**DREW MILLER:** This podcast is brought to you by Lifeway and the Christian Standard Bible

(ACOUSTIC GUITAR THEME MUSIC FADES UP)

**TISH HARRISON WARREN:** When I write a book, I don’t have a question, decide what to say, then sit down to write the answer. I answer the question by writing the book. I really do think that writers and other makers… I think with my hands. I find out what I think and believe by writing it down.

**JONATHAN ROGERS, HOST:** Welcome to The Habit Podcast: Conversations with Writers about Writing. I’m Jonathan Rogers, your host.

(THEME MUSIC CONTINUES)

**JR:** Tish Harrison Warren is an Anglican priest, a columnist for Christianity Today, and one of my favorite authors. Her new book is *Prayer in the Night*. It’s a meditation on this prayer of Compline, a liturgy to be said before retiring for the night.

**THW:** Keep watch, dear Lord, with those who work or watch or weep this night, and give your angels charge over those who sleep.

(THEME MUSIC FADES OUT)

**THW:** Tend the sick, Lord Christ. Give rest to the weary. Bless the dying. Soothe the suffering. Pity the afflicted. Shield the joyous. And all for your love’s sake, Amen.

**JR:** Tish Harrison Warren, thank you so much for being on The Habit Podcast today.

**THW:** Yeah! I love listening to this podcast by the way.

**JR:** Oh good!

**THW:** I actually am a listener.

**JR:** Well, good. I am so excited about your new book *Prayer in the Night*. It came along for me at just the right time. You know, my dad died just recently, and your book has been a great comfort to me. So thank you for that.

**THW:** Well, I’m very grateful to hear that.

**JR:** So, you are… the basis of this book is — or the sort of organizing principle of this book is — a prayer from Compline. A nighttime prayer. Which really is a catalog of human vulnerabilities as you say. You say something along those lines in your book. So let’s start there. When you describe this book, how do you describe it?

**THW:** Yeah. That’s been really hard actually. IVP wanted me to film — they wanted me to do an elevator pitch for the book in 30 seconds, and that was actually kind of tough for me actually. I see it as a tapestry with different themes woven through it, and hopefully coherence, because those themes are interpenetrating and deeply related to each other. Like, vulnerability and suffering obviously relate to each other. Nighttime and vulnerability and suffering. But also, through this prayer — I mean, this prayer is the lattice that this book sort of grew up around.

I would say in general the book is about in the midst of our deep vulnerability, in the midst of the reality that God doesn’t keep bad things from happening to us — so if we can’t trust God from keeping back things from happening to us, how can we trust God? The whole book wrestles with that through this lens of human vulnerability and this prayer. But I’d say we come to continue in the way of Jesus in the midst of suffering and vulnerability through the story given to us by the Church, and these practices given to us through the Church. So the book is sort of… trying to, I guess, excavate the… (pause) the story of the Gospel, and also these Christian practices that hold together the reality of human vulnerability, unflinchingly, and also the hope that we have in Jesus.

**JR:** You draw a distinction between the… you know… real vulnerability and a kind of fashionable vulnerability, you know, whereby we… I don’t know, on Instagram show a picture of a messy desk and say, “My life…” You know.

**THW:** Yeah. Yeah.

**JR:** I don’t know, messiness and beauty. But you’re talking about vulnerability not even choosing to be vulnerable, but acknowledging we are vulnerable! That we get sick, and we get weary, and we suffer.

**THW:** Yeah. I talk about… I quote St. Isaac… I can’t… the Syrian, possibly?

**JR:** Yeah, Isaac… I think that’s right, Isaac the Syrian.

**THW:** Who says blessed is the man who knows his weakness, right? And from this realization, every good thing, including salvation, grows. That’s not an exact quote. This is all from memory. But I talk about in that, there is kind of a curated… you know, nobody wants their Christian leaders or writers or public figures to be kind of too put together right now? So there is a little bit of a curated vulnerability, where I’m gonna… I mean, I’ve seen this exact language used. I wanna sort of leverage intimacy to connect with my audience or to find a platform or whatever. And I’m very skeptical of that sort of idea.

So the book, I’m saying… it’s not a book about kind of, oh, “I’m so messy! My kids never have socks that match!” (Which is absolutely true. My kids never have socks that match.) But especially in — this is in general I think, but there’s this genre of female lit that’s like “I’m a mess!”

