

RAINBOW GOD

The Seven Colors of Love

Johnny & Elizabeth Enlow

Rainbow God: The Seven Colors of Love Book
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RAINBOW GOD

The Seven Colors of Love

This book is dedicated to our lineage.
May we honor those we love who have gone before us
and those who will come after us
with the ways we have discovered and communicated the God
we have come to know.
May our children and their children know the real Him
in ever-increasing ways,
until the truth of how good He is floods the whole earth.

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THE SEVEN COLORS OF LOVE

Introduction—Questions That Must Be Answered.....	13
Chapter 1 Rainbow God	19
Chapter 2 The Seven Colors of Love.....	35
Chapter 3 PAPA: The Color of Strength	49
The Solution For Our Families	
Chapter 4 REDEEMER: The Color of Honor	73
The Solution For Our Religions	
Chapter 5 KING: The Color of Power.....	103
The Solution For Our Governments	
Chapter 6 COMMUNICATOR: The Color of Blessing.....	121
The Solution For Our Media	
Chapter 7 TEACHER: The Color of Wisdom	145
The Solution For Our Education Systems	
Chapter 8 PROVIDER: The Color of Riches	173
The Solution For Our Economic Systems	
Chapter 9 CREATOR: The Color of Glory	191
The Solution For Our Arts & Entertainment	
Chapter 10 What Does <u>Love</u> Look Like Coming Out of <u>You</u> ?	213
Quick Reference Chart	230

Dear Reader,

We'd like to share a few helpful things with you to keep in mind as you are reading.

1. It's highly likely that you've never read a book written by a husband and wife quite like this one. Just like any husband and wife, we see things and express what we see differently. It is our hope that as you read, you will not be distracted by the back and forth style of our communication or worry too much over who is saying what, but that you would experience our thoughts as a seamless teaching and dialogue on the vast subject of God. In order to bring some differentiation, we have put a simple strategy in place. **Johnny's words are typed in a regular font and Elizabeth's words are italicized.**
2. Our goal in writing this book was simple: to expand the reader's perspective of who they think God is. If you are not open and hungry spiritually to learn more about God, then you may not get much out of this book and we apologize in advance.
3. If you are finding yourself at a time in life where you want to understand new things about yourself and God, then get ready to go on a thought provoking journey where you are sure to have genuine encounters with God throughout the pages of this book.
4. We consider ourselves to be Christians who are spiritual, but not religious (which we will explain later in the book). Because we don't want the book to feel religious, rather than put scripture references in our dialogue, we have put them in footnotes. We have also used footnotes to go into a little more depth on subjects that only a few may really be interested in.

5. Some of you may prefer to read a book with more stories and less teaching than this one. If it is more difficult for you to pay attention, you may consider reading only a few pages a day, in order to break it up and be able to better absorb it. Because our desire is to present what may become a fresh perspective and a new mentality about God, we attempted to be repetitive in order to help learners of all types. Remember that repetition is required in order for us to really own a concept as our personal conviction. Read all the way through—you'll be glad you did!
6. There are several times in the book where we encourage you as the reader to put the book down and process something in a more personal way with God. That may sound a bit silly, but we encourage you to approach this book as a potentially life changing encounter with God. So look out for those opportunities and consider taking the challenge in the moment. Who knows, it might just lead you to having a story of your own to tell!
7. Pay close attention to the subtitles in each chapter as you read. They aren't just there to break up the pages into smaller sections, but are a helpful guide to an overall format we are using throughout the entire book. The subtitles will navigate you through an intentional template in gaining a fresh view of yourself and of God.
8. If you want to get the most out of this, then read it slowly and plan on taking awhile to go through it. It will actually shift you into a new mentality not only about God, but about every area of life, which takes time and thoughtful personal processing. There are a couple of ways you can read the book: the usual way, one chapter at a time, or in segments as a 90 day devotional. You would simply read the intro and then one subtitled section a day.
9. At the back of the book you will find a Quick Reference Chart that simplifies the overall template of each aspect of God as Love and how His love is displayed in each area of culture. We included it

knowing that it will especially mean something to you by the end of the book.

However you ended up with this book in your hands, we pray God Himself—nothing less and nothing more—will meet with you in just the way that you can receive it. Above all else, may you gain an increased perspective of How good He is and how much He loves you. Thank you for taking your time to read this book. We are truly honored to have the opportunity to speak into this season of your relationship with your God.

Johnny and Elizabeth

Introduction—Questions That Must Be Answered

GOD. no Matter what you were taught, or not taught about who or what He is, we all have questions about Him.

