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

**JONATHAN ROGERS, HOST:** Hey everybody, Jonathan Rogers here. Before we get started, I wanted to mention my new six week online creative writing course called Writing with Caspian. Together, we’ll read through Prince Caspian and figure out how C.S. Lewis works his particular kind of magic and how we can apply his principles and techniques to our own writing. It starts on February 2nd. You can find out more at thehabit.co/caspian

(ACOUSTIC GUITAR THEME MUSIC FADES UP)

**MATTHEW CLARK:** And if God has made a world that is intelligible, that he has invested beauty and goodness and truth into its fabric, then our call is to read into the reality of things and to be receptive of him speaking through beauty and goodness and truth.

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

(THEME MUSIC CONTINUES)

**JR:** Matthew Clark writes incredibly thoughtful and thought-provoking songs, then he sings them all over America as he tours the country in a tricked-out van he calls Vandalf the White. He’s also a podcaster. His podcast is One Thousand Words: Stories Along the Way. In each episode, he reads one of his carefully crafted essays about art and faith and beauty and imagination and, recently, apple pie. I commend this podcast to you.

(THEME MUSIC FADES OUT)

**JR:** Matthew Clark’s latest musical release is Beautiful Secret Life, a collection of 26 conversational songs about seeing the beauty in the ordinary. I commend that to you too.

Matthew Clark, thank you so much for being on The Habit Podcast!

**MC:** Yeah, thanks so much for having me! I’m excited to be here.

**JR:** So, can you give me a big picture of — it seems like your work is very diverse, right? You’ve got a podcast, and you make music, and you ride around in a tricked-out van that you call Vandalf the White.

**MC:** Yeah!

**JR:** And you write beautiful prose, by the way. Even though we think of you as a singer-songwriter, I just love the prose essays you write that become the basis of your podcast One Thousand Words.

**MC:** Yeah, thanks.

**JR:** So what’s the big picture here? What’s the over… what do you do?

**MC:** (laughs) I’m always kind of trying to figure that out myself, because I feel like it ends up going in a lot of different directions.

**JR:** Right.

**MC:** I think something that’s helped me connect a lot of that stuff is to imagine a sort of bulb underground, and then you have, that thing grows underground and splits off into branches, but everything has that central gift that it comes out of. Maybe there are different buds on the bush. But I think of hospitality as the bulb underground that sprouts up in different ways. So my personal — I guess you can call it a mission statement — is to make things that make room for people to meet Jesus. So, a thing could be anything. It could be a meal, it could be a conversation, it could be a song, it could be a podcast. That’s how those things connect back to making a space where people can meet each other, and they can hopefully meet Jesus.

**JR:** Uh huh. Well… tell me about your van, Vandalf the White. And how does that relate to your work and hospitality?

**MC:** Yeah, well… (laughs) Um, mainly it’s just hospitality to myself.

**JR:** (laughs)

**MC:** Haven’t you always just wanted to hang out in a van?

**JR:** Yes, actually!

**MC:** I thought so. Well, I got really into tiny houses a few years ago, really fascinated. You remember — I don’t know if you ever did this as a kid. Did you ever like build little forts and little like things you could crawl inside, kind of call spaces?

**JR:** Yeah!

**MC:** Well, it was kind of like that same feeling of being a kid. I grew up on 25 acres that was my dad’s family’s land that he eventually built a house on. And there were these old — because it had been a farm, it had these ridges. So it made these little ditches, but by now trees had grown up, and there were these ditches in the woods. And you could lay sticks on top of them and crawl underneath them, and sweep it out, set up a little piece of wood you found and make a little table. You could play underneath those. I always kind of loved those little spaces, so building a van was kind of like that childhood fort-building thing on steroids as an adult. I mean, all the capability and tools of adulthood, and you make an awesome fort in a van that you can take anywhere.

**JR:** (laughs) And before we started recording, I was asking how do you make sure you have the books you need when you’re riding all over the country in a van, and you said you’ve got a nice bookshelf in there.

**MC:** Yeah, well, part of the van too is if you’re traveling a lot, everything is always changing. And so I needed… the first couple of times I went on an extended tour it was really stressful. I felt so dislocated and disoriented. So I thought, I need to create a space that doesn’t change. And that space needs to be beautiful. It needs to be beautiful, and it needs to remind me what it’s like to be a human.

