

I've never been able to find God's suggestion box—and believe me, I have some really good ideas to run past Him, since I'm rarely at a loss for suggestions on how things should be done. But I know that not every good idea is a God idea—so how do I know when I'm following God's plan as opposed to taking off under my own power?

I was wrestling with this issue a few years ago, so I decided to call my godly strong-willed friend Jan Silvious, who is a fellow speaker and author.

“Jan,” I said, “I've always promised God I wouldn't knock down a door He has firmly closed. But as long as that door is still even a little ajar, I'm going to keep pushing on it.”

She laughed and agreed.

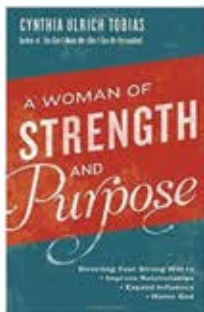
I continued. “How do you determine the difference between a door that God has closed and one that just presents another obstacle to be overcome?” I'll never forget her answer, because it has continued to help me all these years later. “Well, Cynthia,” she replied with her sweet Tennessee accent, “I've always just figured that as long as I have a ‘holy want-to,’ the door's still open. When I lose that holy want-to, God has closed it.”

There's not simple formula or black and white method for determining when the door is meant to stay closed. You have to be walking very close to God in order to recognize it, and even then you don't always get it right. But if you're serious about wanting God's will, He can use many different ways to kindle that holy want-to and give you the desire to keep going or the nudge to walk away.

Renowned 19th century evangelist F.B. Meyer asserted that “You never test the resources of God until you attempt the impossible.” Let's face it—not everyone is **willing** to attempt the impossible—but a lot of us are. And when you're praying for direction on a really big issue, it's especially reassuring to be able to count on the holy want-to. But then you have to go one step further. It's what I call my Starbucks Restroom [Faith](#).

Almost every Starbucks store has a sensor that controls the light in the restroom. You can't just flip a switch, and you can't make it go on by just waving your arm inside the door. You have to put your whole body into that dark room and trust that the light will come on as you enter. Faith in God is a lot like that. He doesn't offer a safety net, He doesn't let us hedge our bets, and He doesn't give any guaranteed results ahead of time. We have to be all in before the light comes on.

If your holy want-to has brought you to a closed door, it's possible that you should at least try turning the knob and giving it a little push. It may just be that you're the one God is counting on to take up the challenge on the other side.



Written by Cynthia Ulrich Tobias, author of [A Woman of Strength and Purpose](#), which releases August 16, 2016.

Cynthia Ulrich Tobias, M.Ed., D.H.L., has a successful background that includes more than thirty years as an author and popular speaker for businesses, churches, and schools around the world; eight years of teaching public high school; and six years in law enforcement. She has written numerous books and is often a featured guest on radio and television. She and her husband, Jack, live in the Seattle area.