And I wanted to say we’re talking about vulnerability, and I define in the book that it comes from the word in the Latin “to wound,” right? So it’s “woundable.” We’re woundable. I wanna say the deepest vulnerabilities in our life — particularly in that chapter, because I’m talking about our weariness, our limits. They’re kind of embarrassing. And they’re things we would only want to trust to the closest of friends and the closest people in our life. That seems to me the good stuff. Like, in the sense of that’s really where we encounter our true weakness. That’s really where we encounter God. That’s really where we can open ourselves to be loved by other people. But it’s in those places that are way too risky to share broadly. So if it makes us cooler or helps our platform or is good material for our latest blog post… it’s not that there’s nothing of vulnerability in that. But that’s not the vulnerability that I’m talking about, that I think is most, um… transformative? Or most, um… transformative isn’t the word, because the stuff I’m talking about is unbidden. It’s not something that we cultivate, exactly. But it’s the kind of stuff that’s most honest, I think.

**JR:** Yeah. I love that you say at one point in your book, “To trust God in our vulnerability is to willingly enter a lifelong exercise in becoming attuned to what blessing truly is and how it is often found in the last place we look for it.”

**THW:** Yeah.

**JR:** I think we should talk about this idea that I’m going to let go of my notion of what the good life is or what blessing is, and align myself with the truth that the good life and blessing are what God says they are.

**THW:** Yeah. That’s exactly right. Yeah, it’s about a sort of change of imagination that suffering and vulnerability bring in us. I mean, I don’t — I’m going to tell you a story that I don’t tell in the book, because I couldn’t figure out how to sort of tell it well. But there was a time when our son — we lost a miscarriage, which I do talk about in the book — we didn’t know we would lose him in the miscarriage, but if he was born, there was a chance he would have severe needs. Like, he would be medically impaired his whole life.

That wasn’t long. It was only a week or two that we had to think through what that would mean for our life, and what I found in that time is that I… I can have such a… man. I have such a death grip on my own version of the American dream, my own sort of imagination fo what the good life looks like, which is so shaped — even though I’m a pastor and I love Jesus, it doesn’t look like the person of Christ. It doesn’t have that much suffering it it. It is so shaped by consumer vision. And I didn’t know that about myself! Cause it’s not a normal… I didn’t want a big house, I didn’t want a lot of money.

But the idea of freedom for me? The ability to sit in a coffee shop and read a book, or the ability to go on a hike… it’s much more of a sort of hippie version of the American dream. I just want a lot of hiking and freedom. It’s an ease… I think ease was part of it. But to realize oh my goodness, my imagination of what joy looks like, or goodness, or the good life looks like, has been so shaped by a thousand things that make it… that when I’m faced with ease being lost, or freedom being lost, it just shows me how much the idea in my head of what abundant life looks like is so, honestly, very different from what Jesus’ life looks like. It shows me what I think of being blessed…. It might not mean a Mercedes or a designer purse. It would never be those things. I would lose the designer purse. I would forget it somewhere. But it’s my own sort of self-made fantasy that really has not… I guess a better way of saying this is it showed me how much of my imagination that’s been unconverted. There’s so much of my imagination that’s not been converted.

**JR:** Yeah. I mean, it’s easy to block the hashtag blessed thing when it’s people talking about their vacations, but we have our own notions, as you said, of the good life. Nobody’s going to mock you for wanting to sit in a coffee shop and hike.

**THW:** (laughs) Right.

**JR:** But I love what you’re saying. This acknowledgement that we have our own… rather than confirming ourselves to God’s notion of abundance, we say “here’s my checklist of abundance, and aren’t I good for not having a designer purse on my list!”

**THW:** Exactly! Right.

**JR:** So, as you know, this is a podcast about writing, and at the risk — your’e talking about things that go much deeper than writing. But can you talk a little bit about how coming to terms with your vulnerability has shaped your writing life and how you approach your writing?

**THW:** Yeah, yeah. So what’s funny… I love this podcast for so many reasons, but one of the reasons is I love talking about writing, so I love taking these ideas in the book and applying them to this, and you’re the only person who’s asked me this question.

**JR:** Oh!

**THW:** And I’ve been speaking on podcasts. There’s been lots of talking about suffering in general, but not with writing. I love it. So I’ll just say this. Before my first book came out, um… I always — I’m gonna be vulnerable here in that I’m a little embarrassed by this — but I think that I thought… how am I not gonna get a big head having a book come out? I was worried that it would be a prideful thing or whatever. And then when my book actually came out, I realized, oh, that’s not the experience at all! The experience of having a book come out is not, “Look at me, I have this book coming out!” It’s getting… I am naked on a stage now. It’s this deeply humbling, vulnerable risk of putting yourself out there.