Who is He? What is He? If He exists, is He good? Should He be trusted? How involved is He in my life? And if He is involved, what in the world is He thinking? Where was He when...? Where is He now? Does He care about me? Does He really care about all the suffering in the world?

Do I matter? Am I important? Is surviving this life all there is? Will I ever feel truly loved? Will I ever feel something other than pain, emptiness, and loneliness?

No matter what your official religion or belief status is, how you answer these questions is, in fact, the most important thing about **you**.¹ Even if you believe there is no God, it is still the most important thing about you. Who you become and what your life produces will be directly connected to your perspective of God. If you have seen Him as less powerful than He is, it will have a great affect on you. If you have seen Him to be less good than He really is, it will greatly affect you. If you have seen Him to be less relevant to life than He really is, then the adverse effects on your life will be equally as profound.

What if the whole point of life is to discover the answers to these questions? Are you willing to take the risk of disappointment and fear of dealing with the pain that is behind the hard questions? Although we were both raised in Christian families and grew up in Christian churches, we went through enough heartache in life to begin asking those hard questions early on. Pain

1 One of A.W. Tozer's best-known quotes is: "What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us." From *The Knowledge of the Holy*, p. 1, ©1961 by A.W. Tozer, Harper SanFrancisco.

has a way of doing that to you — either forcing the issue to the surface or burying it deep enough to ignore.

Are you ready to explore a God who is so much more than most of us have imagined or been told that it jolts you into a new way of experiencing life? Our perspectives of who God is and what He is like are most often formulated by our upbringing and then our reaction to our upbringing. If our childhood left us with happy memories, along with instruction about who God is, then we generally are able to hold on to perspectives of a good God and continue to live out a relationship with Him. On the other hand, if our early experiences in life were fraught with trauma and family fractures, we often find our beliefs about God have deteriorated. We see Him as either nonexistent or someone who can't be trusted. There are obviously innumerable perspectives on who God is and what He is like, but the one that matters most is **yours**.

In recent years, much deserved attention has come to our need to find the reason we are here, our purpose. Pastor Rick Warren's excellent book *The Purpose Driven Life* has been widely received and read by many who are not Christians. It has helped our generation deal with questions like, "What am I here for? What is my purpose and how do I fulfill it?" Ultimately everyone wants to know their purpose in life. Our personal journeys have brought us to the realization that we were made by God and for Him. We have also realized that even though settling these questions of our purpose are vital for a meaningful existence, the answers cannot be discovered or understood without an expanded perspective of who God is.

An expanded perspective of God becomes a life changer for anyone who has experienced it. Though we don't by any means claim to have a full perspective of God ourselves, we do claim to have grown greatly in our own personal perceptions of who He is. This growth has been revolutionary in our own lives, as well as for those we have the privilege of interacting with. For us, every time our individual perspectives of God have expanded, it has resulted in drastic changes

in our quality of life and a greater understanding of our purpose in life, individually and as a couple.

The God each of us sees is the God we show others. As your view of Him expands, you then give others the opportunity to see God in new ways. You could show someone else the expanded view of God that you wish you had been introduced to.

I grew up in as wonderful a home as any I have heard of. My parents were God-loving people who served the Lord as pastors and missionaries. God was the priority of our household and of the way we lived. The church movement we were a part of was radical in its expression and devotion to God. We were taught that God was to be prioritized in every way possible, and not just on Sunday mornings. He was to be prioritized in how we dressed, in how we interacted with the opposite sex, in how intensely we sang in worship in the multiple church services we had to attend every week. He was to be thought of in every word we spoke and in every attitude we expressed. God was everywhere at all times, and He could see and hear everything we were doing. Therefore it behooved us to not do or say anything that might displease Him.

Though I brought many acceptable perspectives of God into my adulthood, there were also many unacceptable ones that came from my childhood—perspectives that I no longer carry and that have changed my life because what I think about God is the most important thing about *me*. The God I grew up with was a good God—theoretically. But in reality, He seemed also pretty much a stern principal who was always looking over my shoulder, ready to chide me for any ungodly action, thought, or deed. The God I grew up with did not love most things about this world or this life. He despised sports and entertainment because they kept stealing people’s attention from Himself. The fact that boys would notice pretty girls was tremendously distasteful to Him, and definitely not holy. The God I knew cared very little for anything here on earth, including the earth itself. It would all burn up one day, and that day could be any day now.

