

Interpreting Your Dreams: Is It About You?

A dream without an interpretation is an experience without meaning. It may have been a nice dream, but it won't have the impact God intended until we understand its meaning and respond.

In my last article, I explained that the most important key to interpreting dreams is a relationship with the author of dreams—we need revelation if we want to understand what we are dreaming. As we begin to marry revelation with skill, our consistency and impact will grow.

What are the skills we need to interpret dreams? The first is learning to recognize who the dream is about.

Who Is the Dream For?

Has anyone ever come up to you and said, "Hey, I had a dream about you"? But as they told you the dream, you realized it couldn't possibly be about you. You played only a minor role in the dream, and the dream's content or message made no sense in your life.

This is common. Just because a person is in a dream doesn't mean the dream is about them.

To interpret a dream correctly, we have to determine who the dream is for. We can do this by asking a simple question: What role does the dreamer play in this dream? In most dreams, the dreamer will occupy one of three positions: the focus of the dream, a participant in the dream or an observer in the dream.

The Focus of the Dream

If the dreamer is the focus, the dream will often be in "first person"—meaning the dream is seen through the dreamer's eyes.

They are *experiencing* the dream.

Imagine being the person with the camera, and the dream is the movie you're filming. Your job is to follow the star. Who is the center of action? Is it the dreamer or someone else?

If the dreamer is the center of action, the dream is about the dreamer. They are the focus. This is what we call an *intrinsic dream*. The dreamer is interacting with other dream elements, and their actions are essential to the dream's plot. If the dreamer weren't part of the dream, there would be no story line, and the plot would fall apart.

When the dreamer is the focus of the dream, the dream is about the dreamer.

A Participant in the Dream

What if the dreamer is part of the dream and interacting with other elements in the dream—but they aren't essential to the plot? Instead, all parts are equally involved? If you took the dreamer out of the dream, the story wouldn't fall apart, but it would change the dream and leave gaps in it.

In this type of dream, multiple people (at least two, sometimes many) are doing something. Maybe the dream is about a group of bicyclists heading up a mountain, and different cyclists are having problems. One has a flat tire, another pulls a groin muscle, several are having other issues—and the dreamer is just one of the cyclists within the group. This is a classic participating dream.

When the dreamer is part of a group, the dream is not specifically about the dreamer. It is about the group the dreamer is a part of. Is the group their family? If so, the interpretation would apply to their family. If the group is people from church, it could be about what is happening in their church. If their co-workers are part of the dream, it could be about their workplace.

This is called an *extrinsic dream*. The dream is about the group, not directly about the dreamer. However, the issues presented in the dream will affect the dreamer to the extent they participate in the action.

An Observer in the Dream

When the dreamer is simply observing the dream, they have little to no impact at all on the dream's plot. Sometimes they feel like a "ghost" in the sense that they're in the dream, but no one sees or hears them. They are simply watching what happens.

This is another kind of extrinsic dream. The dream is not about the dreamer but about the person or group they are observing. Who is the focus of the activity? Whose actions affect the way the dream plays out? That person is the key. The dream's message is for them.

What Is God Doing?

Most dreams (around 90 percent) are intrinsic dreams. God is speaking to us about us. He is helping us overcome obstacles, change our thinking, encourage our progress, give us hope for the future or correct our course.

Sometimes, however, He tells us what is happening with other people or groups. We'll discuss this more in the future, but here's the thing to remember: Every time God shows us something about someone else or a future event, He is inviting us to pray. Extrinsic dreams are always intended to inspire intercession.

Keep dreaming! You can ensure your dreams draw you into deeper relationship with Jesus by asking Him what He is doing. What is He saying? What does He intend by giving you these dreams? Grow in your skill to interpret by studying to show yourself approved (2 Tim. 2:15).

John E. Thomas is the president of Streams Ministries and the co-author of *The Art of Praying the Scriptures: A Fresh Look at Lectio Divina* with John Paul Jackson. Teaching on prophetic ministry, dream interpretation and the Kingdom of God, he travels internationally and works to help restore the awe of God to a world that has lost its wonder. John and his wife, Dawna, live outside of Dallas, Texas.

To learn more about dreams and dream interpretation, check out *Dream Foundations* as well as other resources from John E. Thomas and John Paul Jackson at [.](#)