

# Ten Tips For Christian Dreamwork

## ***1. God Speaks Through Dreams And Visions***

The most essential principle of Christian dreamwork is the Scripture-based assumption that God wants to make direct contact with people through dreams and visions. In the Old Testament it is clearly stated that God speaks through the dream: "Hear now My words: If there is a prophet among you, I the Lord, shall make myself known to him in a vision. I shall speak with him in a dream..." (Num. 12:6-8).

Similarly, in the New Testament we are told that God will continue to speak to us through dreams and visions...when the Holy Spirit is poured out: "And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, "I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams" (Acts 2:16-18).

We need to come to the place where we understand that God is speaking, either directly or indirectly to us through our dreams. "I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you" (Prov. 1:23). Talk with the Lord, and tell Him that you believe He wants to speak to you through your dreams and that you are listening. This act signals your heart that you are giving dreams a place of honor in your life.

Go to sleep like Samuel, saying, "Speak Lord, for thy servant is listening" (I Sam. 3:9). Don't set the alarm, at least on weekends - alarms normally shatter dream recall. Speak aloud personal statements of faith like, "I believe God wants to speak to me through dreams. I believe dreams contain a valid message for me."

## ***2. Take Dreamwork Seriously***

Once you accept the truth that the Lord wants to speak to you in your dreams, make a decision to take your dreams seriously. Clearly decide that you want and need God's help and direction for your life, and are willing to seek it by listening to your dreams. Make an act of faith by placing your notebook, dream journal, or recorder near your bed.

When you first awake in the morning *wait to see if the Lord spoke to you in the night*. If the Lord spoke to you in a dream, ask Him to bring it to your conscious memory (John 14:26).

When you first awake in the morning, ask the Lord if He spoke to you in a dream and to bring it to your conscious memory. "I will bless the Lord who has counseled me; indeed, my heart instructs me in the night" (Ps 16:7). "Morning by morning, he awakens my ear to hear..." (Is. 50:4).

As soon as possible, write a detailed description of your dream, or tell it to your partner. (Dream research shows that 95% of the dreams not written down or told within five minutes are forgotten.)

## ***3. Dreams Speak To Us In "Dark Sayings"***

God tells us that in the dream, He will speak in "dark sayings". "I shall speak with him in a dream. Not so with My servant Moses...with him I speak mouth to mouth...and not in "dark sayings" (Num. 12:6-8). "Dark sayings" (*chiydah*) refers to a puzzle; i.e., a trick, a conundrum, some type of message that is tied in a knot, like a proverb or a riddle. Dreamwork is the art of learning to untie to the knot, to understand how to work with the language of symbols.

Complete dreamwork involves both analytical reasoning and intuitive sensing. Although we use our minds to recall and describe the dream, we can't depend solely on analytical reasoning to uncover its meaning. To unlock the meaning of the symbols in a dream, we must use more of our right brain, our intuitive and imaginative capacities.

In the Scriptures we are admonished to "make your ear attentive to wisdom, 'apply your heart' (*stretch your heart out*) to understanding" (Prov. 2:2b KJV). Whether it's through dreams, visions, prophecy or Holy Scriptures, we must learn to use the pictorial language of the heart to understand the "words" from God.

#### **4. Dream Images Come From Our own Life**

The symbols in our dreams come out of our own lives, not someone else's. In Joseph's dream the symbols came from his years as a shepherd. Hospitals often appear in my dreams, because of my years as a nurse (Judith). In Jerry's dreams, the corporate office or briefcase have often been reappearing symbols.

#### **5. Become Familiar With Your Own Dream Images**

It is important to become familiar with our own dream images and how our deep heart uses them. For instance, in my dreams (Judith), airplanes are often used to indicate it is time to make a ministry trip. Clothes are often used to indicate my conflicts in how I present myself to the public feeling inadequate, etc.