It doesn’t, to me anyway… I’m super super grateful for what I get to do. I’m grateful I get to write. *Liturgy of the Ordinary* has had a lot of success, and it allows me to eat and write at the same time, so I’m grateful. But it feels less like a… I don’t know. I know this analogy is so overused, and I’m gonna use it. And I feel like I can cause I’m the mother of 3 children. But it is more like birth, in like there’s this deep weakness you have to enter into and to literally open yourself up to bring this thing in the world. And just like with your children, you are well aware of the beauty of it more than other people, but you’re also well aware of the weakness of this thing that you’ve made. And so… that’s one thing.

I think just to continue — and I feel this a lot. I’m a columnist now for Christianity Today, so I sort of have to walk into this cultural spaces which are sometimes very heated, and put myself out there by saying something? It’s an absolute gift. I really do love it. But it always feels exposed to me. It always has a level of vulnerability. And there’s almost always — more so with my columns than my books — there’s this criticism that comes back.

I wouldn’t be the first person to point this out, but there’s a reality of suffering with writing. There’s the zone you get in when everything goes well and life is looking good, and you write and it comes and it’s beautiful. And we’re always hoping for that, but there’s lots and lots of times where that isn’t the case. So it’s constantly… I do think of creating anything as this embodiment of holding the already and not yet together? We are getting to participate in this beautiful gift of putting something out in the world. I mean, words themselves are this incredible gift that we get to… I get to write about these eternal things about God. It’s such a gift.

And yet… I think what I’m saying is there’s this vision of beauty, goodness, and truth. And we can see it in the distance, right? So we’re reaching for that reality — whether it’s a poem, or the kind of writing I do, or a story — we’re reaching for something that’s transcendent. Good, true, beautiful, dramatic, that says something true about humanity and God. But we also at the same time are experiencing the not yet. Because we never quite get there. Our reach always exceeds our grasp. There’s always a sense of… there’s thorns and thistles. I can’t… it’s like Leaf by… that Tolkien story…

**JR:** Leaf by Niggle?

**THW:** Yeah. But I think we never… at least, I’ve never gotten there and said this book is just as good as I’d like it to be, just as beautiful. So there’s always… I don’t know if “lament “is too strong of a word. I talk about this in the book, but I think our work itself will need to be redeemed. It’s fallen. We don’t create perfect things. And so… living in that tension is real. But then also the suffering of it’s a hard day. Writing’s going badly. I don’t feel like doing this. My kids are screaming downstairs. I can’t work like this! I think there’s suffering in that as well. Its’ just a part of the process.

**JR:** When you talk about your reach exceeding your grasp, would you say that has more to do with “I’ve got these big ideas I can’t put into words” or is it “I know there’s better ideas than the ones I”m thinking”?

**THW:** So for me, it’s both. I constantly feel like I wish I could know more, I wish I could read more, I wish I could get another degree. But also there’s I wish I could write better. I think it’s a good thing. I have a hunger to grow int he craft. But I also think, you know… I don’t know. This is a hard experience for me to articulate, but I feel like there’s a vision of beauty in writing and truth that I’m always reaching for but never quite getting at.

Some of that is I read other — have you ever read other folks where it’s so beautiful you think ah, this is just painful, cause I wanna write like this but I can’t! But like I said, there are those moments where I’ve been writing, and weeping while I’m writing, because I’m writing things I don’t know. There’s truth going on the page that I don’t have. There’s something happening there that’s outside of me. But there’s also a time — I think we’re always sort of longing for that, and there’s times where it’s not there, and so there’s the frustration of that I think.

I also just think… especially when I’m talking about the mysteries of God, there are things that are just beyond words, and there’s things that are not going to be able to be said. And I’m a first order lover of words. I think words are very powerful. But It think there is a reason the heavens go silent before the glory of God. There’s parts of glory that are unreachable.

This could be completely made up, I have no idea, but someone told me once that Japanese artists, like the ancient Japanese artists, would say that they intentionally put imperfection in their work, because nothing this side of heaven should be perfect, and I thought, well, that just seems like a good excuse for me to have imperfection in my work.

**JR:** (laughs)

**THW:** Cause I’ve never had to intentionally put imperfection in my work. That just happens naturally for me! It’s never been an intentional thing. And so… I like this book. It think it’s a good book. But if you give me this book six months from now and told me I could re-edit it, I would definitely do that.

