



Chapter 8

INSPIRATION, INNOVATION, AND INVENTION: RECEIVING GOD'S CREATIVITY THROUGH DREAMS

BY DR. MARK VIRKLER

*"I wisdom dwell with prudence, and find
out knowledge of witty inventions."*

—PROVERBS 8:12 KJV

Solomon was just stepping into his authority as king over all of Israel. He was probably quite young. He no doubt felt inadequate and unprepared. As he faced the responsibility that had fallen upon him, God came to him in a dream, offering him whatever he wanted. Recognizing his own inability to meet the challenges ahead, he requested, and God granted to him, divine wisdom—in a dream (see 1 Kings 3).

HEARING GOD THROUGH YOUR DREAMS

Other people in the Bible who were facing overwhelming problems received divine creativity from God in their dreams, as well. To Jacob the Lord revealed how to provide financially for his family (see Gen. 30:31–31:17). To Pharaoh He revealed how to prepare for a devastating seven-year famine (see Gen. 41). To Joseph He revealed how to escape destruction (see Matt. 1:20–2:23).

There is an extraordinary passage of Scripture in the Old Testament that reveals where creativity originates. In Exodus 31:3–5, the Lord declares, *“I have filled him with the Spirit of God in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all kinds of craftsmanship, to make artistic designs for work in gold, in silver, and in bronze, and in the cutting of stones for settings, and in the carving of wood, that he may work in all kinds of craftsmanship.”*

The Spirit of God continues to release His creativity nightly into our hearts through the dreams He gives us. Some of the gifts received in dreams touch millions of lives. Others “merely” solve a personal problem for the dreamer. Let me give you a few examples.

The Periodic Table

It is said that Dmitry Mendeleev was on a three-day work bender when he finally gave in for a few minutes of sleep. He dreamt of an arrangement of elements that would change modern chemistry forever: “I saw in a dream a table where all the elements fell into place as required. Awakening, I immediately wrote it down on a piece of paper.... Only in one place did a correction later seem necessary.”¹⁷

World-Champion Golf Swing

Jack Nicklaus figured out why his swing was off through a dream in which he was playing a masterful game of golf. After analyzing the dream, the six-time Masters champion realized he was gripping the club differently in the dream than he did in waking life: “I tried

it the way I did in my dream, and it worked. I feel kind of foolish admitting it, but it really happened in a dream.”¹⁸

The Sewing Machine Needle and Thread

Elias Howe, inventor of the modern sewing machine, had been troubled by how to get the needle to work in his new invention. Having the eye at the base (as in handheld needles) was out of the question. The stories vary, but this is the one that was reported in *Popular Mechanics* in 1905:

One night, he dreamed that he was building a sewing machine in a strange country for a savage king. The king had given him 24 hours to complete the machine and make it sew, but try as he would he could not make the needle work, and finally gave up in despair.

At sunrise he was taken out to be executed, and with the mechanical action of the mind in times of great crises he noted that the spears carried by the warriors were pierced near the head. Suddenly, he realized that here was the solution of the sewing machine needle. He begged for time—and while still begging, awoke. It was four o'clock. Hastily he dressed and went to his workshop—at nine o'clock the model of the needle with an eye at the point was finished.¹⁹

The rest, as they say, is history, as he patented the first sewing machine.

George Washington Carver

Born a slave around July 12, 1864, George Washington Carver became a scientist of international renown. He referred to himself as “*a dreamer who dreams, sees visions, and listens always to the still small voice. I am the trail-blazer*” (emphasis mine).²⁰

HEARING GOD THROUGH YOUR DREAMS

On January 21, 1921, Carver addressed the United States House Committee on Ways and Means on behalf of the United Peanut Growers Association on the use of peanuts to improve the Southern economy. Initially given ten minutes to speak, Carver so captivated the committee that his time was extended.

Explaining the many products that derived from the peanut, including milk, mock beef, and faux chicken, Carver stated: "If you go to the first chapter of Genesis, we can interpret very clearly, I think, what God intended when he said 'Behold, I have given you every herb that bears seed. To you it shall be meat.' This is what He means about it. It shall be meat. There is everything there to strengthen and nourish and keep the body alive and healthy."

After nearly two hours, the chairman asked: "Dr. Carver, how did you learn all of these things?"

Carver answered: "From an old book."

"What book?" asked the chairman.

Carver replied, "The Bible."

The chairman inquired, "Does the Bible tell about peanuts?"