**JR:** Yeah.

**MC:** And I need to be able to get into that space no matter where I am and feel like a real person. And a bookshelf is one of those things! You know? Just having books around and beautiful things. So I built a bookshelf that holds maybe 60, 70 books.

**JR:** Do you sit in the van and write, or do you have to get out of the van and go somewhere else when you wanna do some writing?

**MC:** I actually do sit in the van and write pretty often. Unless it’s been just a long time since I’ve seen another human, then I will go to a coffee shop just to have people around.

**JR:** And so people can see you writing. That’s important.

**MC:** So they know that this is what I do.

**JR:** (laughs) That’s right. All right, well, I wanna — I started to say “I wanna start,” but we’ve already started. But the next question I wanna talk about is the idea that you’ve got this podcast called One Thousand Words in which you just read an essay and do a couple other things, but mostly you read an essay you’ve written and then you also post the essay. I think those are great, by the way. I love what you’re doing with that. But your most recent one, the one that was the end of season 2… it’s called “The Radiant.” Man, there was just so much to love in that little essay. I just wanna talk about some of the things you bring up there. Because you start with the idea of the contrast between the two wizards, and the bad wizard whose name is…

**MC:** Saruman.

**JR:** Saruman, thank you. And the good wizard whose name is Gandalf. And Saruman speaks dismissively of “white light.”

**MC:** Mmhm.

**JR:** Tell me about that. I guess he’s able to split light into its various colors…

**MC:** Right.

**JR:** And Gandalf is more committed to light in its complete form, that’s not split in colors. So, um… tell me about… let’s just talk about that.

**MC:** (laughs)

**JR:** What is, um… because you’re really talking about the difference between analysis and synthesis. That’s one of the things you’re talking about. I shouldn’t say that’s what you’re *really* talking about, but that’s one of the things I thought was interesting. That there’s a scientific approach to the world that dissects — and there’s certainly value in dissection. There’s no question about that. And there’s value in analysis, taking a part into it’s constituent parts and see how it works. But the work of the artist tends to be synthetic, bringing things together rather than taking them apart.

**MC:** Right. And well, so… Saruman is, you know, he’s a traitor, and he’s going over to the side of Sauron, and he’s sort of got to justify that. He’s gotta explain why his way is so — you know, smarty-pants.

**JR:** (laughs)

**MC:** Or smarty-robe. He might have pants on under there, I don’t know. But he says… his justification to Gandalf is Gandalf is missing the potential. Gandalf is seeing the whole, and he’s saying but you can break these things apart and they can be much more useful to us. But the analogy is light, and he says white light is just a starting point. You can break it apart and then… so much of Tolkien’s writing is about the idea of possession and possession becomes appropriation, being able to use things however we want to rather than seeing things — seeing the world, seeing that it’s a gift that’s been given that we pay attention to and honor — and then we recognize it as an invitation God has given to participate in reality. But most of the modern imagination sees the world as just mere material. It’s been reduced to mere material that can just be used however you want to use it. You don’t have to respect it or see anymore meaning or glory in it. Gandalf says, “He who breaks a thing in order to understand it has left the path of wisdom.”

**JR:** Yeah. Wow. Um… another recurring theme, I guess, in Tolkien — or sometimes I can’t remember what’s in Narnia and what’s in Middle Earth — but the idea of taking — this is Lord of the Rings where it talks about taking away things you can’t give back, right? When you take a life, we can’t give life, so to take a life is to take away something that we don’t have the power to give back. Which I think is another really helpful insight, or a helpful guide to what we can do and what we ought not do.

**MC:** Yeah, and that’s a scary conversation to get into. Because you can get into kind of… people talking about is the God of the Old Testament different from the God of the New Testament? One of the things a mentor of mine said was that it’s very different… God’s position is very different because he can give life back. He’s not taking something he doesn’t have ht power to return to someone.

**JR:** One things that came up in that essay was a reference to an older essay from the previous season.

**MC:** Yep.

**JR:** In which you talk about an etymology I wasn’t familiar with, the connection between the diabolical and the symbolical. The idea that the symbolic is about bringing things together, and maybe I think it might also be fair to say pointing out connections that we have forgotten or that we didn’t realize were there between things. Things that rhyme in the world, so to speak. And diabolic, of course… in one regard, “diabolical” derives from the word for devil, but as you — now I can’t remember where you got this insight from — that word, the “diabolos” comes from the idea that if the symbolic brings things together, the diabolic breaks things apart.

