. You know what I mean? But I was really depressed. I was like putting on weight. Like it was a thing. And so even today on Allie's podcasts or Allie's Instagram, she put out a picture today and she's talking about the fact that I was going through depression and that I put on like 50 pounds. I was 50 pounds heavier and I didn't even know it. It was just... So I think those are some of the things that happen when you compartmentalize and when you kind of go through some of this stuff, it's just you learn how to disassociate from that part of yourself, which I think has always unhealthy.

Matthias: [17:34](#) Take me back to that moment. Like you were talking about that the time when you both started kind of working through things and Allie wrote this beautiful blog posts kind of talking about your decision to end your marriage. And she wrote just how emotional it was and she said, I think he realized that freedom meant breaking my heart. I mean, that is so complicated to step into freedom and the incredible pain that comes along with it.

Gattison: [18:08](#) Oh my God. Yeah. Yeah. I think sometimes we want the story to be so neat and clean and tied up with the ball when the reality of life is that sometimes it's really messy and yeah. And my freedom costs her something. Right. It's so, I mean, I can't even begin to describe the emotion of that moment. We had done a lot of research. We have a value for a community and bringing people along with us and not kind of doing things on our own. And so we invited people who were really close to us at the time to kind of journey with us and kind of that we could just be super honest with an ask the really tough questions about what the Bible had to say about homosexuality and blah blah blah.

Gattison: [19:11](#) Anyway, we go through this several months that we were in this mode, in this process, and we finally came to kind of a conclusion, but I'll kind of take you back to where it all happened. It was February 21st of 2017 and long story short, we were sitting on our bed at the time and our room and my youngest son, Nigel, was asleep in the next room. Okay. He had to be maybe four or five months. Okay. So this is really fresh. Everything is really fresh. So we are on the phone with the psychologist. And we had told the psychologist we had a couple sessions with the psychologist before this moment, but when we first started meeting with the psychologist, we told the psychologist, look, we have come to this conclusion that we

don't believe that homosexuality is wrong or that the Bible is against homosexuality is a different contexts, blah blah blah.

- Gattison: [20:15](#) So, but our next question is, is there a way that we can actually make this marriage work? Because we're thinking of our kids, we're just thinking about a bunch of different things and like is there a way that we could make it work? And so we were like, listen, don't try to break us up. Just give us some options or whatever. So anyway, through these couple of sessions, she was giving us options because she had counseled a lot of other clients.
- Gattison: [20:48](#) So anyway, this particular day, February 21st she's given us an option and the option is this. She said, listen, I've had a lot of people who have kind of come out on Facebook, say that you're a gay man and kind of allow yourself to be able to build some relationships with other gay men, women, whatever, and just kind of attend some gay events and just allow yourself to be a part of the community.
- Gattison: [21:21](#) And sometimes for some people that's enough to acknowledge that, hey, yo, I am this. But at the same time I still am choosing to say, end this marriage. And the whole time that she saying this, I'm like, there is no way. It's just not settling with me. Right? Like I'm just like, I now know there's something... My gut, my knower is like, no, this is not, no.
- Gattison: [21:56](#) But Allie is kind of like... And I'm kind of being quiet about it. I'm kind of just trying to listen and take it all in. And meanwhile Allie is like, "oh, okay this is, you are not willing to try that. It's got to be hard and people are going to whatever. But I'm willing to try it." So anyway, we get off the phone and Allie is like, "Okay, so talk to me." Like she's kind of excited, like okay, like let's try it.
- Gattison: [22:27](#) What do you think? And I'm like, "Allie, I do not think that this is going to be a good thing." Like I don't think this is good. And she's like, "Why do you feel like that? Tell me." And I was like... Inside no, Allie and I have always had this relationship where we can be 1000% honest with each other about everything. So I was like, "Allie the reality is up until this point I have been extremely faithful to you. I have not stepped out on our marriage. I've always been super honest with you. And so essentially what we're asking me to do is to come out on Facebook, expect guys not to slide into my DMs and say what's up? And I'm supposed to be able to go to these events and kind of like put myself in this position where I can look, but I can't touch essentially."

Gattison: [23:32](#) And I said this is not just about having sex with a man. This is about me wanting to love a man and to be loved by a man. And those words coming out of my mouth, I'm a verbal processor. And so those words coming out of my mouth were almost revelation to me. And definitely it was revelation to her. And at that particular moment she was like, "Well then I think we have our answer." And I did an ugly cry that topped all ugly cries. And I was just like, I'm so sorry. And I just kept saying, I'm so sorry. And so, February 21st of 2017 is the day that my best friend liberated me. And we're still friends to this day. And she continues to stand by that point of liberation.

Matthias: [24:30](#) Wow. It's like I feel emotion just hearing that like that. It's such a beautiful and hard story.

Gattison: [24:44](#) Yeah. Yeah.