The God I grew up with couldn't care less whether the planet was contaminated or not. He did not like the fact that girls played with dolls and dressed up. He was annoyed by boys and all of their rambunctiousness. My family's God thought children did not need toys or entertainment of any sort. He was decidedly serious. Anything that was not about going to church or reading the Bible or praying was just so beneath Him that He could barely stand it. I grew up perceiving that the only time I was really pleasing Him was when I was in church. Furthermore, that was really the only subject we could even talk about. God did not like to talk about anything that was not religious. I loved playing soccer, but didn't dare talk to Him about that. I mainly just hoped He could ignore me and tolerate it while I played and thought about soccer. I had friends, passions, and desires, but they were not to be brought to God. My "growing up God" was pretty much a one-tone, one-color, single-interest God who loved me—but barely, because I was so darn human, earthly, and distracted by "earthly" things.

We have had the privilege of traveling all over the world and of being exposed to multiple cultures. In much the same way that the culture of our childhood homes contributes to the way we perceive God, we have observed that every nation's culture also has a tremendous influence on how God is perceived by people of that nation. Every culture, or way of "doing" life, whether individually or as societies, contributes to the perception (usually a distortion) of who God is.

By and large, the trend seems to be the projection of a God who is very limited in His ability to identify with us—a God who is very stiff, uncreative, rigid, boring, demanding, religious, and ultimately hard to interact with. These perceptions lead us to a host of questions regarding His power and goodness. If He is so powerful and so good, just why are we in such a mess? Why are there millions of AIDS orphans? Why are there so many starving? Why are there so many in forced sexual slavery? Why is there so much violence, sickness, and death? Everything seems to suggest a God who either doesn't exist,

or worse, isn't good. If He exists and is good, surely His world would not be so out of control.

If we have not wrestled with and answered these questions correctly, we bring to our cultures solutions born in the hearts of those with orphan mentalities. We solve the world's problems the best we can from our wounded hearts and ways, which will never be God's heart for us. When we live from hearts that deep down feel abandoned by God, we will only produce a culture in our homes and in our nations that reflects the God we see. We will only properly care about what we think He cares about. And whatever we think He doesn't care about, we will either not care about it ourselves or will respond to it driven by our collective fears and wounds. As they say, "How's that working for us?!"

Think about this on a personal level. Whether your parents ever talked to you about God or not, what parallels do you see in things you believed or currently believe about God that are similar to your childhood? If your parents weren't around or never spoke of Him, perhaps you tend to see God as distant, at best. If your parents or authority figures seemed overwhelmed by you or especially worried about how you would turn out, maybe you interact with a God who thinks your life is so complicated He couldn't possibly help until you get it together first. Maybe He is disappointed with you, and the choices you have made have left this God of yours looking at you through eyes of disgust and shame. Maybe your God is loving but uninvolved in the details of your life because He has more important things to take care of, so you beg Him to occasionally get involved. Perhaps you struggle in a never-ending cycle of either trying to fix your life or wanting to quit and stay as "medicated" from your pain as possible. When you have extra energy, do you look for someone else to blame or heap it on yourself? If you can identify with any of this, then you need a healed and expanded view of God.² It can change everything.

It changed everything for us. Our expanded perspective of God has not gone unchallenged by the realities of life and crisis. However,

2 Several years ago we began a friendship with Bob Hartley, founder of Deeper Waters Ministry. It is important that we acknowledge that he introduced us to this new mentality and language of a "healed and expanded view of God" and we highly recommend his resources on the subject of hope. Check out his website at www.BobHartley.org.

we have grown to have an unwavering perspective of who we have seen Him to be—better than we ever hoped. This expanded perspective of who He is has allowed us to live life like we never lived before, free to love and be loved by a Father who cares far more than we thought—about us and about the details of life. God was the one-tone, one-color God. We have since come to know Him as the Rainbow God.

Before, He was the One who loved us, but mainly as it related to us getting to heaven one day. But we now see Him as the God of all of life, the many colors of love. We see Him everywhere and in everything, quick to offer His compassionate heart and perfect solutions for the problems around us. He not only cares, but is passionate about all areas of life and of culture because it all originated in Him and is the essence of who He is.

Family. Religion. Government. Media. Education. Economy. Art and Entertainment. What are you interested in? What do you care about? What is it that you see about our culture that makes you passionate to the point of giving your life or career to it, or a frustration that makes you angry enough to want to change it and make a difference? What if that thing in you is God? What if He does care after all, through you? What if the very thing that has captured your attention since you were little—that thing that you wish you had the money or courage or talent to do the rest of your life—is there because God put it in you? What if that thing that you are good at is Him? What if He isn't hidden in the walls of a cathedral or dead behind the religious rituals human beings have settled for? The proof that God cares about politics, a stable income, and a good movie is the fact that you care. Could He be closer to you than you perceived, felt, or were told? Could He possibly be more real, relevant, and better than you have thought?

It is our hope that as you bring your questions with you through the pages of this book, you will gain a healed and expanded view of God that will cause you to live like never before.