

Prophecy: Why Your Nightmares May Be a Blessing

Many times, we receive messages from God through our dreams, but we don't recognize or understand them. Scripture reveals that God speaks over and over again while we sleep, we just aren't aware of it (Job 33:14-18).

For example, often if a dream feels dark, we automatically dismiss it. If we are being chased in our dream or if we are somehow under attack or feel threatened, we assume the dream is just our own fears manifesting at best, or the enemy influencing us at worst.

But what if it is neither one? And what if we discount and dishonor such dreams to our detriment?

God promises that He reveals Himself to us in visions and speaks to us in dreams (Num. 12:6). So if we take God at His Word, we understand that *He* is the one speaking to us while we sleep, we just aren't listening or understanding the picture language in which He is communicating. To start, we first must consider the possibility that just because we have a nightmare doesn't mean it's not from heaven.

The Blessing in a 'Bad' Dream

How can I make such a suggestion? A biblical example of this is found in the life of Abraham, our father of faith. We may recall that the Abrahamic Covenant was established in a dream (Gen. 15:12-21). And we know what kind of dream it was too: a terrifying one.

"As the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram, and terror and great darkness fell on him ... On that same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram" (Gen. 15:12,18a).

Typically, we define a nightmare as a terrifying dream, so we would say Abram had a nightmare. And normally, we think of nightmares as all bad. However, God met with Abram in his nightmare and gave him the epic blessing of a supernatural covenant that we still benefit from even today.

The reason this is relevant to us is because it demonstrates through Scripture why all bad dreams aren't, and that God can speak through the scary dreams and use them in our lives. For example, often when we have dreams of being chased or feeling under attack, it's accurate to say those images are *our* perspective of our waking life situations. But that's not all the dream is telling us. More than anything, the reason we have the dream is to reveal *God's* perspective of that same situation.

God's Point of View

And what is the dream showing us about how our Father sees these circumstances? Usually, even though we might be getting chased in our dream, we actually escape. Even when it appears like we're under attack, we realize we remain *unscathed and unharmed*. Even if we feel we are in a dangerous or threatening circumstance, we are indeed still safe. We are protected. We are secure. That is God's message to us. He's showing us through the dream that even though life seems scary at times; it's going to be OK. We're going to be OK, because He is with us.

I want to share a recent testimony from one of our CLU students that illustrates this principle beautifully. Karla Tillman just completed our online dreams course, and I've excerpted highlights from her final paper below. You'll discover some of the key insights she learned through the class, as well as see the encouraging way God ministered to her through a "scary" dream with His message of comfort during a challenging time. May it be an encouraging example to you as well!

Karla's Story

"As I sit here typing this paper, I can't help but think, 'How is it that I am only just now finding out that Father God communicates with His children through dreams?' I wasted valuable time not knowing this. I had never heard a sermon on angels, the Holy Spirit, the gifts of the Spirit, let alone dreams. Honestly, I don't think this is fair. Don't get me wrong; I understand that we build precept upon precept. However, it seems in my Christian journey, I am learning in pieces that I couldn't apply before.

I believe everything that is written in the Bible. Yet, I was skeptical if dreams could play a role in my life today. Knowing that everything in the Christian journey is based on faith, I decided I would give it a try. It was exciting. I had dreamed before, but never on purpose. Not that I could force myself to have a dream, but I could apply what I had learned in this course to recall my dreams.

What is super amazing is the dream decoder method known by the acronym DAESI (Dream, Action, Emotion, Setting and Interpretation). Following the DAESI Method, I first write a summary of the dream, usually one or two paragraphs long. Then I ask myself, what am I doing in the dream (action), what is my overall feeling (emotion) and what is my heart processing (setting); then I can interpret the dream and journal it.

One evening, I dreamed I was flying an airplane. I was the only person onboard. Although the sky was clear of clouds, I eventually found myself flying into a tornado. I didn't even see the tornado. Meanwhile, I was twirling and spiraling down fast, trying not to lose control of the plane. I flew right into the center of the storm. Next thing I knew, I walked out of the tornado unharmed.

Using the DAESI Method, my action was flying the airplane, and my feeling was fear as I was losing control. In analyzing this

dream, I had to first consider what was going on in my life, what I was thinking about before I went to bed and what I was praying for when I fell asleep.

I'd been feeling overwhelmed because I was in charge of organizing my father's wake and funeral and was the executor of his estate. This manifested as the airplane. Things were becoming increasingly overwhelming, represented by the tornado.

Father God was encouraging me that I would walk away without a scratch if I gave the problem over to Him and let Him help me. I was reminded that Father God knows the way I should take and can give me the wisdom to answer my problems. Now I will pray over the dream and ask the Holy Spirit if there is anything else He wants to say to me.

So I recalled the dream and interpreted the dream. Now the third part of the process was to act on the dream. In the case of the dream above, I immediately knew once I stopped worrying and trying to be in control, I would be relieved and less stressed-out. Also, the execution of the estate was going much more smoothly. This is just one example of how Father God loves us and will use dreams to encourage us. I can rest assured He will never leave me or forsake me.

In recalling my dreams and following the DAESI Method, I have noticed how Father God will use dreams to give me warnings or reminders. More than likely, such a dream will recur if I don't act on it, thus making it hard to ignore His messages. They can offer solutions to the problems I am currently working on. They can even be used as affirmation for other concerns I am having.

This is just the beginning, and for the rest of my life I am making a commitment to learn the skills to understand and interpret my dreams in order to understand how He speaks to me.

Our Takeaways

You can see how important it was for Karla to honor that “bad dream.” Just because something negative is happening in the dream—like flying solo into a tornado and feeling afraid—doesn’t mean God isn’t speaking. We don’t want to discount this revelation as simply a “soul dream” and not pay attention, mistakenly assuming it’s just our own subconscious mind thereby missing out on the message from heaven.

Now when Karla is tempted to feel overwhelmed in her waking life as she executes her father’s estate, she can pull out her dream picture—this snapshot of the Spirit. She can set her mind on things above and refocus on how God sees the situation (Col. 3:1-3). Even though it feels like things are spiraling out of control, it’s not really that bad. Even though it feels scary and like she’s all alone, she can be encouraged that she’s not going to crash; she will recover her position; she is going to be OK.

Partner With God’s Picture

In our dreams we see our feelings for what they are, but we also see God’s truth. His point of view is that even though things appear scary, we are safe. Even though we feel afraid in the moment, Father is showing us His vision and version of the situation so we can come into agreement with that, partner with His picture and perspective and be filled with hope and peace.

Praise God for the blessing hidden even in the bad dreams! He is showing forth His faithfulness in the midst of the storms, giving us His promises to meditate on and pray in to. Father causes all things to work together for our good, and He will reveal to us His heavenly point of view while we sleep (Rom. 8:28; Acts 2:17).

The next time you have what appears to be a bad dream about a challenging situation in your waking world, prayerfully

consider it more closely. Invite Holy Spirit to highlight through the symbols how you were actually safe. Ask Jesus to show you how even though it didn't look good, you ended up escaping free and unharmed. Ask Father God to reveal through your dream His perspective, peace and protection and observe to collapse those truths, adopting them in your heart as your own.

When tempted to feel sad or stressed in waking life about the circumstance, recall that snapshot of the Spirit and choose instead to refocus on God's gift and blessing as revealed through the dream. Thank Him for keeping you safe and sound. Thank Him for the confidence and deep-down peace you feel seeing that even in the midst of the storm, He's shining out a silver lining. Thank Him that you now live free and fearless, knowing He is with you, and you have never been alone. {eoa}

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