#### **6. Intensity Of Symbols, A Clue**

The more intense the symbol, the more important and urgent the dream message is. Dreams may become nightmares, because we have ignored their message. The intensity of our images is more important to us than their precision and clarity. Dream symbols offer us transformation, precisely because of the divine energy embedded in them.

Hint: don't take sexual dreams literally. Lighten up. Most of the time sexual dreams need to be viewed symbolically. Sexual intercourse is a symbol of union, communion, connection.

#### **7. Most Dreams Are About Our Self**

Once we understand how dreams work, we will notice that they speak most often about the events and circumstances of our own life. Experts tell us that approximately 95% of our dreams are about our own self concerns and problems we are facing. Whatever we think or feel, even in the depths of our being, is materialized in our dreams.

Be careful in thinking that dreams about cities on fire, or dragons coming out of the earth, are about end times or prophetic. Most of the time they are about your inner self, giving you a mirror as to how you are functioning.

#### **8. Explore The Meaning Of The Dream**

As soon as possible after recording your dream, find time to explore the dream to gain insight and understanding of its wisdom. It is important to note here that we seek insight and revelation, not some formula to unlock the secrets of our dreams. *There is no single correct method to figure out our dreams.*

Try this simple approach. Note the main issue or theme or central motif of the dream, answering the question, "What is this dream mainly about?" Then, determine what is the emotional tone, the basic feeling in the dream. Next, describe the main action, the overall activity in the dream.

Finally, explore the questions evoked by the dream. Ask, "What is the key point in the dream? Why am I behaving like that?" Another angle is to consider what questions the *dream* may be asking *you*. In this case, the importance of the dream is not to understand it so much as to reflect on the questions it poses.

## **9. Our Dreams Draw Us Into Closer Relationship To God**

Dreams are meant to help us develop a real relationship with our Lord – the very Source of our life. The process of engaging our dreams brings us into a kind of personal dialogue with God in which we come to know Him and ourselves better.

Dreams contain God's divine energy, which can empower, heal, and transform us by creating faith and hope and energy. The images and symbols in our dreams can transform the psychic energy from our unconscious into our conscious life to re-energize us for everyday living. What's really exciting about this is that the dream can bring us energy *whether or not we understand the dream at all!*

## **10. "Aha!" Is Key To Meaning Of Dream**

Because the dream belongs to the dreamer, each person is the interpreter of their own dreams. By depending upon the Holy Spirit and asking skillful questions, other people can help draw out the meaning of our dream from our own heart. However, the meaning of any dream must be drawn from the dreamer. *We should never accept ideas for understanding our dream that our heart does not respond to.*

There needs to be an "aha!" moment, an inner click or intuitive knowing, letting us know that we are close to the meaning of the dream. We will intuitively know that we have tapped into the energy behind the dream.

The work of the Holy Spirit is to lead us into all truth and bring to our remembrance all that the Lord has said. The Holy Spirit is also responsible to bear witness in our spirit that we are children of God. Because the Holy Spirit bears witness to the *truth* of something, when we hear the right interpretation in dreamwork, our heart will leap (aha!) in agreement. This is the witness (*intuitive knowing*) of the Holy Spirit in our hearts (John 16:13, Rom. 8:15,16, II Cor. 1:21).

### **Bonus Tip**

The Scriptures make it very clear that it is God who gives the interpretation – the understanding of the dream comes from Him.

Joseph said to them, 'Do not interpretations belong to God?' (Gen. 40:8).

The Lord 'reveals the profound and hidden things; He knows what is in the darkness' (Dan. 2:22).

God gave the four youths knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel even had understanding in all visions and dreams (Dan. 1:17).

We approach dreamwork with prayerful reflection, asking God to give us the understanding and interpretation of our dreams. We cultivate faith that God will illumine the significance of the dream message in the right time. Jesus taught us the principle of asking, seeking, and knocking, and the door shall be opened (Luke 11:8-14)!

St. James tells us that, if we lack wisdom, we should ask for it – and to ask without doubting (Js. 1:5). It was the Lord God who gave understanding and wisdom to Daniel. Will He not also do so for us?