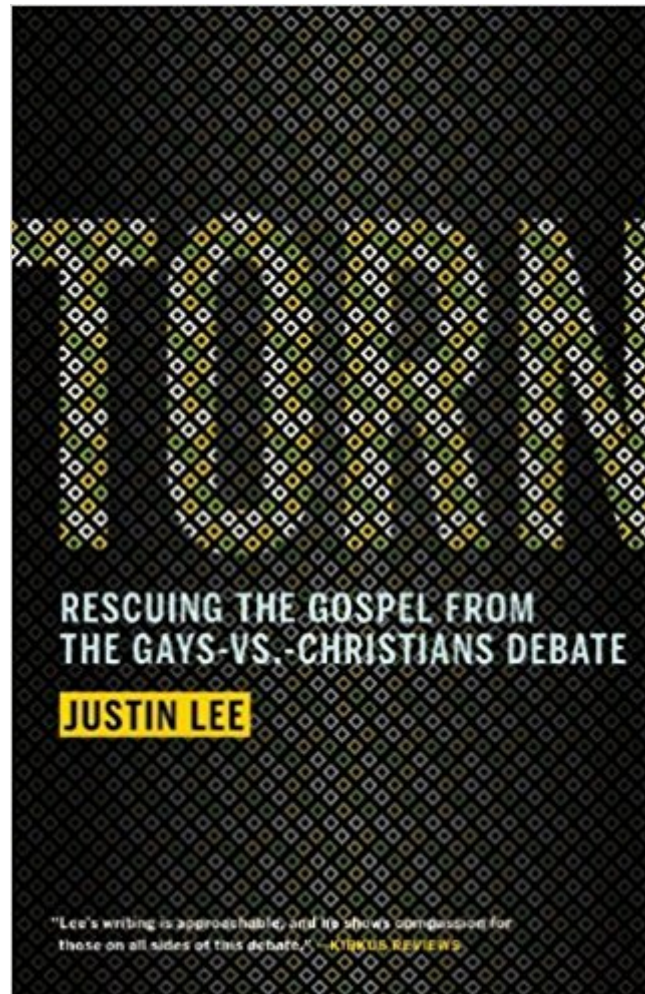




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Torn: Rescuing The Gospel From The Gays-vs.-Christians Debate



Synopsis

As a teenager and young man, Justin Lee felt deeply torn. Nicknamed "God Boy" by his peers, he knew that he was called to a life in the evangelical Christian ministry. But Lee harbored a secret: He also knew that he was gay. In this groundbreaking book, Lee recalls the events--his coming out to his parents, his experiences with the "ex-gay" movement, and his in-depth study of the Bible--that led him, eventually, to self-acceptance. But more than just a memoir, TORN provides insightful, practical guidance for all committed Christians who wonder how to relate to gay friends or family members--or who struggle with their own sexuality. Convinced that "in a culture that sees gays and Christians as enemies, gay Christians are in a unique position to bring peace," Lee demonstrates that people of faith on both sides of the debate can respect, learn from, and love one another.

Book Information

Paperback: 272 pages

Publisher: Jericho Books; Reprint edition (May 14, 2013)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1455514306

ISBN-13: 978-1455514304

Product Dimensions: 5.2 x 0.8 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars 457 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #28,067 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #14 in Books > Religion &

Spirituality > Religious Studies > Gender & Sexuality #24 in Books > Gay & Lesbian >

Nonfiction > LGBT Studies #28 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Specific Groups > LGBT

Customer Reviews

"Radiates a genuine concern and belief in progress through slow, personal evolution...Both LGBT individuals and Christians will benefit from the modeling of a kinder, more accommodating navigation of this culture war." — Publishers Weekly, "Lee's writing is approachable, and he shows compassion for those on all sides of this debate." — Kirkus Reviews "Disarmingly vulnerable...poignant..." — Christianity Today "The beauty of this book is that Lee wants to challenge all kinds of Christians...Perhaps it is because of so many fights hard won that Lee is now able to move into more nuanced territory in this gracious and grace-filled memoir." — The Christian Century "Lee, one of our leading voices on the issues of being gay and Christian, gives us this powerful look at ways that members on both sides of the lines can learn from and grow with

each other." *—SHE Magazine* "...His book offers helpful suggestions for Christians...[and] helpful suggestions for pastoral counseling..." *—World Magazine* "This book is full of three things that are not always much in evidence in our debates on sexuality--fresh air, common sense and manifest love of Christ. What makes it different is that it is not essentially about arguing a case but about bridging the gaps of understanding and sympathy that (inside and outside the Church) have distorted or muffled the overwhelming miracle of God's gift in Christ and in Scripture. I welcome it very warmly." *—Honorable Reverend Dr. Rowan Williams* "Justin didn't leave the church when he realized he was gay...he has been too determined to show them how much he loves them...This is the story of how one Christian man's faith taught him to accept himself, serve others who are in need, and bridge the gap for those who do not always understand." *—Jennifer Knapp, Singer/Songwriter, Founder of InsideOutFaith.org* "This is the most important book I've read in years, and it will be the first I recommend to anyone interested in bridging the divide between the LGBT community and the church. Justin has given us a precious gift with this story. May we receive it with the same courage and faith with which it was delivered." *—Rachel Held Evans, blogger, author of Evolving in Monkey Town and A Year of Biblical Womanhood* "In *TORN*, Justin Lee blends simplicity, clarity, humility, honesty, and vulnerability in a gracious and eye-opening way. The book brings fresh perspectives to old and polarized debates, and it offers a wise and faithful way forward for pastors and other Christian leaders, parents and other family members, not to mention gay men and women themselves. This is the book that every Evangelical, Charismatic, and Roman Catholic Christian should read on the question of homosexuality." *—Brian D. McLaren, author of Why Did Jesus, Moses, the Buddha, and Mohammed Cross the Road? Christian Identity in a Multi-Faith World (brianmclaren.net)*

