

JEN HATMAKER

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About Jen Hatmaker

If there's anyone with the mix of guts and vulnerability needed to peddle grace as today's ultimate commodity, it's Jen Hatmaker.

Hatmaker's anticipated new book *For the Love: Fighting for Grace in a World of Impossible Standards* is a visionary, relatable tour-de-force in which the bestselling author writes about grace like she lives it: passionately, hilariously, and exceedingly well.

"In a world already plagued with so much sorrow, injustice, loss, and pain, we don't need to inflict any more," Hatmaker says from her home in Austin, Texas. "We need to become a people who are for each other--and not just for people who are like us. But for everyone."

The writer behind bestselling titles *7: An Experimental Mutiny Against Excess* and *Interrupted: When Jesus Wrecks Your Comfortable Christianity*, Hatmaker has a robust history of proclaiming countercultural truths with wit, wisdom, and an irrepressible love for people and God. Her messages resonate powerfully with women across the country that recognize her as an advocate, leader, and friend.

Through her total of 11 books, hugely popular blog, HGTV hit "My Big Family Renovation" and recent pilot "Your Big Family Renovation," speaking at high-profile conferences and more, Hatmaker is calling for a restoration of community, forgiveness, and love--and empowering her audience to do the same. Her following spans platforms and continues to grow: she reaches between two and three million people every month through Facebook alone.

Hatmaker never dreamed she'd routinely influence millions when she sat down to write her first book 10 years ago. On a borrowed laptop during precious spurts of downtime when her oldest babies were just one, three, and five years old, she hammered out a manuscript and took it to a conference. There she received numerous offers to publish her debut. "Now that I know how unlikely and hard it is to get published and to find somebody to listen to your unpublished words, I am 10 times as grateful today as I was then," she reflects.

Born in Kansas to a father in Christian ministry and a mother in education, Hatmaker comes from a tightknit, jovial clan --"We thought all families were loud and sarcastic," she says, laughing. The family moved often due to her dad's work spending time in Texas, Arkansas, and Louisiana before moving back to Kansas for her high school years.

She attended Oklahoma Baptist University where she met Brandon Hatmaker. "We got married in college. It was 1993, halfway through my sophomore year--he was a senior. We were just the two dumbest kids that have ever walked on the planet," Hatmaker says dryly. "But it worked out! We've been married 21 years." Brandon is a pastor and self-proclaimed "huge fan of the underdog," and the two make a dynamic team. Together they parent five children--three biological kids and two adopted from Ethiopia. In 2008, the couple established Austin New Church that serves and loves the decidedly secular Live Music Capital of the World in myriad ways.

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Hatmaker's latest project, *For the Love*, was born out of a desire to address her readers holistically. "It was so liberating to write," she says. "My readers and I are all over the place. We're moms and wives and professionals and we're juggling church and service. We care about the world, but we also care about dinner. I'm just hoping that *For the Love* is nourishing to my reader in every way that she needs it to be."

In Hatmaker's world, topics like fashion faux pas and global community ethics are discussed seamlessly. *For the Love* mirrors that freewheeling flow of conversation and thought, and the result is a delightful patchwork of a book that exudes immediacy and relevance. "Sometimes I just want to laugh," Hatmaker says. "Sometimes I want to be moved. Sometimes I want to be challenged. Sometimes I just want to be entertained. And sometimes, I want someone to come alongside me and say, 'I'm in this with you. You're not alone.'"

And that is precisely what *For the Love* accomplishes so beautifully: it is uniquely and conveniently all-encompassing. Hilarious but thoughtful; a nourishing break but unflinchingly real; thank-you notes inspired by Jimmy Fallon ("Thank you, Autocorrect, for making me appear simultaneously like an English professor and a perverted gangster."), mouth-watering recipes and strong theology ("If it isn't also true for a poor single Christian mom in Haiti, it isn't true.") all rolled inimitably together.

As *For the Love* tackles complex issues with intellect, humor, and heart, Hatmaker emerges as a firm but gentle encourager, pushing women to laugh, love, and live. Through her rotating lens, it becomes clear that in the quest for better lives and a better world, people—imperfect, messy, and maligned—are the answer.

And that, in turn, calls for grace.

"I think part of my role in my time and place is to help lead our tribe to be healers instead of hurters," Hatmaker says. "And I think we can do it. I think we are doing it amid fundamental differences—even monumental ones. I don't believe unanimity is a prerequisite to community at all. So much of the message of *For the Love* is this: Let's really give this grace thing a try."

According to Hatmaker, giving grace a try isn't just a good idea. It's a responsibility. "Here we are," Hatmaker says. "Our generation is the most educated, resourced, advantaged group of women on earth. Surely we can leave a legacy that says we did right by all we were given."