"No, sir," Dr. Carver replied. "It tells about the God who made the peanut. I asked Him to show me what to do with the peanut and He did."²¹

Benzene Molecule

The discovery of the round formation of the benzene molecular structure came through a dream. After years of studying the nature of carbon-carbon bonds, German chemist Friedrich August Kekulé dreamt of dogs running around in a circle, each one holding the tail of the next dog in its mouth. (Other accounts say it was a snake seizing its own tail.) He realized the benzene molecule was probably circular in shape, and he proved that it was.²²

DNA

“In 1953, James Watson dreamt of two intertwined snakes (or, some say, a double-sided spiral staircase) that made him picture a double helix. This was pretty key since he—along with input from Francis Crick, Maurice Wilkins, and Rosalind Franklin—went on to prove that DNA is in fact a double helix.”²³

Understanding to Pass Exams

Dr. Ben Carson, retired pediatric neurosurgeon and 2016 presidential candidate, tells the story about struggling to understand a required college chemistry course. He asked the Lord to help him, and the night before a major test, he “picked up his chemistry textbook, determined to learn the whole course overnight. He fell asleep. While he slept, God gave him a prophetic dream:

I was in this large auditorium.... Just me, and a nebulous figure working out chemistry problems.... When I went to take the test the next morning, it was like *The Twilight Zone*.... I opened that [test] book and I recognized the first problem; it was one of the ones I’d dreamed about. And the next, and the next, and the next.... I aced the exam.²⁴

The Messiah

The magnificent “Hallelujah Chorus” of George Frideric Handel’s incredible oratorio came to him as a prophetic flow. He said that “he saw all heaven before him” and he heard the music flowing in his mind and wrote feverously for twenty-four days.²⁵ Handel released the worship that takes place before the throne in Heaven to bless us here on earth.

WHY NOT YOU?

God wants to give the same kind of creativity to you. Whatever your situation, whatever problem you are facing, whatever challenge

HEARING GOD THROUGH YOUR DREAMS

you are trying to conquer—God wants to intersect your limited knowledge and understanding with a supernatural, creative solution.

You were created in the image of God! The very first thing we learn about God is that He is a Creator. As His twice-born child, His divine creativity is your birthright. And when your conscious mind comes to the end of its abilities, He is there to step in with heavenly wisdom and knowledge. This is an awesome gift that is available to us all.

OUR DAY ACTUALLY BEGINS IN THE EVENING RATHER THAN IN THE MORNING

As God created, He stated over and over, “And the evening and the morning were the (first, second, third, etc.) day” (see Gen. 1:5, 8,13,19,23,31 KJV). That is quite an amazing concept. Let’s explore the possible benefits of viewing our day as beginning in the evening.

Since our spirits never sleep, they will work on whatever we ask them to work on as we fall asleep (see Song of Sol. 5:2). It is very significant, in light of the fact that while we are sleeping our mind is at rest, that our heart breaks through with messages from our spirit and God’s Spirit, who is one with our spirit (see 1 Cor. 6:17). The ideas received during a night of communing with God can easily set us up for success in our waking hours.

CLOSING OUT THE CURRENT DAY BEFORE FALLING ASLEEP

The Bible is quite clear that we are not to let the sun go down on our anger (see Eph. 4:26). In other words, process your daily stuff and come to peace before drifting off to sleep. You don’t want your heart consumed with anger, bitterness, or resentment all night, for if it is, you wake up with poison in your spirit and are toxic for the day. I know. I have done that in the past. I am very careful not to do it anymore.

Research into the effect of traumatic events on the mind indicates that there is a period of time known as the “consolidation window” when fear memories are being established and strengthened in the brain. This window usually lasts about six hours after the experience of a painful event. Left unprocessed and unhealed, such trauma will begin to affect a weak organ or system and eventually will be expressed in disease and pain in the body, in addition to affecting our soul and spirit.

Therefore, God said, “Take care of your emotions before you go to sleep at night. Bring your hurts, frustrations, anger, and pain to Me. Let Me show you My perspective, and let Me touch the brokenness before it can fester and become infected. Don’t let the sun go down on an unhealed heart.”

In their classic book *Dream Language*, James and Michal Ann Goll discuss our Hebraic inheritance in embracing the visitation of God through our dreams. They explain the traditional Jewish bedside prayers that are designed to prepare the heart and mind to sleep and to be open to Him. Part of that ritual involves reflecting on their day and taking inventory of their soul, looking at what happened, whom they encountered, what feelings they had, what they are proud of, whom they need to forgive, and for what they need God’s forgiveness. Finally, they prepare for the next day, considering what their hopes are for tomorrow and where they desire God’s blessing.²⁶

More than four hundred years ago, St. Ignatius Loyola encouraged looking for God’s presence in your life through what has been called the Daily Examen, a technique of prayerful reflection on the events of the day in order to discover what God was doing and to discern His direction for us. The following version of St. Ignatius’ prayer is from the *Ignation Spirituality* website:

1. Become aware of God’s presence. Look back on the events of the day in the company of the Holy Spirit.

The day may seem confusing to you—a blur, a jumble, a muddle. Ask God to bring clarity and understanding.

2. Review the day with gratitude. Gratitude is the foundation of our relationship with God. Walk through your day in the presence of God and note its joys and delights. Focus on the day's gifts. Look at the work you did, the people you interacted with. What did you receive from these people? What did you give them? Pay attention to small things—the food you ate, the sights you saw, and other seemingly small pleasures. God is in the details.

