



IN DREAMS • What Dreams Reveal

What Do I Need to Know?

The first part of the Study touches on the way dreams are perceived in certain circles of psychoanalysis. The study of dreams carried relatively little scientific weight until Jung and Freud conceived them as a means to tap into our subconscious. Freud thought that our dreams were all driven by the principle of “wish fulfillment,” which is why the majority of his proposed dream symbols have some kind of sexual connotation. Jung had a more mystical view of our subconscious. He felt that certain concepts/images were stored there, and that these symbols, called archetypes, were universal symbols (ideas and beliefs) connecting all humanity. In both cases, their theory affected what they thought certain symbols meant within the context of a dream. Besides the more legitimate fields of psychoanalysis, there’s a host of popular variations of dream analysis, often associated with psychics and the occult.

As Christians, how should we approach the topic of dreams? In leading the study, you are simply touching on these current thoughts to generate discussion. You are not trying to assent to their value or truthfulness, nor branding them as evil. Do symbols in dreams offer us some clues of what’s going on inside our minds? It’s probably reasonable to assume that some insight can be gained by looking at your thoughts expressed in dreams, and that there is a degree of symbolism in dreams. And, for certain psychological issues, under the guidance of a trained psychologist, perhaps this may be a helpful tack of investigation. However, from a Christian perspective, there are three very unhealthy patterns to observe and beware of.

First, dream experts tend to make your subconscious into God. They seem to speak as if “it” knows everything, and see dreams as the vehicle to gain access to that “all-knowing” throne room. We do not have an inner oracle in the basement floor of our mind that knows the answer to all our problems. Our subconscious is not the ultimate source of wisdom – God is. Second, people get hooked on dream analysis like it’s a fortune teller, or their horoscope – both of which are also harmful. We are to go to God for wisdom, direction, and insight, as well as seeking out mature Christians. Last, such extensive personal analysis can lead to unhealthy narcissism (self-focus).

These thoughts are simply for your knowledge as leader. This part of the study, again, is just supposed to be an interesting way to get into the subject of dreams.

What’s the Big Idea?

Modern psychology has often looked at dreams as a window into the subconscious. This study will examine the possibility that dreams may also be a window into the soul and the spiritual world, and therefore, evidence for God, a soul and an afterlife.



The second part of the study opens up the question of whether, through dreams, we can occasionally tap into the future. The reason or value of raising the issue, is that such knowledge would point to the existence of a soul. Flesh and blood reside within this space and time. No one knows the latent capacities of our souls, and perhaps in certain states, like dreams, it can overflow temporal bounds. We don't know. From a Christian perspective, this is not something we should really toy with. God alone knows the future with clarity, and is our source for wisdom concerning the future. But it isn't wrong if group members feel that our souls do have such a capabilities.

OK – here's where we want to bridge into some gospel content by referring to John's vision in Revelation. Visions have the same symbolic quality of dreams, but they are given by God, and are different from a dream. It's not necessary for you to make this distinction with the group – we are simply looking for a bridge into some biblical content. The passage we chose is not random. It expresses the central truths of the gospel. And while it's used as an example, it becomes a very natural way to summarize the message of the gospel. Jesus is the Lamb who is slain – by His blood, we have been forgiven. At the same time, He is God and the One who sits upon the throne. It's all in there. Encourage people to read the rest on their own, or if the conversation goes further, continue to talk about the gospel.

What if There's a Problem?

All foreseeable issues are dealt with in "What Do I Need To Know?"

What Are the Answers?

1. Have the group share.
2. Allow the group to share.
3. Allow people to share what they think is the significance or purpose of dreams.
4. a-2, b-4, c-1, d-5, e-8, f-6, g-3, h-7
5. Have the group share. It's reasonable to assume that there is some level of symbolism in our dreams.
6. Allow for any, and all answers. No one knows the latent capacities of our souls, and perhaps in certain states, like dreams, it can overflow temporal bounds. We don't know
7. Open discussion.
8. If people were actually able to foresee, in some way, future events, this would be a strong argument for the existence of a soul. Flesh and blood are stuck in this space and time.
9. Go around the group and have each person share, if they can remember one.
10. If in dreams we are more open to the spiritual world, then certain evil dreams might be influenced by an evil spirit.
11. Discuss. No right or wrong answer.
12. The scroll is God's history and plan of redemption that no one could bring about except Christ. The Lion of the tribe of Judah and the Root of Jesse are Old Testament references to the Messiah (Jesus). The slain Passover lamb was symbolic of Jesus – through His sacrifice, death passes us over. Seven is the number of completeness, horns represent power, and eyes knowledge. This symbolizes God's omniscience and omnipotence. The harps represent hymns or songs, while golden bowls of incense represent the prayers of Christians. The blood that purchased men was Jesus' sacrifice on the cross.
13. Allow the group to discuss. You might suggest that this is one of the reasons for the Bible. Dreams can often have many interpretations, and be open to manipulation. The Bible provides a more objective means of self disclosure.

What's Our Response?

The application of this study was, through dreams, to consider the reality of our souls, the spiritual world, and God. We also hope that the last passage from Revelation 5 will be a means to explain the basic elements of the gospel message. Unless you decide to add your own specific application, and depending on how the final conversation about the gospel goes, the Study has no other application.