

UNDERSTANDING VISIONS AND DREAMS

For God speaks again and again, though people do not recognize it. He speaks in dreams, in visions of the night, when deep sleep falls on people as they lie in their beds –Job 33:14-15 NLT.

Then, after doing all those things, I will pour out my Spirit upon all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy. Your old men will dream dreams, and your young men will see visions –Joel 2:28 NLT.

Definition of Visions: A picture given to us by the Spirit through the inner or outer eye while awake. We can receive it through mental image of pictures or words, a vivid living vision or even trance (Jer 1:11; Hab 2:1; Acts 22:17-21; Dan 10).

Definition of Dreams: A vision given to us by the Spirit while we are asleep. It is received by symbols or literal and understood by personal significance, scripture and the spirit (Acts 2:17; Matt 1:20; 1 Kings 3:5-15).

VISIONS

We can categorize them into three forms:

1. Glimpses in the Spirit
2. Gentle internal visions and Strong internal visions
3. Open visions

Characteristics of Glimpses in the Spirit

- lowest level of visions
- fleeting internal pictures
- brief in duration
- usually contains a still picture
- God can speak powerfully through these gentle visions
- many of these glimpses can be symbolic e.g. while praying for people you can see glimpses or still pictures. You will need to pray for specific interpretation.

Gentle internal visions and Strong internal visions

- much stronger than simple visions
- they are still and seen internally
- they can include a story line of corresponding events
- one needs to concentrate and focus to keep them from missing
- Strong internal visions are clearer and contain a higher level of revelation
- one has to be careful of distractions and be sure to sift them out

Characteristics of open visions

- these visions contain the highest level revelations (of the three)
- these visions can be received with eyes open and are not easily distracted
- these visions can come also when you are engrossed in some kind of an activity
- impressions and internal visions can be disrupted but open visions cannot be stopped (e.g. open vision in trance Acts 10:9-16)

DREAMS

Joel 2:26-28 “...old men shall dream dreams...”

Biblical language meaning of Dreams:

- Chizayon (Heb, OT) – a revelation or vision; describes prophetic function (II Sam 7:17; Job 4:13; 7:14; Joel 2:28; Zech 13:4)
- Onar (Greek, NT) – an inspired vision or revelation

Sources of Dreams

➤ God.

Since there is a human tendency for us to reason with God’s voice, He may speak to us through dreams uninterrupted.

➤ Demons.

They have access by giving us bad dreams. But we have the power to reject it, rebuke it, and refuse to accept it.

➤ Ourselves and busyness (Ecc 5:3).

Things that happen during the day can cause us to have dreams.

- ❖ Dreams are a valuable tool. Joseph was warned in a dream to bring this child, Jesus to Egypt (Matt 1:20).

Ways that God uses Dreams

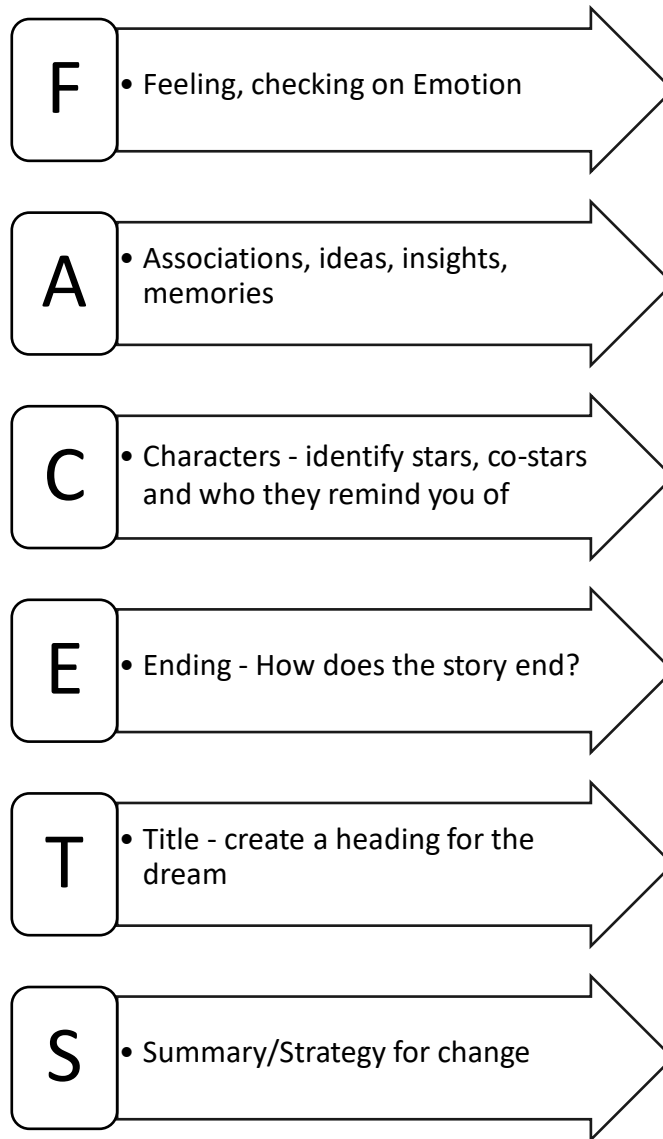
1. To rebuke an individual (Gen 20:3) – warning Abimelech that the woman is Abraham’s wife.
2. To establish a covenant and predict the future. (Gen 15:12-16) – God assuring Abraham and revealing the future.
3. To confirm a covenant and to grant blessings
 - Revealed by a dream to Jacob (Gen 28:10-15)
 - Revealed to Solomon (I Kings 3:12-13).
– Wisdom / Riches.
4. To foretell future events. (Gen 37:5) – Joseph would become a ruler.

5. To forewarn dangers and tragedies.
6. (Matt 2:13-14) – “...*flee to Egypt; Herod wants to kill; stay there till I bring the word.*”
7. To reveal actual condition of our soul. (Dan 4)
Mirror of our soul – inner life
Helping you to identify your own shortcomings.

Practical steps to remembering dreams

1. Pen and paper ready at bedside (record) immediately, before you forget.
2. Keep your eyes closed – think, recollect what you have dreamt, its description, then write in detail.
3. Don't worry if you forget, God will reveal it again.
4. Compare with God's Word, principles, character.
5. Check with someone who can interpret.
6. You are the best person to interpret or give meaning of what you saw.

Checklist for Interpreting Dreams



Simple Guidelines

1. Never interpret dreams literally.
2. Break dream into parts.
3. All dreams can have one or two meanings.
4. Actual meaning of the symbols in a dream lies with the dreamer.
5. Not every dream is from God.
6. Dreams continually seek to bring us into balance and ultimately to wholeness.