

4 Ways a Prophetic Dream Changed My Life

The stench is unbelievable. You quickly cover your mouth and nose, but it is still hard not to stare. The slab that was once an inviting pink color is now a slimy gray, crawling with maggots and buzzing with flies. Part of you feels a responsibility to at least throw it in the nearby Dumpster, but mostly you just want to get away from it as quickly as possible. Yuck!

Maybe you have never encountered a piece of rotten meat left in the elements for days on end. But this disgusting spectacle exactly describes the spiritual state of a culture when the church does not fulfill her role as the “salt of the earth” (Matt. 5:13). Abdicating our responsibility of preserving the customs, institutions and general moral conscience that prevent a society from decaying will leave the culture to rot all around us. At times the church stares in sickened fascination at what is decaying, longing for the Rapture, as God—and even creation—longs for our Savior to be manifest on the Earth through us. “The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed” (Rom. 8:19).

The church, particularly in America, is far more affluent than it has ever been in history. Yet our influence on the culture at large is much less than what it has been in the past and only a shadow of what it could be.

The tide, however, is turning. Divine favor is opening doors for individual Christians and entire ministries everywhere. Nevertheless, if we do not properly understand influence, we will not utilize this favor in the right way. The book from which this article is excerpted, as you might have guessed, is about moving the church from favor in society to its rightful place of influence. As you read, you will embark upon a

journey that will radically transform your prayer life and revolutionize your walk with God. You were created for influence!

God led me on this discovery in a most unusual way.

A Divine Message

Have you ever awakened from a dream that changed your entire outlook on life? As strange as it might seem, God actually used dreams throughout the Bible to sidestep the limited human mind and speak directly to the heart of His servants (see Job 33:14–18). Sure, most of us will have dozens of “pizza dreams” for every “God dream” we experience, but that should not stop us from being open to what the Lord may have for us in these special encounters.

I had one of these encounters in 2003. In the dream, my spiritual father, Dutch Sheets, said to me, “You know, Will, God is teaching me a lot through this study on Ahithophel [pronounced uh-hith-uh-fel].” When I awoke, I said to myself, *Ahitho-what? Ahitho-who?* I had never heard this name before. I shrugged off the experience as a “pizza dream” and went about my business.

Several months later, during a time of prayer, I opened my Bible to 2 Samuel 15 and stumbled upon the name Ahithophel! *It is actually in the Bible!* I thought. Stunned, I upgraded the event from months earlier to a “God dream.” I knew that Father God was about to teach me something very important through this man’s life and story. I never dreamed, however, that this revelation would:

1. Change how I pray for the nations and governmental authorities (see 1 Tim. 2:1–2);
2. Deepen my understanding of spiritual warfare and its effect on society (see 2 Cor. 10:3–5);
3. Increase my desire and gratitude for an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ, our King;

4. Change how I see workplace and societal involvement.

If you read the entire book, I believe the same thing will happen for you. There are many things we do not understand about the unseen forces at work in our lives and in the world. Though the Bible is silent about some that we were never meant to worry about, God clues us in to forces and principles in this political drama that we must understand if we are to pray effectively and regain the influence God intends for Christians to have in the world.

In response to God's prompting in my dream, I began to study 2 Samuel 15-19—a story of betrayal, as prideful Absalom attempts to usurp the throne of his father, King David, by winning the hearts of the Israelites and then defeating him militarily. Absalom, having already stolen the hearts of many away from David by working gradually but powerfully at the city gates (see 2 Sam. 15:1-6), sees the need for Ahithophel's counsel to thrust him to the next level: Israel's throne. Once a trusted member of David's inner circle (see 1 Chron. 27:33), Ahithophel betrays David by becoming Absalom's adviser. Fortunate for me, Ahithophel's name was only mentioned in my dream; he and Absalom were probably David's worst nightmare! Before America endured her Watergate crisis, Israel had her "Absalom-Gate" scandal!

Ahithophel is a brilliant strategist and political spin doctor. As you will see, however, his strategies reveal the powerful sway of the kingdom of darkness. How does King David survive this assassination attempt against his character and, literally, against his life? What makes him one of Israel's most godly and influential leaders? What does this story teach us about biblical influence? As you observe the seen and unseen forces colliding in this story, you will understand how prayer and godly influence, properly wielded, can shape your future and turn a nation.

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