Matthias: [24:46](#) So it's been a few years. You are now a recording artist.

Gattison: [24:51](#) Yes.

Matthias: [24:52](#) You're working on all of these super cool projects. I'd love to hear, you described yourself as an extreme creative.

Gattison: [24:58](#) Yeah. Oh the extreme creative, not just the creative.

Matthias: [25:04](#) Yeah. Tell me about that.

Gattison: [25:05](#) Yeah. So the reason why I say an extreme created is because creativity for me as a way of life, it's not just something that I participate in, it's just I feel like I don't exist beyond creativity. And so I am a singer, I'm a songwriter. I play the piano and I also am creative in the way that I try to approach problems, right. And I try to make solutions that are something that can be built on movements. And so there's a reason why I say that and I will probably get into that a little bit later. But as far as on the music side, I have put out some music. I'm working on EP right now that is mainstream music. It's kind of pop, I tell people it's like under the umbrella of pop, but it's inspired by like funk, soul and electronic music.

Gattison: [26:13](#) And so that's kind of my lane. And actually the EP that I'm working on I'm actually partnering with Allie and my shade of beautiful and we are together releasing this EP. And it basically is a snapshot in about four or five songs, a snapshot of the last 10 years of Allie and I's relationship. And so there's actually a song on there called February 21st which is the day that we

ended our marriage. And it's a duet between Allie and I and it's going to be amazing. And yeah. But so I released two singles already and I just recently got the exciting news that my songs, the dance remixes to my songs hit the Billboard charts.

Matthias: [27:05](#)

Oh wow.

Gattison: [27:06](#)

Yeah. And so I was number four on the Billboards breakout charts. And so what the breakout charts are is basically Billboard says, Hey, there's only five on their breakout list. And so they say these five artists, these five songs you need to watch out for. And so you may just hear some of my songs playing in the club.

Matthias: [27:31](#)

Yeah. It's so cool.

Gattison: [27:32](#)

Yeah.

Matthias: [27:33](#)

Congratulations.

Gattison: [27:34](#)

Thank you. Thank you so much.

Matthias: [27:36](#)

And then I mean you're doing this Innovative Love Coalition which is like a collection of queer worship, right?

Gattison: [27:47](#)

So basically Innovative Love Coalition is a hub for creatives and the first project that we're taking on definitely is geared towards worship. So the reason why I like to make that distinction is because there's going to be projects that we take on that have nothing really to do with the church per se, but one of the reasons why we're doing this project first, which is the first ever worship compilation by openly queer worship artists and allies. So which I think is the beautiful part about this is that openly queer worship artists and allies are working on this together and making something that's inclusive of all people, which is I think what it was supposed to be and the original, I think that's the love that Jesus had when he was here is radical inclusive love.

Gattison: [28:53](#)

But anyway, one of the reasons why we're doing this first is because one, there was a need, right? And affirming and progressive Christian spaces traditionally what's been happening is we've been taking from the Bethels and the Hillsongs and we've been taking what they have been writing as far as worship is concerned and we've been trying to adapt it to our environment, which is cool. It was cool for the moment that we did it, but I think it's time for us to write our own songs and

to write songs that reflect the inclusive nature of God. And so that basically is one of the reasons why we're going with this project first. And then it was also, quite frankly, it was like we need a real big win right out of the gate. And I have a background in worship.

- Gattison: [29:53](#) I used to be involved at a church named Jesus Culture, which is kind of big in the charismatic movement. And so I knew this world and I was like, we could do this pretty big. And so I just called on some people, not that are a part of Jesus Culture, but I called in some other people that I knew and I was like, "Yo, let's, let's do it." So we have Grammy nominated songwriters, singers. We have people who've been in the industry forever, both straight and queer. And we have lots of other extreme creatives that are a part of this thing. So it's going to be fine.
- Matthias: [30:42](#) Oh my gosh. Like this is such a cool project because you're talking about like all of these queer worship artists and allies who are doing this work. And I can't help to think of the fact that the worship industry, there's so many people in it who cannot be out.
- Gattison: [31:02](#) Oh yeah.
- Matthias: [31:02](#) Because they're in the worship industry.
- Gattison: [31:03](#) Absolutely.
- Matthias: [31:04](#) So just open up these doors and say, wait a second, you can get out and be doing worship.
- Gattison: [31:10](#) Absolutely. Absolutely. No, it's a huge thing. And I do know people that are in that industry and can't come out unless they're ready to give up their livelihood. And that's their decision to make. And I think we should stand with people who are at every part of their journey, but one of the things that I want to do is to create what I call like a soft landing pad, right? Like how can we create something that not only is going to be beneficial for us immediately in terms of, it's going to be beneficial for our churches. It's going to give us some new life and kind of a fresh wind in our churches to be able to sing songs that are by us. But then how can we also create a landing pad for people who are entrenched in that industry that feel like they have no way out. Can we create an ecosystem? Can we create our own creative hub that people can feel safe to be able to create what they want to create and still be able to get it out to the masses.

