

12 Common Dream Categories—How Many Have You Had?

Dreams are as diverse as the languages we speak, the clothing we wear, and the food we eat. Dreams are a communications expression of the creative heart of God. As the Master artistically paints each flower of the field, so dreams are individually, tailor-made for you and me.

What are dreams made of? Are they spiritual gifts given for us to unwrap? Revelatory dreams naturally fall under the spiritual gift of prophecy. Yet they are too broad to be confined neatly and strictly just to one gift. Dreams may also be an impartation of the gift of discerning of spirits. Like the colors in a rainbow in overlapping shades, difficult to tell where one stops and another begins, dreams are definitely unique and creative expressions of spiritual gifts. There are no clear lines of demarcation between spiritual gifts. The word of wisdom blends into a word of knowledge. The gift of faith overlaps with the workings of miracles. Yes, dreams are spiritual gifts that intertwine with various enchanting shades.

Dreams are not a dead language but a dynamic, living language full of life. As Creator, God is incredibly diverse. He loves variety. Just one look at the natural world in all its abundant variety is enough to show the diversity of God's creative nature. This diversity is just as true for the spiritual realm as for the natural. As Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 12:4-7, "There are various gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. There are various operations, but it is the same God who operates all of them in all people. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to everyone for the common good."

The Spirit of God uniquely designs His impartations to match our individual callings. So, just as there are diversities of spiritual gifts, there are also diversities of dreams. The Holy Spirit matches our dreams to the way we think and perceive individually. In other words, He gives us dreams according to our sphere or realm of influence. It is part of His amazing nature.

Categories of God-Inspired Dreams

Dreams from the Holy Spirit are difficult to categorize because they come in virtually infinite variety and are tailored for each individual. Nevertheless, I want to expose you 12 basic categories of dreams that we receive from the Holy Spirit.

1. Dreams of Destiny

Destiny dreams reveal part of the progressive calling of God regarding your life, guidance and vocation. Generally, they relate to your sphere of influence. Sometimes they will be extrinsic dreams regarding God's redemptive plan for city, region or nation. At times destiny dreams are more personal, revealing the unfolding of your life in God's plan. They may relate only to the present, where you are right now, or they may deal with the past, present and future of your life. Dream language moves in all three arenas. Dreams of destiny are inspiring and charge our faith to soar to new levels!

2. Dreams of Edification

These are the "feel-good" dreams. When you wake up from them, you absolutely feel great. You feel like you are on top of the world and ready for anything. Edifying dreams are inspirational in tone. They are filled with revelation and they produce hope. If you have been discouraged, you may receive a dream of edification that, even if you do not remember all the details, will instill in you a sense of hope and confidence, thus dispelling your discouragement. Dreams of

edification can help change the course of your life.

3. Dreams of Exhortation

Sometimes called “courage dreams,” dreams of exhortation often contain a strong sense of urgency. They challenge us to take action. While edification dreams produce hope, exhortational dreams produce faith. They impart inspiration and motivation to get up and do something for Jesus’ sake. More than just giving simple advice, dreams of exhortation also reveal an accurate, detailed picture of what is going on behind the scenes, especially in the demonic realm. This revelation is for the purpose of challenging us to take action about what we have seen. Take courage and act!

4. Dreams of Comfort

Comfort dreams serve to heal our emotions and our memories. We can use them to reinterpret circumstances of our past with a heavenly lens, helping us to see things differently. In other words, comfort dreams give us a heavenly perspective on an earthly situation so we can receive emotional healing. Thus comfort dreams can also release assurance. If edification dreams produce hope and exhortational dreams release faith, comfort dreams stir up love. They will help you love yourself better, love God better and love others better as well.

5. Dreams of Correction

Corrective dreams reveal personal changes—character issues, heart issues, repentance issues—that we need to make in order to be able to move forward. These are *not* condemning dreams. The Holy Spirit never condemns. Rather, He comes in gentle love and releases a wooing to draw us to turn to Him and accept His correction. The Holy Spirit convicts and convinces us, but He never condemns. But God, in His infinite patience and loving kindness, relentlessly pursues us. He wants to perfect us and so He sometimes uses dreams of correction.

6. Dreams of Direction

Directive dreams often contain a higher level of revelation and are obviously very prophetic in nature. Quite frequently they will convey a distinct sense of urgency. Their purpose is to give specific guidance, which may even include warnings of some kind. One example is the dream of the wise men in the second chapter of Matthew, whom God warned not to return to Herod. This prompted them to choose an alternate route home. Ultimately, dreams of direction serve to help us get farther down the road toward fulfilling our destiny and purpose, showing us signposts and helping us avoid pitfalls along the way.

7. Dreams of Instruction

These are primarily teaching dreams. Directive dreams give us direction; instructive dreams teach us. There is a fine line of distinction between the two. Scriptures are often highlighted in these dreams and frequently you will hear a voice speaking to you. Sometimes instructive dreams will even be doctrinal in nature, but they will always contain insight with revelation. Edifying dreams produce hope. Exhortational dreams instill faith. Comfort dreams stir up love. Instructive dreams impart teaching with wisdom.

8. Dreams of Cleansing

Some people call these “flushing” dreams, and with good reason. One of the most common images associated with the cleansing dream is that of being in the bathroom, on the toilet or taking a shower. These dreams deal with cleansing issues. To use scriptural terminology, we could call these dreams of sanctification. They are concerned with our purification process. Cleansing dreams are used to wash us from the dust and dirt that we pick up by walking in the world. Essentially, these dreams are all about applying the cleansing blood of Jesus to our lives.

9. Dreams Revealing the Heart

These are also known as dreams of self-disclosure or dreams of self-condition. Jeremiah 17:9 says, "The heart is more deceitful than all things and desperately wicked; who can understand it?" And Jesus said in Matthew 12:34b, "For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks." Self-disclosure dreams show us where we presently stand with God. God gives us dreams of self-condition to show us where we are, tell us what we need to do and reveal where He wants us to go.

10. Dreams of Spiritual Warfare

Spiritual warfare dreams are calls to prayer. They are intercessory-type dreams that reveal hindrances that are in the way and may include calls to worship and fasting. Their purpose is to inspire us to press through to victory to the cross of Christ, tearing down strongholds and overcoming every obstacle or barrier that stands in the way.

11. Dreams of Creativity

Creative dreams involve such things as designs, inventions, new ways of doing things. They can charge our spirit man and help us become change makers, changing the culture of our homes, cities and the lives of others and even the strongholds of our minds. God often uses creative dreams with artistic people to give them songs to sing, pictures to paint or words to write. I have had dreams revealing the title of a new book along with a brilliant artistic cover. I call these "Holy Ghost cheat sheets," and I can use all of them He wants to give. God is a Creator by nature, and He loves to give creative dreams to His children.

12. Dreams With Impartation

Impartational dreams are used to activate any of the various dimensions of the gifts of the Spirit. Many times it will be the gift of healing; both emotional healing and physical

healing. In some cases, an angel of the Lord may actually appear in your room and touch you, releasing one of heaven's many power encounters. The Holy Spirit will use dreams to impart gifts, callings, courage and whatever else is needed.

If you are just beginning to walk in the realm of dream language and find this great diversity of dreams a bit overwhelming, be patient. It will take time and experience to become adept at identifying different dream types and categories and interpreting the messages you receive. He will gently and lovingly guide you along the way in your very own diversity of dreams.

God's ways are amazing. He will lead you not only into revelation but He will teach you how to understand what you just received.