**JR:** Sure.

**THW:** And six months later I would probably re-edit it again. Like, for me, my editor always has to take the book out of my clenched knuckles and say “time to let this thing go.” Because I can compulsively edit. I do think there’s sort of a desire… the book comes in a moment of time, and there’s always sort of more to say.

**JR:** Yeah. I read the audio books for my *Wilderking* stories, and those were, what, more than 10 years old when I read them, and it was just painful to read back through and resist the temptation to edit as I went along. And sometimes I did. I would change a sentence that was not right.

**THW:** I never read my work after it’s published.

**JR:** Really.

**THW:** I can’t do it. It’s too… yeah, I can’t do it. I really don’t. (laughs) I read it a thousand times before then, but then I don’t…

**JR:** That’s funny. I’ll go back a d read old things. I think my jokes are funny. I thought they were funny the first time.

**THW:** (laughs)

**JR:** (laughs) One thing that I’ve been thinking about is that is you’ve been talking about these ideas of your reach being beyond your grasp and coming to terms with your own limitations — which I guess is another way of saying your own vulnerabilities — as you come to grips with those limitations, you open yourself up to something that’s beyond your capability.

**THW:** Yeah.

**JR:** You do, early in your book you quote Madeleine L’Engle talking about the good work of art is more and better than the artist. And I believe that so strongly, and you’ve already touched o this. Your’e making something and writing, and you realize this is better than I can do.

**THW:** Yep, exactly.

**JR:** This is beyond me, and I”m [participating in am mystery that’s beyond me. And again, I think there’s so much about what your’e doing in this book that speaks to that. Whether you have the chapters on sleep, or… yeah, one of the clauses in the prayer is watch over those who sleep.

**THW:** Give your angels charge over those who sleep.

**JR:** There you go. Yeah. And the realization that as we sleep, we are opening ourselves up… we are acknowledging that part of what it means to be human is to let go of control, and that seems so important.

**THW:** Yeah, and it is interesting, and it part of the work of good writing. Someone interviewed me for a podcast recently, and we were talking about this question of how do we trust God when bad things are happening. And he said, you know… what was your answer? And I said I didn’t have an answer! And he said, well, how did you write the book? And I realized, oh no, when I write a book, I don’t have a question, sit down, totally come up with an answer, write it in outline form, decide what to say, then sit down and write the answer. I answer the question by writing the book. Like, part of the way I understand this book is it was a book — I didn’t want to write this book. I actually was sitting down to write a different book and ended up feeling like I had to write this book. And part of it for me was this was the question I was avoiding. What I was wrestling with was how to trust God.

It was a question I was using all kinds of things, from distraction to theology, to get around and not have to deal with it. So it really took me writing 70, 80,000 words on this, reading a ton on this, and taking these 70, 80,000 words and editing them and changing them down to about 40,000, then sending that to an editor, having them interact with it, get back to me with questions and changes… I had to go through that whole process to be able to… where I feel settled. To be able to learn to trust God again, honestly. And to be able to know truth I find’ know.

I really do think writers and other makers… It think with my hands. Madeleine L’Engle talked about this too. I don’t decide what to say then write it down. I find out what I think and believe by writing it down, if that makes sense.

**JR:** Yeah. And it is an act of faith to launch into a book when you’d on’t know what the answer to these questions are.

**THW:** Yes. Yes… it was torture! (laughs) They talk about sitting in front of the page and bleeding onto the page. It did feel like man, I just have to walk into all these questions. I knew the ultimate answer was Jesus, but you can’t just write Jesus, like the second grade Sunday school answer. (laughs) and that be it. And I didn’t wanna… what the kids call “Jesus juke” this? Where you just sort of avoid the question by making a shallow, pat answer? So I just had to go sort of in all of my confusion… that’s why I use this prayer. There’s a lot of reasons I used this prayer, but the ultimate reason is for me, it couldn’t be like — I was figuring this out. I was exploring this.

To explore this question, I needed an outside guide, which was this prayer, and I needed something that wasn’t just like… here’s a philosophical, cognitive, theological answer for the question theologians call theodicy — how can God be good and powerful and there be suffering and tragedy in the world? Because I already had that! I have a seminary degree. I’ve been ordained. I can answer this question. I needed a way into the emotional reality of this question, the pain that this question brings, and also the complexity of it. Like you talked about, bringing up how vulnerable joy itself is? I don’t think I would have gotten there on my own. I don’t think if I was just sitting in a room pontificating on my thoughts on suffering or human vulnerability I would have come to that. So it as really through having to do… I mean I basically meditated on this prayer for two years of my life, and it was through that meditation that I think my heart was able to know things and trust God in a way that I didn’t before.

