



## **Unstoppable: From Belief to Destiny**

By Marion Medina

“You were created on purpose and for a purpose.” For Liz Forkin Bohannon, this used to be an abstract belief, but now it guides way she lives. This month we’re exploring how our God-given dreams can become realities that God uses to shape us, to benefit the people around us, and even to change the world. And our guide for this exploration is Liz Bohannon.

Liz is the founder of Sseko Design, a company that “started under a mango tree in Uganda with the purpose of creating educational opportunities for academically gifted female scholars. To date, Sseko has created opportunities for hundreds of female scholars to continue on to University and become leaders in their community and our world.” Who better than Liz to advise us on how to move “From Belief to Destiny!”

*The following has been adapted from 4word’s February “Work, Love, Pray” podcast featuring Liz Forkin Bohannon.*

Every one of us has an invitation from God to be a co-creator and to participate in what God is doing in the world. But we have to choose to step off life’s treadmill and get involved. Answering God’s invitation requires us to show up and take risks. We have to be ready to fail and pivot and try again. But if we choose to step out in faith and pursue our God-given dreams, we are in for a great big, life-giving adventure.

Let’s look at a couple of the “tests” we may encounter when following God toward a dream and learn from Liz about how to handle them.

### **The Perception Test**

When we choose to follow our God-given dream, we may find that some of the people closest to us don’t understand. People who love us and want the best for us may even be disappointed when we don’t stay on the path they expected.

Liz knew that leaving her first corporate job and moving to Uganda without a plan would cause some disappointment, but she learned at an early age that you can’t please everyone - and if you try, you end up disappointing yourself. Liz decided that rather than listen to the various opinions of those around her, she would listen instead to the voice of God. She chose to pay attention to an “audience of one” and remain focused on God’s invitation to her.



Stop for a moment to contemplate these words from the book of Proverbs:

*“Trust in the Lord with all your heart;  
do not depend on your own understanding.  
Seek his will in all you do,  
and he will show you which path to take.”* – Proverbs 3:5-6

## **The Passion Test**

Liz’s passion for educating girls and women in Uganda did not develop overnight. Throughout her college years she was intrigued and disturbed by the subjects of privilege and inequality - especially as experienced by girls and women. She found herself reacting with anger and sadness to the lack of educational opportunities and the outright oppression experienced by girls in certain parts of the world. These “negative emotions” helped Liz recognize that this issue was important to her.

Liz discovered her passion by stepping back to examine the anger and the sadness, and she realized that they were a signal from God to do something. But she became aware that in her current environment she didn’t have a single relationship with anyone who was experiencing these issues. She had an opinion about the plight of girls and women, but she knew that wasn’t enough. To respond to God’s invitation, she needed to act.

Leaving her corporate job and moving to Uganda was her attempt to “close the gap” between what she thought she cared about and the reality of her current circumstances. She was willing to pay the cost of following her passion because she believed that closing the gap between opinion and action would yield great rewards in the long run.

Take a moment to consider the word of James, the half-brother of Jesus:

*“What good is it, dear brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but don’t show it by your actions? Can that kind of faith save anyone? Suppose you see a brother or sister who has no food or clothing, and you say, ‘Good-bye and have a good day; stay warm and eat well’—but then you don’t give that person any food or clothing. What good does that do? So you see, faith by itself isn’t enough. Unless it produces good deeds, it is dead and useless.”* – James 2:14-17

## **What’s holding you back from pursuing your God-given dream?**

Liz believes one of the primary reasons people don’t pursue their passions and dreams is fear. Fear is a normal part of life, and Liz has dealt with her fair share of it. But she has learned how to weigh the risks. Whenever we step out in faith we risk being



misunderstood and mistaken, and we even risk failure. But there is perhaps a bigger risk that we often don't recognize - and that's regret.

Instead of fearfully asking the question "What if something goes wrong?" try flipping the script and asking, "What if I do this and it works?" Or ask, "What if I do this and it fails but through that failure God reveals the next thing I need to do?" If you wait until you feel fearless, you will most likely never take action. And if you don't follow where God is leading, you may wake up one day and regret not knowing what God might have had in mind for you. God wants you to be part of a story that is much bigger than your fears. It is an act of worship to say, "God put this desire in my heart, so I'm going to follow it."

And God isn't asking you to pursue the dream by yourself! God is faithful and Jesus will go with you on the journey. Even in the worst-case scenario, God is going to be there and it's going to work out. It won't be easy, and it may not necessarily be viewed as a huge success by those around you, but it's going to be alright in the end because God loves you and loves when you step out in faith. In the words of the Apostle Paul, *"...we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them"* (Romans 8:28, NLT).

You were created on purpose and for a purpose. So pursue your God-given dreams, and get ready for a great big, life-giving adventure!

*To hear more about Liz's story and the other tests she faced along the way, Listen to the February episodes of Work, Love, Pray available now at [4wordwomen.org](http://4wordwomen.org).*

### **Discussion Questions:**

How do you feel or what do you think about the idea that you were created on purpose and for a purpose?

What kinds of things make you angry or sad, and what might those "negative" emotions be telling you about your passions?

Is there a dream you believe God might be inviting you to pursue? What is it, and how are you stepping out in faith to answer God's invitation?

What might happen if you stopped asking "What if something goes wrong?" and started asking, "What if I follow this God-given dream and it works out?"



Liz Bohannon is the Founder and CEO of socially conscious fashion brand Sseko Designs, which she founded in 2008 as a way to provide educational and economic opportunities for women in East Africa.

The Sseko story has been featured in dozens of publications including, Vogue Magazine, Redbook Magazine, O Magazine, Inc., Fortune, and others. Sseko has appeared on national broadcasts including ABC's Shark Tank and Good Morning America. Among other notable honors, Liz was named a Top Three

Transformation Leader by John Maxwell, Forbes listed her as a top 20 public speaker in the U.S., and Bloomberg Businessweek named Sseko as a top social enterprise to watch.

Liz now splits her time between Uganda and Portland, Oregon, where she and her husband Ben run Sseko Designs and raise their two young sons.



Marion is the Director of Programs for 4word.

Marion served in pastoral ministry for 17 years at three local churches including, most recently, Willow Creek Community Church. During her church ministry, she incorporated her organizational development skills with her practical knowledge of effective discipleship to create growth strategies that focused on the equipping and mobilization of congregations on the mission of Jesus. She holds degrees from Trinity International University and Wheaton College in

Organizational Leadership and Missional Church Movements.



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### **Why 4word?**

At 4word, we know you want to reach your God-given potential so you can have a Kingdom impact on your workplace and the world. To do that, you need resources for professional and spiritual growth - and a community of like-minded women to cheer you on!

The problem is your time is limited and meaningful connections are hard to find. This can leave you feeling overwhelmed, frustrated, and isolated on your life's journey.

**We believe you shouldn't have to navigate work, life and faith on your own because God designed you for community. You are worthy to be surrounded by loving and supportive women who "get you."**

**We understand you face unique challenges as a Christian woman in the workplace, which is** why we create easy-access opportunities for leadership development, spiritual growth, and connections to influential women around the globe.

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- Access relevant content – 4word's podcast, blog, and our Community Group Discussion Guides are specifically geared to women in the workplace to help thrive on your journey.
- Get matched with a mentor – From our pool of over 220 amazing mentors we connect you with the right fit for a transformational mentoring experience through 4word's Mentor Program.



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