

God Still Speaks

The Role of Dreams and Visions

Theme Introduction

By Carol Madison

My initial response to the idea of devoting an issue to dreams and visions was simple. Nah, I think we'll stay away from that. It might be a stretch.

But then I thought back to the few times in my life when I know God spoke to me through a dream. It doesn't happen often, and I don't typically try to interpret my dreams—even if I can remember them!

However, I recall a dream years ago that led to reconnecting with someone from high school. In my dream, she was in distress. It was so vivid that I woke up alarmed. I didn't know if it was true—and to this day I still don't know. But it prompted me to pray for her.

Shortly after I was surprised to learn that a sports team from my high school was in the state tournament. On the chance that she might be there, I headed downtown, praying that perhaps we could connect. I sat down in an arena full of thousands of people, looked down the row, and there she was!

We exchanged contact information, which led to a renewed friendship that gave me opportunities to share Christ with her.

On another occasion, I dreamed that I was going to people in my church, grabbing them by their collars, and imploring them to consider a senior pastoral candidate. I said we needed to

help him accomplish God's greater calling in his life—advancing the prayer movement. Now, I'm generally not a collar-grabber, but it was so clear in my dream that people needed to wake up to this potential of God's invitation.

At the time, our church was searching for a new senior pastor—and this man was not in the running. But instead of approaching members of the search team, I just prayed because I believed I was not to unduly influence them.

Eventually, the leadership redirected their efforts and asked this pastor to candidate for the position. On the day that we voted to call him as our pastor, he addressed the congregation and used the same imploring words I used in my dream.

You won't convince me those dreams weren't from God!

IN THIS ISSUE

For some of you, this is an unusual topic. For others, this is a common practice in your stream of prayer. By tackling this theme, we hope you will at least pay attention to different ways God might speak to you. Scripture reveals God speaking through dreams and visions, so we know it is biblical!

But there are also cautions in seeking God through anything other than His Word. You will find in this issue a balance of caution, instruction, and openness to the many ways God speaks.

Joseph Winger outlines how God spoke in unusual ways throughout Scripture. God wants to communicate with us—primarily through His Word—but He might use different means. Dick Eastman invites three questions we should ask: is the source from flesh, the enemy, or from God?

Real-life stories of dreams and visions from the 10/40 Window have convinced Fred Markert that God's Kingdom also advances through the supernatural. He encourages an openness beyond our

cultural norms.

For the most part, I don't remember my dreams. And I've never had a vision. But I believe that in the days to come, God may surprise all of us with super^{natural}, Kingdom-advancing strategies—because He can!

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