**JR:** We weren’t actually recording when I talked about joy, but what I said before we started recording was that I was very interested in this insight, that on our list of human vulnerabilities, joy is one of those vulnerabilities. And as you said, it was this prayer that you didn’t write, that you were borrowing somebody else’s words, and that gave you… made it possible to have these insights that are your insights, right? I’m not discounting the fact that you had insights, but you gained insights because you were borrowing somebody else’s words and someone else’s structures.

**THW:** Yeah, absolutely. This insight is common. The insight comes from standing on the shoulders of others, and this was the shoulders I stood on. And this is partly — I mean, I joke about part of the reason I — I could only be an Anglican priest or pastor or nothing else is we get to cheat off the smart kids’ papers.

**JR:** (laughs)

**THW:** We get a crib sheet from all of those who’ve gone before us, so I don’t feel like I have to drum up profundity every week. I mean, there’s a sermon. But even if I bomb the sermon, you know, there’s this whole other structure around me. The gospel will be stated. It will be told. I get to cheat. I get to look over, on you said, the smart kid’s desk.

**JR:** We’re about to run out of time, but I really want to talk about — even if we do run out of time, I still wanna talk about this. And that’s the idea that you point out that so often we think, especially in Western Christianity — we think of prayer as self-expression. And sometimes it is. Sometimes we’re free styling it. But you make the point that self-expression is not the only or most important thing about prayer. So when we borrow the prayers of the ancients, that’s a helpful — you know, those habits that shape us, rather than our, somehow, drumming up profundity. But I’m also wondering, does that give us any clue about writing and creativity? Cause we do think of writing and creativity as self-expression, perhaps even more than we think of prayer as self-expression.

**THW:** That’s really interesting. I haven’t thought about that.

**JR:** Well Tish, if you’d read the questions I sent you ahead of time… (laughs)

**THW:** (laughs) But I told you I didn’t! I think um — I like that question a lot, so here’s what I’ll say. Of course there is a real element of self-expression in writing. And all communication, but that’s partly why writing is amazing, right? You can write down things you think and feel and give them to others. But there is a way that… so part of what I found in prayer is that -- because I still kind of freestyle pray, extemporaneously pray, self express in prayer, every day all the time. That’s a thing I commonly do. But having these prayers from others or receiving these prayers… from the ancient church particularly, but even from like Doug McKelvey, who was on here last time I was here. But entering into the prayers of the church is shaping us. It shapes us, so even when we go back into our self expression, it’s different.

**JR:** Oh, that’s great.

**THW:** Because we’ve been shaped by these things. So I do think there needs to be that exchange when we’re writing. This is why we read other people. This is why reading changes our writing. This is also why, I think — this is the part where I might be a little controversial — but I think that it’s very good to be a student of writing before we kind of stake our own claim as being a “writer.”

This is what I mean by that. I don’t mean we shouldn’t ever write until we get a PhD or an MFA. That’s not what I’m saying. But I think… I didn’t start writing until — and I wasn’t published, I didn’t have much of a writing career really until my 30s. I think there was some goodness in that. Eugene Peterson was in his 40s when he wrote his first book.

**JR:** Oh wow.

**THW:** Jesus, you know, it wasn’t until his 30s that he started his public ministry. I think there is wisdom — this doesn’t apply to Jesus. That wasn’t the best example.

**JR:** (laughs)

**THW:** But sort of… being a student and learning before we kind of go into the craft. I’m not meaning this linearly, because we learn about writing by writing, and I really do believe that. But it is something I worry about with blogging culture, and I’m sometimes a little skeptical of self-publishing because of this idea. That just sort of whenever when you’re ready to write you can put something out there. I think there is something really good in having… (pause) Here’s what I’ll say. Certainly before you do spiritual writing, before you have anything theological out there, it is very, very important that you have had the experience of writing something — I had this in seminary, which is why I think seminary can be a really good thing — of writing something that you deeply believe, turning it in, and someone in authority over you is saying, “This is not good enough,” or “You are wrong,” or “You didn’t support your point well. Go back and do it again.” Because it’s easy to think, oh, these are my precious, cherished beliefs and ideas! And so to have someone outside of you say it doesn’t matter that this is your deep self-expression. It’s not up to muster. Go back and do it. Having to have that humiliation of that, but also that practice of coming back in and reshaping things, is just so, so important.