3. Pay attention to your emotions. One of St. Ignatius' great insights was that we detect the presence of the Spirit of God in the movements of our emotions. Reflect on the feelings you experienced during the day. Boredom? Elation? Resentment? Compassion? Anger? Confidence? What is God saying through these feelings?

God will most likely show you some ways that you fell short. Make note of these sins and faults. But look deeply for other implications. Does a feeling of frustration perhaps mean that God wants you to consider a new direction in some area of your work? Are you concerned about a friend? Perhaps you should reach out to her in some way.

4. Choose one feature of the day and pray from it. Ask the Holy Spirit to direct you to something during the day that God thinks is particularly important. It may involve a feeling—positive or negative. It may be a significant encounter with another person or a vivid moment of pleasure or peace. Or it may be something that seems rather insignificant. Look at it. Pray about it. Allow the prayer to arise spontaneously from your heart—whether intercession, praise, repentance, or gratitude.

5. Look toward tomorrow. Ask God to give you light for tomorrow's challenges. Pay attention to the feelings that surface as you survey what is coming up. Are you doubtful? Cheerful? Apprehensive? Full of delighted anticipation? Allow these feelings to turn into prayer. Seek God's guidance. Ask Him for help and understanding. Pray for hope.

St. Ignatius encouraged people to talk to Jesus like a friend. End the Daily Examen with a conversation with Jesus. Ask forgiveness for your sins. Ask for His protection and help. Ask for His wisdom about the questions you have and the problems you face. Do all this in the spirit of gratitude. Your life is a gift, and it is adorned with gifts from God.²⁷

MY NIGHTTIME RITUAL

As I lie in bed, I breathe slowly, saying the name of Jesus over and over again as I breathe in and out. I say, "Je..." as I breathe in and "...sus" as I breathe out. As I breathe in, I see His Spirit as Light, entering me and filling me. As I breathe out, I see my spirit as semi-light going back to Him. If I need something specific such as peace or calm, I may repeat those words as I breathe in and out. I ask for a dream or for insight on an issue that is before me. I drift off to sleep.

PREPARE YOURSELF FOR THE COMING DAY

Notice that both the Judaic and the Ignatius prayers are not complete without offering the next day to the Lord. Presenting ourselves and our upcoming activities to Him at night is an awesome way to get into the spirit and receive supernatural revelation so that the next day is ensured of divine success.

HEARING GOD THROUGH YOUR DREAMS

Here is the process I use to make sure this happens regularly in my life: I know that whatever I fill my heart and mind with as I drift off to sleep is what my heart will work on during the night. While my mind is out of the way, my spirit and the Holy Spirit, who is joined to my spirit, are able to sift through all my disjointed thoughts, sort them out, and bring clarity and creativity to them. They then provide revelation, understanding and inspiration to me through dreams as I sleep or as I journal as soon as I awaken. I record and interpret my dreams as soon as I get up, and often they provide a springboard into even greater wisdom and direction from the Lord through my journal.

I receive a lot of creative ideas during these morning journaling times. If there is a dream I remember, I type up a summary of it and then I tune to flow and ask the Lord what it is about. He interprets it as I type. I save the file in my “dreams directory” on my computer.

If I wake up in the middle of the night from a dream, I will sit at my computer for a few minutes and type up a brief summary of the dream, and then I go back to sleep. In the morning, I review the dream, ask God for the interpretation, tune to flow, and record the interpretation in the file.

FILLING THE “HARD DRIVE,” THEN USING THE “SOFTWARE” OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

I find revelation comes to those earnestly seeking, exploring, and hungering for it. All the examples of creative solutions seen earlier in this chapter involve people who had immersed themselves in their searches, and their hearts gave them revelation as the reward for their search. When we search with all our hearts, we find Him (see Jer. 29:13).

For example, I spent one year seeking to learn how to “abide in Christ.” I had looked up every verse in the New Testament on being

in Christ and having Christ in me, and the revelation was ready to pour out of me.

It did so while I was in Singapore, teaching evening classes on how to hear God's voice. I was free during the daytime, and I sat at my laptop and typed for three days with my eyes closed. That became my book *Naturally Supernatural*, which is a world-altering revelation that has blessed many. Three days of flow to write a 150-page book! But, you do see, I had prepared my heart and mind by researching the topic deeply for many months. I was full of insight and revelation, and out they poured.

If you look at many of Charity's dreams that she shares in this book, you will see the same principle at work. She was meditating on a passage of Scripture or a spiritual truth. She had immersed herself in learning everything she could on a subject, such as compassion. And as she was seeking the Lord, He was found by her in a dream, in a vision of the night.

YOU CAN RELEASE DIVINE REVELATION AND CREATIVITY

Now that you know the process, you can release God's creativity through your heart on a regular basis. Hearing His voice makes you the head and not the tail, above and not beneath, a lender and not a borrower (see Deut. 28:1-14 NKJV)! Supernatural ingenuity restored to the Church so that She becomes the innovative leader in tomorrow's world—don't you love it? I sure do. Will you become a part of this visionary army?

Let your answer be "Yes, Lord!"