**MC:** Right, right. We’re so used to associating that word with “devil” — which it is associated with a specific being — but the word literally means to divide, to put asunder. You an hear it in the “di-“ part right? It means to separate or cut into pieces. And “sym—“ like “synthesis,” means to bring together. Which also, I love the words re-member and dis-member. You could use those words: dismember for diabolic and remember for symbolic might be helpful.

**JR:** Yeah.

**MC:** We’ve been dis-membered from so much. We’ve been cut off from so much. And part of the work God has been doing is to rejoin those things, is to bring us back to himself and all that he’s about.

**JR:** And so the work of the writer, the work of the artist, is hopefully to participate in that, right?

**MC:** Right, right. And to pay attention to discover those connections that are there. And that goes back to Saruman splitting the light. Rather than doing that, we wanna do what Gandalf does, and we wanna pay attention to those rhymes in the world. We wanna pay attention to the way that God has woven reality together, and we wanna pick up on those patterns and bring them out in the work that we do.

**JR:** Yeah, and I think in doing that, in participating in that regathering, so much of it is a matter of reminding people and saying for them things they didn’t know to say, but when they hear them they say, “Oh yes, that’s right.”

**MC:** Ah, that’s one of the best feelings! That’s one of my favorite things about reading Lewis, when he says something that you hadn’t thought of but it just locks into place. It like clicks, and you’re like oh, I should’ve known that!

**JR:** So how do you — this may be too hard of a question to spring on somebody, but how do you do that? It’s really cool when you see it, and we admire when we see other people do it for us, make those connections we didn’t know were there, but in practical terms, any ideas for how we do that? How we remind… (pause) I mean, the point is these are things that have been forgotten. How do you remember things that have been forgotten?

**MC:** Yeah, well… that is hard. But I think going back to *Only the Lover Sings* — it’s a Josef Pieper book — I think one of the things he says is we have to develop a habit of contemplation. And contemplation has the word temple in it. It means to go in the temple and to attend to the god of the temple. And so, it’s… and he talks about how leisure is not a negative term. It’s not just a term that means the absence of work. Leisure is a proactive, substantial term that means to show up and to actively attend to, behold God. And he says art making is actually a form of contemplation. When you make art… the portrait artist has to look at — who has to look closest at a face? Somebody that’s gonna paint a face! So the artist has to really pay attention.

If contemplation is that… maybe I could link that to something that D.C. Schindler said. There’s a great book called *Love and the Postmodern Predicament* by D.C. Schindler.

**JR:** I don’t know that book.

**MC:** Oh, it’s so good! Most books I learn about from Ken Myers on Mars Hill Audio Journal. He’s kind of my book list provider. But he made a point to say that intelligence is not something you have or don’t have. Intelligence is a practice.

**JR:** Yes.

**MC:** And the word means — “intus” means what it sounds like. It means into. And “legere” is where we get legibility from. So “legere” means to read. So “intus-leger” means to read into the reality of things. So intelligence, in other words, is similar to contemplation, similar to beholding, similar to looking closely and paying attention. And if God has made a world that is intelligible, that he has invested beauty and goodness and truth in its very fabric, in the very being of the world, then our call is to read into the reality of things, to practice contemplation and to look closely at it, and to be receptive of him speaking through beauty and goodness and truth.

**JR:** Yeah, that’s so good. Mostly, in so many ways the writer and artist’s job is to slow down and pay attention to things that the rest of us are too busy to pay attention to.

**MC:** Right.

**JR:** Right? It’s not that, you know — it’s not that the artist has necessarily a special vision that nobody else can see. Although sometimes when you see what some people write you think that person has a special vision that I could have sat there a long time and never see that. But it is so much a matter of slowing down and saying I’m gonna slow down for people who aren’t slowing down. Who maybe can’t slow down, depending on their situation.

But as you said… I love what you’re saying about the idea of intellect… the angels are intellectual beings as distinct from rational beings, if I have my ancient philosophy sorted out. But they know by — they look and see what is intelligible. Whereas human knowledge sometimes has to — one thing human beings can do is reason things out. And we’ve come to associate intelligence with reason, whereas you said in its original sense, intellectual knowledge was just seeing what’s true. And the reality is it’s something that’s outside us, not something we cook up inside our brains.