Matthias: [32:32](#) I think I am just still sitting here kind of in awe of this project because it's something that we've needed for so long.

Gattison: [32:38](#) Yeah.

Matthias: [32:39](#) You all launched the Kickstarter for it on Easter Sunday, right?

Gattison: [32:43](#) Yes.

Matthias: [32:43](#) So what has the response been like?

Gattison: [32:46](#) Yeah, the response has been good. It's so interesting to me because everybody that I've come in contact with from before we launched the Kickstarter until right now has been like, we've needed this for so long. And I do want to make it a point to say that we are standing on the shoulders of giants, right? We are not the first person to ever think about doing a worship compilation. And that there are queer, specifically queer pioneers who have gone before us and who came out at a time where it was extremely, not only unpopular to come out, but it was a threat to their life. It was a threat to everything that they knew and it was in the height of that ex gay type of environment.

Gattison: [33:50](#) And so I want to make sure, and we're going to be doing some things in our newsletter where we send out... We're talking to people who have those stories. We're getting the stories from those people about what it was like in their day and why something like ILC right now is so important. And so I always want to honor those people who have come before us. That being said this what ILC is doing I think is a new iteration and I think the thing that makes it the first ever is that we're doing it with allies. And so I think at this point we really are just like the response has been one, yes we've needed this, but two people have heard the first single which we released. And so when you go to the Kickstarter and you get a chance to... I think if you donate as little as \$5 you get the single for download.

Gattison: [34:58](#) And people have just been in shock. I mean literally you can go to our Instagram and you can see the comments, but people have been in shock and awe. I can't tell you how many messages we've gotten that have said that they were crying and in tears. I can't tell you how many messages we've gotten that said, I haven't been to church in years. And quite frankly, when I saw a post from a friend who said that this was has something to do with church, I didn't really want to look at it, but I was just

too curious. And so I looked at it and I heard and it brought healing.

Gattison: [35:39](#) And those are the things to be really honest with you. Those are the things that keep me going. Those are the things that I'm looking for. And those are the things that we're hoping to hear more of as we move forward with this Kickstarter and as we put out the full project. This is just one single, we have a whole project that we are working on that I'm telling you it's got to be the introduction to a new era in the church.

Matthias: [36:08](#) How can people find the Kickstarter, your work, how can people support you?

Gattison: [36:13](#) Absolutely. So if you go to our Instagram, if Instagram is your fancy, then go to @Innovativelovecoalition and in our description you'll be able to click the link. The link is in the bio and if you are on Facebook, if that is your fancy then you could go to, you can search Innovative Love Coalition and the same thing applies there. You'll see a post about our Kickstarter. You can also, if you have any questions, comments, concerns, you can always go to our website which is www.innovativelovecoalition.com. And we have a section for you to learn more about us but we also have a section called get plugged in and you can message us, you can contact us and we'll answer any questions that you may have.

Matthias: [37:14](#) And then, I mean how can people find your work? Because you are still doing some separate from this too, like-

Gattison: [37:21](#) I am. And so if you want to find my work if you're on Instagram you can go to @GattisonOfficial, G-A-T-T-I-S-O-N Official. And Instagram is pretty much where I live. I have a Twitter as well, @iamGATTISON and if you want to check out my website, my website is www.Gattisonofficial.com. And it's so fun because I just put up a new website so go check it out. It'll be fun.

Matthias: [37:57](#) And people can find your music everywhere.

Gattison: [38:00](#) Yes, they can find it everywhere. Wherever you choose to stream or download. If you just type in Gattison, G-A-T-T-I-S-O-N you will find my music there.

Matthias: [38:10](#) Sweet.

Gattison: [38:11](#) Yeah.

Matthias: [38:12](#) Thank you so much for joining me. Is so cool to hear what I mean, both your personal journey and then what you're up to like we need this.

Gattison: [38:21](#) Yeah. Thank you so much for having me it's really good to a part.

Matthias: [38:28](#) You can find Gattison on Instagram @Gattisonofficial, he's on Twitter @iamGATTISON or over at Gattisonofficial.com.

Matthias: [38:38](#) And be sure to check out the Innovative Love Coalition and their Kickstarter, InnovativeLoveCoalition.com or on social media @InnovativeLoveCoalition. Queerology is on Twitter and Instagram @Queerologypod or you can tweet me directly @MatthiasRoberts.

Matthias: [38:54](#) Queerology's supported by its listeners over 230 of you support Queerology on Patreon. To find out how you can help keep Queerology on the air head over to MatthiasRobert.com/support. A really easy way to help support Queerology is by leaving a rating and a review. Do that right in your podcast app or at MatthiasRobert.com/review and will take you right there. 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 high reach out. I'll get back to you and until next week you all, bye.