

Chapter 1-2 Summary/Reflection

Justin Lee is a Christian male who also identifies as gay. Throughout his life, he has struggled with his relationship between faith and his sexuality. He shared stories of many others and snapshots of articles written on the topic. Additionally, he shared a story of his youth in school. He was known as G-d Boy due to his love for faith. He was once asked what he thought about the Christian vs. Homosexuality debate. He later confessed that looking back on the conversation now he is ashamed of what he had said. However, he is thankful that he has since learned a great deal about the intersection.

Chapter 3-4 Summary/Reflection

In chapter 3, Justin described his relationship with his girlfriend, Liz. He elaborated stating that he was emotionally attracted to her but not physically. He even went as far to say that when they were at a concert today, holding hands, he noticed another male more intensely. Additionally, Justin described the night that he had confided in Brian that he liked boys.

In chapter 4, Justin discloses his sexuality to multiple people. He had disclosed to Brittney, Liz, a few more of his friends, Pastor Rick and his parents. Overall, everyone was very supportive and loving even if they did not understand or it made them uncomfortable. Most importantly, Justin's parents expressed their unconditional love to them and told him that they would support him in every step of the way.

Chapter 5-6 Summary/Reflection

In chapter 5, Justin goes into depth on why individuals are gay. He breaks down what different groups might mean by gay: an attraction towards the same-sex or the physical actions with members of the same-sex. After discussing many different theories, Justin described his personal opinion. He believes, which I agree with, that being gay is inborn. He described that being gay has to do with hormone exposure in the womb and the structure of the brain.

In the next chapter, Justin describes the ex-gay conference he attends with his parents. At this conference, he is re-exposed to many of the theories he presented in the previous chapter. Specifically, he was lectured that men are gay because they have absent or distant fathers and overbearing mothers. Justin decided he needed to express how he felt during the questions and answers portion. He stated that is not how he grew up and he does not believe that is what makes an individual gay. Additionally, Justin shared stories by various individuals. Some of which were “success stories” meaning the individuals were ex-gays. Essentially, this meant that they did not act on their same-sex attraction but they were still attracted to people of the same-sex. Justin closed the chapter with a story and stated that he hopes youth are not encouraged to follow in the footsteps or pursue the path of the ex-gay movement.

Chapter 7-8 Summary/Reflection

Justin explains that he continuously thought and prayed about his sexuality. He elaborated that he knew there were three options. One being he could marry a woman out of obligation to society and G-d. Another he contemplated being in a relationship with another male but never committing a sexual act with him. Lastly, he thought that maybe he was destined to be

celibate for life because that was G-ds plan. Justin concluded that he was prepared to endure whatever G-d had planned for him know He was by his side.

Justin was now in college and exploring telling some individuals in the Christian circle. However, he was advised by many high officials that he was still sinning even though he was not acting on his temptation. Justin really wanted to believe that it was not Gay vs. Christians. But, he was realizing more and more that the debate and tension continued to grow. Each time it was brought up in conversation, Justin was told “don’t be gay” or “respect our views and don’t bring your own agenda into this.”

Chapter 9-10 Summary/Reflection

Justin explains briefly that the church’s view on the LGBTQ+ community. He describes that their ideas are like yeast and/or poison in that they can spread and contaminate the entire church easily. With that in mind, he believes that the Christian churches have a great deal to learn and need to stop using scapegoats based on childhood situations to try and explain why individuals are gay.

In chapter 10, Justin describes the idea that the Church and homosexuality are at a constant war. He goes on to elaborate that Christianity preaches love for one another but he believes that is not always how the Church is acting. Justin states that the church better start following through on what they are preaching otherwise the schism between gay Christians and Christianity may never be repaired.

Chapter 11-12 Summary/Reflection

Justin continues telling readers about his journey. He describes in detail that the culture war between Gays and Christians is extremely toxic. Justin explains that it is one side actively dismissing and hating the other. He tries so hard to build a bridge between the two cultures that he internalizes the hate the groups have for each other leaving him to be extremely depressed and suicidal. He reaches out to his parents and professionals for help, but no one really knows how.

In chapter 12, Justin describes multiple passages from the Bible. Specifically, he mentions Sodom and Gomorrah, Genesis 19, Leviticus 18:22, moral vs cultural commandments, and *Arsenokoitai*. Throughout the chapter, Justin also gave some context to some of the passages. For instance, he described that Leviticus 18:22 was actually about man lying with idols or worshiping idols not about homosexuality. Also, moral commandments were anything that described a sin and cultural commandments were anything that described unclean. Lastly, *Arsenokoitai* is the ongoing debate of Gays vs. Christianity as scholars do not really know what it means. However, they do know the roots indicate male bed. This fuels the fire between the culture war.

Chapter 13-14 Summary/Reflection

In chapter 13, Justin goes into detail about his internal struggle about whether not he should support gays in Christianity or condemn it. He is struggling with whether it is sinful and if him supporting it will make him an outcast in the church. However, he is questioning if the church has the right idea when it comes to Gays vs. Christianity.

Justin continues into chapter 14 by saying that the church must dig deep and give grace to the gay community as it does the rest of its followers. Additionally, Justin describes his own

public coming out journey in which he posted his story onto a Christian website. After getting many positive responses, he decided to create his own website and post his story there. His website impacted an immense amount of people, even some who claimed it saved their lives. In addition, Justin participated in a symposium in which again he told his story. This time, he had many Christian leaders from campus telling him he had opened up their perspective. Lastly, Justin created the Gay Christian Network. This organization started off small by just having the website and then increased to thousands of people interacting with one another. Eventually, Justin applied for non-profit status. The Gay Christian Network continues to grow and thrive today.

Chapter 15 Summary/Reflection

Justin ends his reflection with seven statements. They are: (1) Christians must show more grace, especially in the midst of disagreement. (2) We must educate Christians. (3) We must move away from an “ex-gay” approach. (4) Celibacy must be a viable option. (5) We must shatter the myth that the Bible is anti-gay. (6) Openly gay Christians must find their place throughout the church. (7) We must learn how to effectively dialogue. These seven statements encompass the essence of Justin Lee’s memoir and inner struggle while he was coming to terms with his sexual orientation.