**MC:** Yeah, that’s so good. Jeremy Begbie talks about the romantics in a book called *Resounding the Truth*. And Begbie is a musician, and he became a believer, and he became a theologian, and he’s a teacher. He was actually one of Malcolm’s professors, I think.

**JR:** Malcolm Guite?

**MC:** Yeah. When he did his doctorate. Yeah, he was talking about the romantics, and he said once you had the Enlightenment, which reduced everything to materialism and got rid of God, then the Romantics came in and they just couldn’t shake the feeling there was something wrong with that.

**JR:** (laughs)

**MC:** So how do you put meaning back into the world? The Romantics took it upon themselves to sort of impose meaning on the meaningless nature. And that’s where we get the idea of originality. Because you have to become the origin of meaning for the world. That is not really what originality means. What originality means is to return to your origin.  
  
**JR:** That’s great.

**MC:** So it’s contemplation. Or to be re-membered to God is what the artist is actually called to. To pay that kind of attention, to listen.

**JR:** That’s great. It’s so important to remember that it’s not our job to make meaning.

**MC:** Yes. And that’s a huge relief too!

**JR:** Right!

**MC:** At least, it’s a relief to me.

**JR:** I’m glad you brought up Josef Pieper and *Only the Lover Sings*. I love that book. And I wanted to talk about a few ideas that I think are really relevant to the things you’ve been talking about. Again, I think we’re just gonna be in this, one or two quotations that I wanna trot out from Pieper. I think this is just a way of rearticulating some things you’ve already been touching on. And I wanna hear you react to this, since I know that you’re such a fan of this book Only the Lover Sings.

Pieper says, “One of the fundamental human experiences is the realization that the truly great and uplifting things in life come about perhaps not without our efforts, but nevertheless not through those efforts. Rather we will attain them only if we can accept them as free gifts.”

**MC:** Yeahhh.

**JR:** The best things in life… it’s not that our effort is completely irrelevant, but on the other hand, if we’re not receiving them as free gifts, we’re not really gonna get them with our own efforts.

**MC:** Right… somebody said that — I wish I could remember where it came from. But somebody talked about the whole world being a kind of proposal.

**JR:** Wow.

**MC:** That the job of humanity is to accept the proposal.

**JR:** Oh wow. (laughs) I love it.

**MC:** Kinda like the world is God holding out a bouquet and a ring on one knee. And I love that idea of… well, it might have been Schmemann, Alexander Schmemann in *For the Life of the World*. He talks about man is a hungry being, and God offers the world. And our job is to basically just affirm, to say I’m in. It is so good. I agree with you Lord. And our position is really to stand before this incredibly gracious, generous proposal and just say, yeah! I love you too!

**JR:** I love it.

**MC:** Yeah. But yeah, we’re in a position of response though. So we do participate in that we’re not overwhelmed in other words. God does not just knock us down. He knocks on the door, but he doesn’t break down the door. We have to kind of reach for the knob and welcome him. Which is such a bizarre thing! That we’re in a position to show hospitality to God.

**JR:** That’s wild, isn’t it?

**MC:** Or he puts himself in a position of vulnerability. That’s not necessarily his situation, but he chooses to make himself vulnerable, and we can welcome him and love him in return… or not.

**JR:** How does that… this is a podcast about writing. Not just a theological podcast. So the things we’re talking about here, what do they have to do with writing and art making?

**MC:** Nothing!

**JR:** Okay!

**MC:** (laughs) I think that sometimes when I’m trying to write a song for instance, I get in this unhelpful place where I’m trying to force this thing. I’m demanding that the songs show up, and demanding that the words do what I want them to do or ht music does what I want it to do. And that just doesn’t work! There’s something about life and personhood and the — I love the phrase you use, “the world God has made” — that does not respond well to demandingness, to force and pressure, but responds well to care and patience. So I’ve found that sometimes when I get to that place where a song is not cooperating because I’m being a jerk about it —

**JR:** (laughs)

**MC:** I need to back off and say maybe I’m trying to make this story do something that it doesn’t really do, and I haven’t taken the time to get to know the story well enough, or the characters, I haven’t gotten to know them well enough to let them actually be who they are.

