



Turning Lost Students into Christ-Centered Laborers

IN DREAMS • What Dreams Reveal

While it has only been in the last hundred years that western science has assigned dreams a role in understanding ourselves, the wisdom of much of the non-western world has always regarded dreams as, not only a window into our souls, but the spiritual world as well.

Excerpt from an article by Adam Weintraub of *The Cincinnati Enquirer*:

When you get a message in a dream, pay attention.

Teri Bonfield of Westwood did, and she hit the Ohio Super Lotto jackpot. She and three employees of a Toledo, Ohio, firm who hold the other winning ticket will split Saturday's \$20 million prize. Bonfield took the current value of her share in a lump sum, almost \$3.1 million after taxes.

"A friend of mine had died of cancer; she was 24," Bonfield said Monday. The friend, Tina Siegel, appeared in a dream about a year-and-a-half ago, Bonfield said, and left her with such a strong impression of a set of numbers that she wrote them down when she awoke -- 10-15-16-17-18-42.

Bonfield, at 30 the president of a home health care agency that employs 50 to 60 nurses and other employees, started playing the numbers every week. She bought this week's tickets at Don's Hi-Lo Beverage in Bridgetown.

1. Describe a recent weird dream you remember.
2. Have you ever had a recurring dream? About what?
3. Freud felt that all dreams could be explained as "wish fulfillment." Why do you think we dream?

Dreams – A Window into Our Lives

Jung and Freud did pioneering work into dream analysis. They proposed that dreams gave us a window into our own minds and subconscious. Actually, Freud tended to see them as a window into an Adult Bookstore. In his elaborate scheme of dream symbols, he saw no less than 102 items as being phallic – pretty much anything that wasn't flat. Let's try our hand at dream analysis, shall we?



4. Match the symbol with what it allegedly represents. If you're a Freudian: just replace the list on the right with, well, you know.
- | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| a. Can't hear someone on phone | 1. Loss of Friends |
| b. Toothless | 2. Problem with boy/girlfriend |
| c. Triangle | 3. Witness an unhappy situation |
| d. Rat | 4. Feeling powerless |
| e. Abandoned | 5. Deception around you |
| f. Running alone | 6. Achieving success |
| g. Walking down steps | 7. Triumph over adversary |
| h. Killing a snake | 8. Difficulty making decisions |
5. Do you think that the events, people, objects, and activities in dreams symbolize deeper realities in your life? Can you give an example of something you knew was symbolic?

Dreams – A Window into Our Souls

Western rationalism had snubbed dream analysis as “anti-intellectual” until Freud and Jung dressed it in surgical “scrubs” and smuggled it into the University disguised as medical science. However, for thousands of years, the rest of humanity, particularly Muslims and Easterners, believed that dreams were a window into the soul and the spiritual world.

NPR Story Project. Steve Hodgman; Bedford, New Hampshire:

When I was in college, I lived in a wing of a dorm where everyone was very friendly and got along well. The atmosphere was casual, and we used to walk into each other's rooms unannounced. The guy in the room next to ours, Andy, had a fridge and a TV, rare commodities in dorms back in 1972. He generously allowed us to use them whenever we wanted.

It was a quiet Friday night in October, I spent the evening studying, turned in early, and slept well. At one point during the night, I woke from a strange and vivid dream. In it, I saw myself leaving my room and going next door to get a soda from Andy's fridge. When I entered the room, I saw several people sitting around on the beds and chairs. One of them, sitting in the middle of the room with his head down, was Andy's brother, a shy, obese man I had met only once a year before. I also recognized Andy, Andy's girlfriend, and four other students from our wing. They all had their heads down and seemed despondent. When I asked them what was wrong, they all looked up at me except Andy's brother. A moment later, they turned their eyes away again and looked down at the floor in silence.

I didn't think about the dream again until the middle of the afternoon the next day, when I decided to go next door and grab a soda from Andy's fridge. When I entered the room, there were several people sitting around in the same positions I had seen in my dream. The only difference was that Andy's brother was not in the chair in the middle of the room. When I asked what was going on, I received the same silent and awkward glances I had met with in my dream, I asked again, and Andy averted his eyes. His girlfriend looked up, her face all red from crying. “Andy's brother had a terrible accident this morning,” she said. “He was driving a couple and their two children somewhere, and he went off the road. The children were both killed.”