Justin Lee is the founder and executive director of The Gay Christian Network (GCN), a nonprofit, interdenominational organization working to increase dialogue between gays and Christians and support people on both sides wrestling with related issues. A passionate Christian from a conservative evangelical background, Justin thought he knew everything there was to know about the Christian approach to homosexuality-until unexpected events turned his world upside down and forced him to reconsider everything he believed. Today, his organization works with individuals, families, and churches to stop the debate from tearing people apart. Justin's work has garnered national attention and praise from gays and Christians from across the theological spectrum. He has been featured in numerous print, radio, and television venues including Dr. Phil, Anderson Cooper 360, the Associated Press, and a front page article in The New York Times. He is the director of the

2009 documentary *Through My Eyes* about the debate's impact on young Christians, and the co-host of popular long-running podcast GCN Radio. Justin lives in Raleigh, NC.

Such an outstanding, informative, brilliantly written book. I am in the exact position in my life as Justin Lee. I cannot say what a help this book has been to me in my "Tug of War" between my being a Lesbian and my Christianity. My book, *YOUR STORY MATTERS (TELL IT)* is my memoir of my fifty-five year relationship - a relationship lived in fear of being discovered and discriminated against. Finally, finally my partner and I came out in 2013 and were enthusiastically received by our straight friends, family and community. What a wonderful feeling. Recognition of our relationship was epic. Going forward, being proud, I returned to my church feeling I would receive the same acceptance. One Sunday the pastor noted that should the "gays" march outside the church, we should offer them water. In my head and heart I was saying"yes, that would be nice, but would you invite them in?" In another sermon it was noted..."The gay community has gained acceptance by banding together - this is what the church needs to do!" That old feeling of being a sinful, sick individual returned to me and out of frustration I approached the pastor. We had a private meeting at which time I tried to present my "side" of the story. At the time I was 72 and my partner was 82. Pastor agreed I had a problem. His position remains firm in the scriptures. His only suggestion for my troubled heart is to give it to the Lord and ask for direction. With the help of *TORN* I am writing down what I am experiencing. My book will be titled, *TUG OF WAR*. I hope my words will be powered by my faith and prayers and open more eyes to acceptance of all God's children.

This will likely always be considered a "classic" offering in the genre of Christian LGBT+ Affirming books. If you or know someone who is GENUINELY interested in understanding this perspective, then I highly recommend this book - Jason's story is strong, captivating, and covers a broad spectrum of elements of the topic. If you're reading this as a skeptic, then like ANY book of this topic, it will not impact you. This topic is so intensely polarized, that individual readers with the intent of criticizing are wasting their time. Lee's book is not an in-depth study in the theology of the topic - there are plenty of other offerings out there to dig in to. But *Torn* is a well-written, fun read that will make the interested reader think "wow - I never considered that" and "yeah- that traditional argument doesn't really make any sense". I gave the book to my college-aged son and it totally rocked his world - but because he was ready to receive the message. And now he's LGBT+ affirming. For those who subscribe to the paradigm of 'sola scriptura', don't waste your money. There are plenty of Gagnon and Dallas books here that will stroke your

being-LGBT-can-be-prayed-away-and-they-must-be-forcibly-celibate sensibilities.

As Christians who identify as lesbian and bisexual respectively, this book has become our primary reference for loved ones who are struggling to understand how we justify our relationship in the eyes of God. Our hope is that more people will read this and develop a more integrated perspective. That said, there are statements about gays who are promiscuous in the book that are pretty harsh. It would have been more helpful for the author to clarify his perspective without so clearly differentiating himself from others who have had multiple partners. Still, this is the best book by far of any we have read for understanding the biblical view of gay relationships and how they fit into the church as a whole. We highly, highly, highly recommend this book and have given multiple copies as gifts.

An eye opener about the life of a Gay Christian, told by a young man who wants to honor his faith, even when it denies him the love he craves. The author tries everything the church has to offer to help him get "cured" of his homosexuality and live the ideal life, but sometimes God has other plans. Author Justin Lee bares his heart and soul to readers. Amazingly, the betrayals he suffers do not lessen his faith. Unable to find a church that will accept him as he is, he creates an online site where gay Christians can find like minded colleagues. Lee never doubts God's goodness and love, even as those who claim to love the Lord condemn him.

As a minister, I work with people on all sides of the Gay/Christian Issue. Consequently, I am always looking for ways to try and bring the two sides together in a peaceful, loving way. This book is wonderfully written for just such a purpose. Justin Lee comes from the Conservative Right where he learned about Jesus, God, grace, and faith. He is also gay. In this memoir, he lays out his journey in such a way as to help us love both sides, no matter what side you're on.

This book was excellent. I appreciated Justin's totally open and honest way of sharing his experience, his love for God, and also his love for Christians who, most often times, misunderstood or misjudged him. He comes across as such a man of character, and his mature approach to this very personal and real life experience, well, I just appreciated it and respect him so much. We all need to learn from him and love each other and strive to understand one another the way he has through his story. I'd recommend this book to absolutely everyone!! Whatever your personal beliefs, if you call yourself "Christian", but don't personally know or have a close friendship or relationship

with someone who is gay (attracted to the same gender), then Justin's story is a really great resource.

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