**JR:** Yeah. Yeah.

**MC:** There was a great documentary… I think it’s called Rivers and Tides? Rivers and Tides. There’s a sculptor — and I’m not thinking of his name right now. He’s a Scottish sculptor. And it’s this very quiet, wonderful documentary. I think it was made in the early 2000s. But he’s stacking these stones. He’s making this egg-shaped sculpture on the beach. He goes out into nature and he makes these — just from found items — he makes these sculptures. And he stacks these stones, and they’re balanced, and they fall down. Then he stacks them again, and they’re balanced, and they fall down. And he goes through this four or five times, and the thing keeps falling apart. And then by the end of the day he finally gets it, and he says “I feel like I’m just getting to know these stones.” I’m just getting to understand how they work, but it’s taken me all day to stack something that doesn’t fall apart. That same kind fo attentiveness and care comes into play in the creative process.

**JR:** Yeah. Another thing that Pieper talks about that’s related to all this — related to the general tone of things we’ve been talking about — is the role of remembering in art making and in what w present to our reader or our audience or whatever. And so the… (pause) Again, you mentioned originality, or the Romantic notion of originality, that it’s created inside my head somewhere and I present it to the world.

**MC:** Right.

**JR:** Whereas I think a very freeing way of thinking about these things is to say my job is to remember and help people remember something that we’ve forgotten. I love — Marilynne Robinson, I heard her give a talk recently, and she said one way she knows what to write about is she looks for things that are simultaneously beautiful and forgotten, or beautiful and — what was it she said? Beautiful and unacknowledged.

**MC:** Yeah!

**JR:** You know? And I really think that’s a very different thing from saying I’ve gotta wrack my brain to think of something that’s original or nobody’s ever thought before in the history of the world…

**MC:** (laughs)

**JR:** But rather, I’m going to remember… and as we write, as we make art, we’re not necessarily — we’re probably not presenting things that everybody already knows and remembers, right? It’s things that they’ve forgotten. It feels fresh not because nobody’s ever said this or thought it before, but because we’ve forgotten. And I also think this is relevant to where you started with hospitality, to invite people into a remembering. That seems like a helpful way to think about the artist’s work to me.

**MC:** Yeah… well it makes me think of how the way a human is made is you come into the world and then you pop up — ideally, right? — you pop up into the middle of a context, right? You’re contextualized. You’re embraced by a mom and dad, and maybe some sib ling s and some extended family, and you’ve got this immediately from the get-go, your’e sort of swaddled by other people. And if we’re made in the image of the trinity, that makes sense, that we understand ourselves in relationship to other people.

A friend of mine pointed out that God reveals himself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In order to be a father, you have to have a son. In order to be a son, you have to have a father. So even the members of the Trinity are sort of communicated and named relationally, with relationship to one another. And so art as a kind of hospitality and a kind fo remembering… I think one of the things it can do is help recontextualize us. It can bring us back into contact with other people and help relocate us. Because I think we’re very dislocated people. I think in our society we’re so terrified because we’re just in this kind of free fall, and there’s no context, there’s no story. All of that has been kind of thrown out. But to be brought back in front of a face, and to look into a face, and see someone seeing you is such a gift. And I think art can help create those kind of opportunities for people.

**JR:** Yeah, it says to the reader, to the audience, you thought you were alone, but it turns out you’re not. It turns out you were part of a family and a context. And being born into a family and a context also means that we can know things we never knew we knew. And we can be reminded of things we didn’t know we’d forgotten. And we can also forget things that we never actively knew, right?

I remember once I went to visit a great uncle that I’d never met before. He lived off somewhere. And when he asked the blessing, it was the same blessing that my father asked. This man I’d never laid eyes on before, and he asked the same blessing that my father — and he got it from the same place! But there was something awakening about that. It felt like a connection to somebody I didn’t know I was connected with.

**MC:** Oh, that’s so sweet. That reminds me of Theoden when he’s dying — in the movie at least — and he says I know your face. I know your face. When Eowyn is bending over him. But to recognize something of your life in somebody else’s life… that’s beautiful.

**JR:** Yeah. And you know, also this idea of being born into a family. You know, what teenager has… I think every teenager at some point says “I didn’t ask to be born!” As a sort of reproach to their family. But that’s also one of the great theological insights that you can have! I didn’t ask to be born! This whole thing’s a gift.