It’s like Flannery O’Connor, right? They asked her do writing programs discourage too many young writers? And she said not nearly enough.

**JR:** (laughs) Yeah.

**THW:** There is this idea that we need to submit ourselves to others in this craft and be shaped by that. We have to be shaped by the input of others. And prayer… there’s a sense where of course, of course. My three year old daughter can pray, and her prayers deeply please Jesus, so I’m not saying we need some sophisticated way of praying. And yet the disciples come to Jesus and say “teach us to pray.” And he doesn’t say, you know, you can’t be taught. It’s self-expression. A three year old can do that.

**JR:** (laughs)

**THW:** There’s this sense that my daughter and I, even as an adult, can continue to grow in prayer. So just in writing, you know… I’m homeschooling this year, and my kids are writing every day, and that’s beautiful and good, but they certainly can grow in writing. Some of that is going to have to be able to learn from others who are further than you in the craft, to be shaped by others. To be shaped by things like, you know, here’s a structure. Write a sonnet, and it has to fit the structure. But also to be able to say you didn’t support your thought here well, or this is a weird analogy, or you didn’t use grammar correctly here. All of these outside rules are things that in some ways may get in the way of self-expression, but are also the things that shape us so when we do go into self-expression again, we can do that in a different way. Hopefully a deeper, better way that is formed by community and that’s formed by craft, that’s formed by a long history of community. So I think all of that applies to writing as well.

**JR:** Well, that’s great. All right. We’ve run out of time, but I still have to ask my traditional last question. Who are the writers who make you want to write, Tish?

**THW:** Yeah. Um… so I gave a really long list last time, so I’ll give a short list this time. It’s kind of the same people. Annie Dillard.

**JR:** Yep.

**THW:** C.S. Lewis.

**JR:** I’ve heard of him.

**THW:** (laughs) I know. He’s so predictable, but I do love him. I love memoir, so Mary Karr.

**JR:** Yeah…

**THW:** And um, Eugene Peterson. Those are some that make me wanna write. Mmhm.

**JR:** Yeah. I agree. Eugene Peterson makes me wanna write. Matter of fact, I went and wrote three middle grade novels after Eugene Peterson.

**THW:** Really?!

**JR:** Mmhm. His book *Leap Over a Wall* about the life of David actually, um… okay, it wasn’t reading the book. It was hearing the sermon series on which the book was based that made me go oh, these are great stories. I wonder what would happen if some of those stories happened in the swamp. And then I wrote the *Wilderking* stories.

**THW:** That’s cool. That’s very cool.

**JR:** All right, Tish Harrison Warren, as I said, I’m so glad that *Prayer in the Night* is in the world. And um… so thank you. And I hope everybody reads it.

(THEME MUSIC FADES UP)

**JR:** Like, literally everybody who can read.

**THW:** Thank you. Me too! (laughs)

**DREW MILLER:** This podcast is brought to you by The Rabbit Room, where art nourishes community and community nourishes art, and all our podcasts are made possible by the generous support of our members. To learn more about us, visit [rabbitroom.com](http://rabbitroom.com), and to become a member, [rabbitroom.com/donate](http://rabbitroom.com/donate).

Special thanks as well to Taylor Leonhardt for letting us use her song “Diamonds” as the theme music for Season 3 of The Habit Podcast. You can learn more about Taylor and follow her work at [taylorleonhardt.com](http://taylorleonhardt.com)

**JR:** The Habit Membership is a library of resources for writers by me, Jonathan Rogers. More importantly, The Habit is a hub of community where like-minded writers gather to discuss their work and give each other a little more courage. Find out more at [TheHabit.co](http://TheHabit.co).

(THEME MUSIC FADES OUT)

(ACOUSTIC GUITAR MUSIC FADES UP)

**DM:** This episode is brought to you by the Christian Standard Bible. Recently, I got a chance to sit down and talk with Russ Ramsey, a familiar face at The Rabbit Room, and pastor of the Cool Springs location of Christ Presbyterian here in Nashville. Here’s what he loves most about the CSB.

**RUSS RAMSEY:** I love the CSB translation of the Bible. I think it’s so beautiful to read and so easy to work with. It gives a text that is clear and understandable, that’s also suitable for public reading and sharabilty. It’s a great text for sharing passages of Scripture with others on social media and things like that, because it’s got this clarity and readability to it. It does a beautiful job of welcoming a reader to the language by not being difficult.

(MUSIC FADES OUT)

**DM:** To learn more about the Christian Standard Bible, visit [csbible.com](http://csbible.com).