



## **Unstoppable: How to Thrive in Your Relationship with God**

The following is adapted from an interview with Shae Bynes, author of “Grace Over Grind.” To hear the full interview, listen to this month’s Work, Love, Pray podcast episodes.

*“The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands. And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything. Rather, he himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else. From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands. God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us. ‘For in him we live and move and have our being.’” – Acts 17:24-28*

### **Cultivating Intimacy**

A relationship with God is just that – a relationship. And a thriving relationship with God grows over time as we show up to engage consistently and honestly with God. It’s not about the destination; it’s about the journey. It’s a lifelong adventure in which we thrive and flourish progressively as we grow in our intimacy with God.

Intimacy with God is foundational for being rooted in God and for understanding our identity in Christ. But intimacy isn’t something we can achieve on our own. There isn’t a list of “good Christian girl” tasks that, if accomplished, will get us promoted to a new level of thriving with God. We have to start by cultivating a relationship with God.

Cultivation requires making consistent space for being with God so we can learn to discern God’s voice and recognize the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Though there is no one-size-fits-all formula for cultivating intimacy with God, but there are some practices that have been used by Jesus followers for centuries.

### **Hearing God**

One of the most obvious ways to grow closer to God is through the Scriptures. The Bible reveals God’s epic story of rescue and restoration, and when we read the Scriptures with an open heart and a desire to know God better, the Holy Spirit will make the Scriptures come alive to us. God will begin to speak to us through the Scriptures and give us insights beyond just the words on the page.

Along with Scripture, we can also learn new ways to pray. And we can recognize that prayer involves listening and reflecting as well as talking.

When Shae Bynes encountered God in a powerful way, she began to set aside time for “business meetings” with God every day. These were times when Shae engaged in a two-way conversation with God about her business and her personal life. She asked God to give her his mind and heart



for the people she was called to serve, and she also asked God to reveal who she was and how she needed to grow and change. And Shae began to hear God.

God assured Shae that she was his beloved daughter, and Shae trusted that because she was “in Christ,” God would lead her. She began to move forward in faith whenever she sensed God calling her. Shae believed that her loving Father was guiding her, and that God would correct her course if needed.

Like Shae, we all need to believe that we are the beloved daughters of God and that God desires to speak to us and guide us. You *can* hear God, you *can* be sensitive to God’s leading, and you *can* begin to thrive in your relationship with God, because God loves you and wants you to experience intimacy with him.

### **Transparency and Vulnerability**

Intimacy with God requires us to get honest. We need to get to the point where we’re comfortable bringing our whole selves to God – the positive and the negative. We often think we need to perform for God because God is holy. But the truth is that God already knows both our joys and our frustrations, our pleasures and our struggles, our victories and our failures. And God can handle all of it. Presenting a cleaned-up version of ourselves to God keeps us trapped. Only when we open up and become transparent and vulnerable with God can receive God’s healing words.

It might sound scary to be this brutally honest with God, but Shae’s advice is to try it once. Don’t feel the need to bare your whole soul in one day, just take small steps (not leaps) of faith, and you’ll find that momentum begins to build. When you try being vulnerable with God once, you realize that it’s ok – that God is not surprised by the messy parts of you. And you come to learn that sharing the good and the ugly with God is actually not for God’s benefit - it’s for yours. God already knows, but God invites us to engage with him in ways that lead to an intimate, thriving relationship.

### **Keep Growing in Grace**

It would be tragic if we stopped growing closer to God. So how can we have confidence that we’re on the right path?

Shae reminds us that true confidence is actually confidence in Jesus - not apart from Jesus. We need to create space in our days to breathe and think and listen to God rather than just filling up all our time with “doing.” Being in Christ means that we work from a place of rest in Jesus rather than working so we can eventually get to rest.

When we create a rhythm of life that has margin and space we are reminded of our dependence on God, and we’re able to experience God’s grace instead of our daily “grind.” We learn that we weren’t created to do things and accomplish things by ourselves or in our own strength. We were created to work with God and to flourish in our partnership with God.



Shae advises us that if we really want to thrive in our relationship with God, we need to grab hold of the freedom we have to walk, and work, and dream in Christ. Religious routines and checklists will leave us empty and disappointed, but cultivating an intimate relationship with God will fill us up to overflowing.

God has already given us grace. We need to allow ourselves the grace and freedom to grow closer to God over time. When we walk with Jesus step-by-step, we'll eventually look back and see the amazing things that God has done in and through our lives. We are called to seek God's Kingdom first and to live our lives in him, because It is in him that we live and move and have our being.

#### Discussion Questions

1. On a scale of 1-5 with 5 being “fully thriving” and 1 being “barely there”, how would you rank your current relationship with God?
2. How are you making space in your days to cultivate an intimate, thriving relationship with God?
3. Does being completely honest with God about the good and the ugly parts of yourself feel scary to you? Why or why not?
4. Have you ever experienced God calling you to step out in faith? What happened?
5. What might God be inviting you to do, or do differently, to thrive in your relationship with him? What is the first step you plan to take towards that end?



Shae Byne is a passionate storyteller, mentor, and strategist who equips leaders to be catalysts for transformation in the marketplace. Known as “Chief Fire Igniter”, Shae co-founded the Kingdom Driven Entrepreneur movement in 2012, and her most popular book *Grace Over Grind: How Grace Will Take Your Business Where Grinding Can't* is shifting the way people live, work, and engage the world around them. Whether she is sharing on platforms publicly or consulting privately, you can expect Shae to deliver an abundance of truth with love, grace, and contagious joy.



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.



***4word** is a global community of Christian women in the workplace. Our mission is to help women in the workplace reach their God-given potential with confidence.*

### **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.

### **Our Simple Empowerment Plan:**

- Connect to a community – We offer virtual and in-person Community Groups specifically designed for working women – and we also have special groups for executive women.
- 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.



Join the Journey to empower 10 million Christian women in the workplace to change the world by 2030. Click the picture below to learn more.



## Upcoming

**HundredX Campaign** April 3- May 2

**May Discussion Guide** Unstoppable Women- Setting boundaries – saying “no” so you can say “yes”

**Mentoring Program** Summer Session Sign-up Deadline May 12. To Learn more and sign up click [here](#).

Benefits Experienced by our Mentees

- Connection with someone dedicated to helping them uncover their gifts and put their best foot forward.
- Confidence to make the right changes to put them on track to begin a new and exciting chapter in life.
- Just enough push and accountability to finally make the choices they have been putting off.
- The ability to dream again and accomplish their God-inspired goals.
- The resources and tools to help manage their time, get organized and learn how to balance work and life.

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