

Receiving Holy-Spirit Revelation to Interpret Your Dreams

Why is it that God so often speaks the language of mystery?

Our Father wants to be understood when He speaks; however, He frequently communicates in “dark speech.” (See Num. 12:6.) This means He speaks in ways that are veiled, or mysterious, and we need revelation if we’re going to understand what He’s saying. Dreams fall into this category all the time.

“Even when things without life give sound, whether flute or harp, how will it be known what is played unless they give a distinction in the sounds? If the trumpet makes an uncertain sound, who will prepare himself for the battle? So also you, unless with the tongue you speak words easy to understand, how will it be known what is spoken? For you shall speak into the air” (1 Cor. 14:7-9).

God sets a principle in 1 Corinthians 14 that He Himself abides by: You can’t expect someone to respond to something they don’t understand.

We need understanding for our dreams—but how do we get it?

Where to Go for Dream Answers

As Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 12:10–11, interpretation is a gift of the Spirit, not a process of human intelligence. Technically, this passage is talking about tongues and interpretations, but the principle holds true for all spiritual communication, including dreams.

Only God can interpret spiritual communication. In other words, there is only One who can tell us what we need to know.

Because God Himself is the answer to the dream question, we can study principles of interpretation and develop a skill set that will help us understand dreams, but we won't be able to grasp the full understanding God has for us if we depend solely on what we've learned. Joseph understood this concept when he asked, "Do not interpretations belong to God?" Yet he also understood he had a role to play in the process of interpretation, for he added, "Please tell the dreams to me" (Genesis 40:8, author's paraphrase).

In later blog posts, we'll talk about the skills that can help you position yourself to interpret the dream, but these skills can only position you for the interpretation—revelation is still required.

The Difference Between Disciples and Crowds

Jesus spoke to the crowds in parables and veiled speech, and His disciples asked Him about it in Matthew 13:10b: "Why do You speak to them in parables?" He told them the understanding belonged to them—but not to the crowds.

What set the disciples apart? Why did the understanding belong to a select few but not to everyone? As we read the rest of the chapter, we realize the answer: It was their relationship with Jesus. The crowds would hear the parables and be entertained; they would go back to their lives feeling like they had an experience, but the disciples would return to Jesus and ask Him to explain what He meant.

The Key to Interpreting Dreams

The key to interpreting dreams is relationship with the author of dreams. When you have a dream or someone shares a dream with you, go back to God and ask Him what He was trying to say. It can be helpful to ask questions like these:

- "What did You mean by that?"
- "What were You trying to say to this person?"

- “What are You accomplishing in my life?”

As you engage with God about His revelation, He will speak to you in greater detail. Most revelation is an invitation to engage God for more.

Develop friendship with the Holy Spirit. Deepen your ongoing conversation with Him. Speak to Him constantly, and you will find He is already speaking constantly to you. Expect Him to clarify what He is saying. As Bill Johnson succinctly says, “He doesn’t hide stuff from us. He hides stuff for us.”

Seek Relationship

God’s veiled speech reveals our hearts: Do we really want to understand, or do we just want to have an experience? Are we looking for relationship or entertainment?

Our response to dreams can reveal the kind of soil we’re working with (See Matt. 13:3–23). We can treat dreams lightly, without paying much attention to them, or we can see them as invitations to seek God and listen for His voice.

“And He answered them, ‘To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted. For whoever has, to him more shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him’” (Matt. 13:11-12).
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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 .