I left the room stunned. As I walked back to my room again, I kept rehearsing the timing of the dream and the accident. Over and over, I said to myself that the dream had happened on Friday and that today was Saturday. I kept saying it because I didn't want to make a mistake. I wanted to be sure that I wouldn't start wondering years later if I had reversed the two events in my mind. Memory sometimes works like that, and I wanted to make sure that the dream had come first.

6. Do you think it's possible to see future events in a dream?

7. Have you ever been struck by something you've seen, and thought "I think I've seen this, or felt this, in a dream"?

8. Do you think this provides evidence for a soul or spiritual component of who we are?

Nightmares

Nightmares are characterized by the presence of vivid imagery (frequently situations in which the dreamer is in danger) and strong negative affect (e.g., intense fear, anxiety, or guilt). These dreams are usually remembered in detail, and occur largely in REM sleep during the second half of the night.

NPR Story Project. Matthew Menary; Burlingame, California:

I sleep soundly most of the time and seldom need an alarm clock to wake up in the morning. My dreams are usually about work, and I try to forget them as quickly as possible. The dreams I do want to remember I usually can't. Only a few times in my life have I had a nightmare.

The dream started simply. I was driving a truck down the Kansas Turnpike. I have never driven a truck, and although I lived in Kansas City at the time, I had never been on the Kansas Turnpike. It was night in the dream, and I could see only my hands on the steering wheel and what was illuminated by the truck's headlights. Suddenly in front of me, shining in the headlights, was a human arm. Horrified, I swerved to keep from hitting it as I frantically tried to step on the brake, but I couldn't slow the truck, and as soon as I got around one body part, another appeared up ahead. The farther I went, the more body parts I saw. They kept coming up at me, faster and faster, until I finally hit one with a grisly thump. A moment later, I sat up in bed screaming.

I realized that I was having a nightmare. I took a deep breath and looked at the clock, more to reassure myself than to find out the time. It was 4:05 A.M.

I enjoyed my Saturday and forgot about the dream. Sunday, I bought the weekend newspaper and read it in my usual leisurely fashion. Near the end of the first section there was a two-paragraph article about a truck driver who had run over a body lying on the Kansas Turnpike. The accident occurred on Saturday at 4:05 A.M.

9. What's the creepiest dream you can remember?



10. Have you ever had a dream you felt was just plain evil, or that there was an evil presence or influence on, or in, your dream?
11. Do you think that dreams open up a window to the spiritual world? How?

Does God Ever Speak to Us in Dreams?

Well, we can't leave this discussion without talking about, perhaps, the most famous dream (or vision) of all: *The Book of Revelation*. The apostle John claimed that this was a communication from God, in dream or vision, concerning the "end of days."

Symbols are the language of our dreams, and therefore all "apocalyptic" literature is symbolic. Ever see the "man" symbol on the men's room door? Men don't look like that do they? It's a symbol. Likewise, John had a vision of the "end times" communicated through symbol imagery. It takes practice and a growing knowledge of Biblical symbols to be able to interpret well, but let's take a crack at it.

Revelation 5: 1-10:

Then I saw in the right hand of him who sat on the throne a scroll with writing on both sides and sealed with seven seals. And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming in a loud voice, "Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?" But no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth could open the scroll or even look inside it. I wept and wept because no one was found who was worthy to open the scroll or look inside. Then one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals."

Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing in the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. He had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. He came and took the scroll from the right hand of him who sat on the throne.

And when he had taken it, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a new song: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth."

12. Translate as many of the symbols and symbolic phrases as you can – blood, sevens, horns, harps, etc. Show all work on a separate sheet of paper. If you fail...well, just don't fail! Good luck.
13. Do you think that God still makes Himself known through dreams and visions? Ever felt that in a dream God was speaking to you?

Try reading the rest of Revelation on your own and see if you can make sense of it.

End 

The Compass is the discipleship curriculum for Campus Crusade for Christ's Campus Ministry. It was created by Centerfield Productions, the field based division of CruPress. We'd love to hear your feedback on this lesson. Please write us at centerfield@uscm.org