**MC:** Yeah.

**JR:** And to give an account of that, right? To give an account of the giftedness of the world that we’ve found ourselves in. If you can do that as a writer as a songwriter, as an artist… that’s a pretty high calling. And we don’t need originality.

**MC:** Well, and it takes me back to something that Chesterton said about gratitude being the highest form of thought.

**JR:** Yeah.

**MC:** If gratitude is the highest form of thought, then art making is also this practice that always leads us back to a kind of gratitude. We’re recognizing God’s presence and the giftedness of things, and we’re responding to that. I was thinking about this the other day because I was writing a song about the phrase “how long.” How long, O Lord? I’ve been reading Eugene Peterson’s book on Revelation. But even if you’re lamenting, there’s a weird undercurrent of gratitude and acknowledgement even in that, because “how long” is a kind of prayer that has faith in it. I wouldn’t be asking this if I didn’t think you were listening or it didn’t matter to you or you couldn’t do anything about it. I’m asking you this question Lord in faith, and even in gratitude, because I think that your’e gonna show up some how and it’ll be the right way.

**JR:** Yeah. That’s so good. Alright man, we’re about to run out of time. I can’t believe this has gone by so fast. So I gotta ask you… who are the writers who make you want to write?

**MC:** Oh, well… I’m gonna say the obvious stuff, of course. I go back to Tolkien again and again and again, but I just grew up on Tolkien. My mom read to me before I could read to myself, and I kept going.

**JR:** Did she read The Lord of the Rings or just The Hobbit when you couldn’t read?

**MC:** She read The Hobbit, and she started reading The Lord of the Rings, and then I got old enough that I picked it up and kept going. And then I love Amy Lee’s writing. Do you know Amy Lee?

**JR:** Yeah. Colorado person?

**MC:** Colorado person. Anselm person. She’s written a few… she writes for The Cultivating Project that I also write for. And Lancia, who runs The Cultivating Project, is someone that just through her encouragement, she’s someone who’s just really spoken into me and helped me believe I really could write.

**JR:** Yeah. I need to get Lancia on this podcast.

**MC:** Yeah, that would be fun. And then Malcolm has made a huge difference. Especially with regard to poetry, because I had some traumatizing poetry experiences with mean poetry teachers in college…

**JR:** (laughs)

**MC:** …who made me really terrified. He broke through that for me and helped me come back around to it.

**JR:** Can you put your finger specifically on how he made you feel better about the world of poetry?

**MC:** (laughs) well yeah, there’s a funny story. We were out at Laity Lodge at a retreat and he was speaking. And he was about to speak on Theseus’ speech in… um…

**JR:** Midsummer Night’s Dream?

**MC:** Midsummer Night’s Dream, about how imagination bodies forth. And he was gonna talk about Seamus Heaney’s rain stick poem. But anyway, before he started any of that he said look, I’m an Anglican priest, and part of my job back home in the diocese is I’m on the spiritual warfare… team… or whatever it’s called. It has an official name. And he said so, you know, we hav etc learn these prayers of exorcism and stuff like that. And everybody in the room was like, okay… what’s going on?

**JR:** (laughs)

**MC:** And he says, I wanna pray a prayer of exorcism for us before we start talking about poetry, because I know that almost everybody in this room has the little haunting voice of the terrible, mean English teacher.

**JR:** Really!

**MC:** And he said, I wanna pray that the Lord would cast out that discouraging voice that makes you feel that poetry is something you’re not good enough to participate in.

**JR:** Wow!

**MC:** Because it’s such a gift, and words are such a gift, and somebody has tried to diabolically cut you off, put you asunder from these good things. And so he literally prayed a prayer of exorcism for anything that was holding us back.

**JR:** Really!

**MC:** Yeah! But what was amazing about it… I thought okay, this is kind of weird, maybe kind of funny. But as he was praying, I started crying. I kind of broke down. And I was not expecting that. And I realized that I had all this fear and baggage that was built up, and I really wasn’t all that aware of it. And the Lord started working on that with me, and kind of breaking through a lot of that.

**JR:** That was not the answer I was expecting to my question.

**MC:** Isn’t that wild? (laughs)

(THEME MUSIC FADES UP)

**JR:** That’s great. I love it! Well, Matthew Clark, thank you so much. This has been great. Let’s talk again soon.

**MC:** Yeah! I loved it. Thanks so much.

**DM:** 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 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).