



Unstoppable: Say Yes to God's Best

This Discussion Guide is based on an interview with Dr. Shannon Crawford. To hear the entire conversation, listen to the May edition of 4word's Work, Love, Pray podcast.

Life presents us with lots of opportunities, but how can we show up ready and energized when God opens a door of opportunity?

Time and energy are finite resources, and if we don't use them wisely, we'll eventually become depleted. Living in such a way that we are energized and replenished often involves saying "no" - even to *good* things - so we can say "yes" to the *great* opportunities God has for us. Learning to say no at the right times leaves us with more capacity and bandwidth to seize God-ordained opportunities.

Boundaries help us protect our finite resources so we can use them the way God intends. In fact, establishing healthy boundaries is essential for showing up as our best selves when God calls. But to set good boundaries we need to be aware of what's driving us internally.

Hardwired to Perform

Think of your mind as a computer. The software is everything you consciously think you should do. The hardware is what's been wired into you early in life.

Perhaps early on in your family of origin you were seen as "the helpful child" or the "responsible child" - or perhaps the "lazy child." Over time, these identity labels become hardwired into you so that you unconsciously carry them into adulthood. And because we are all largely unconscious of our hardware, these labels can cause you to try and push past your limits as you try to either live up to them or prove them wrong.

You move from our family of origin into an educational system that evaluates you based on performance, and this can reenforce those early labels. All the way through, from family to school to university and into your career, you can end up questioning whether you are "enough" or whether you "belong." You may consciously try to think differently about yourself - to reprogram your software - but without divine help there's a good chance you'll still be subconsciously processing these identity questions.

Unchecked, this can cause you to begin functioning out of a "false self" as you strive to be seen as worthy, perfect, or high achieving. And down the road this striving can lead to anxiety and even depression because you end up trying to derive a sense of value and purpose from outside sources instead of from God.

Boundaries and The Mind of Christ

The Apostle Paul, writing to the church in Corinth said, *"Those who are spiritual can evaluate all things, but they themselves cannot be evaluated by others. For, 'Who can know the Lord's thoughts? Who knows enough to teach him?' But we understand these things, for we have the mind of Christ."*
- 1 Corinthians 2:15-16



The first step in setting healthy boundaries is developing a God-given “spiritual vision” for our lives. Once we understand God’s vision for us, we can more easily say “no” to opportunities that might take us in a different direction.

We discover God’s vision for us by connecting with the Holy Spirit in purposeful time set apart for silence and meditation. As we meditate on Scripture, we start to recognize God’s voice. Over time we can develop an inner conversation with Jesus that continues even when we’re working or talking to someone else. We learn to recognize when God is nudging us or whispering to us. Instead of spreading our time and energy all over the place, we begin to focus on activities that are in line with our spiritual vision – God’s vision for our lives. And we learn how to work with God in partnership to that end. As we partner with God, our internal hardware begins to change.

Partnering with God involves recognizing that we have been given the mind of Christ to guide our intelligence and common sense while, at the same time, taking care not to fall into self-reliance and self-sufficiency. When we’re working in partnership with God, we’re not making decisions that are driven by some subconscious motive or need. Instead, we’re making decisions based on what our hearts truly want and what God wants for us.

The Psalmist said: *“Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you your heart’s desires. Commit everything you do to the Lord. Trust him, and he will help you”* (Psalm 37:4-5). When we’re consistently delighting ourselves in Jesus our deepest desires will start to align with God’s vision for us. And with this in mind, we gladly establish healthy boundaries that allow us to focus our time and energy on opportunities that line up with that vision.

Two Enemies of Good Boundaries

There are a couple of pitfalls to be aware of in this process. The first is a subtle shift in direction towards **pride**. When we find ourselves using the word “I” a bit too much, it can be a sign that we’ve drifted away from partnership with God and into self-sufficiency and self-reliance.

Pride can feel like a little weed of resistance toward God in our hearts. When we feel this resistance, we need to go to God and ask if there’s something that needs to go – even something we perceive as good. We need to be willing to release whatever God prompts us to give up so God can redirect us towards God’s vision for our lives.

On the opposite end of the spectrum lies the pitfall of regret. Regret freezes us in the messy moments of our mistakes and holds us there. When we find ourselves wallowing in regret, we need to stop and recognize that God loves us even in our worst moments.

God is bigger than your worst regret and God can redeem even your sin and blunders. If you have trouble believing this, go back to Scripture and see how biblical characters messed up and how God redeemed their errors and used them for good and for the Kingdom.

Paul wrote that *“... nothing can ever separate us from God’s love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God’s love”* (Romans 8:38-39). There is nothing you can do that is beyond God’s extravagant pursuit of you.



This is important to remember when you find yourself drifting toward either pride or regret. As soon as you recognize one of these pitfalls, go back to seeking God through silence, prayer and meditation. Don't let your inner critic define you or push you. Instead, invite God to tell you who you really are, and agree with what God says about you. You are loved, you are worthy, and God adores you - with all of your imperfections.

An Open-Handed Life

Setting truly healthy boundaries requires first hearing from God and understanding God's vision for your life. This is a continual process that takes place within a loving relationship with God as you remain open to redirection by the Holy Spirit.

So hold your life open-handed to Jesus and allow him to reprogram your internal hardware. He will direct your path and help you discern when to say yes, and when to set a boundary. And you'll be able to show up as your best self for Kingdom opportunities when God calls.

Discussion Questions

Have you ever had to say "no" to an opportunity that seemed good at the time? What happened?

What stood out to you as you read the section of the Discussion Guide that talked about your internal hardware?

How do you react to the idea that God can redeem even your worst mistakes?

What do you sense God inviting you to do as a result of this discussion?

What is the first step you plan to take to follow through?



Dr. Shannan Crawford is a licensed psychologist and the CEO of Crawford Clinics where she and her incredible team of counselors provide innovative psychotherapy services using a holistic Christian approach tailored for individuals, executives, couples and families. She is the host of the podcast Unlock U with Dr. Shannan Crawford.

As the innovator of the Restoring Self-Cohesion (RSC) approach, a hybrid of psychotherapy and faith-based inner-healing models that facilitates deeper healing than talk therapy by identifying and resolving the unconscious roots producing personal, relational, spiritual, and vocational symptoms.

Dr. Crawford weaves RSC into her work as an Executive Coach helping leaders and influencers overcome areas of self-sabotage, imposture-syndrome, procrastination and self-limiting beliefs undermining enjoyment in their calling. As a conference speaker, Dr. Crawford speaks for a variety of audiences on topics such as, emotionally healthy leadership, business, anxiety, trauma, marriage,



resolving childhood wounds and traumas etc. She has spoken nationally and internally including Singapore, Indonesia, India, Brazil, and Bangladesh. Dr. Crawford loves serving as an adjunct professor at universities such as The King's University in Southlake, TX.

Passionate to see the end of human trafficking, she serves on the board of untrafficked.org. She is working on a trilogy book project; an allegory fiction adventure that explores the nuances of the internal world through the story of espionage and romance.



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

June Discussion Guide Unstoppable Women: Setting boundaries -saying “no” so you can say “yes”

Mentoring Program Summer Session Sign-up Deadline May 12. For more information and to sign up, visit [4word Mentor Program](#).