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From A Dream To A Nightmare To A Dream
Matthew 1:18
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What is a dream and then what is the American Dream. The road to the American Dream for African Americans has been riddled with obstacles, oppression, racism, violence, setbacks, and roadblocks. Said differently, "Life ain't been no crystal stair," but we're still climbing.

A cherished ambition or ideal or the contemplation of doing something is the definition of a dream. We all have contemplated the possibility of doing something of great worth and imagined that perfect person that completes us. All of us at one time have had an opportunity to dream.

Joseph, the father of Jesus, was in the midst of a dream of epic proportions. On the surface, he was seeking to secure his future as a carpenter. Yet there was something on the horizon that he could not visualize.

Joseph was preparing to marry Mary according to the Jewish customs of that day. He was looking for the perfect woman, from a family of good reputation, one who would make him a suitable wife and provide him with a number of children. Joseph's marriage to Mary was prearranged. Not only were the parents a part of prearranging the marriage but also the Lord played a part in the matchmaking process.

The same God who arranged the marriage of Joseph and Mary is the same God who puts people in places to bless you, people to encourage you, obstacles to challenge you, and people who go ahead of you to lead and guide you.

After the arrangement of the marriage, they were considered husband and wife but they did not live together for an entire year. For Joseph and Mary, the process had just begun. During the period of separation, Joseph dreamed of his future with Mary and he had every reason to dream. Eventually his dreams were transformed into a nightmare. Most of our nightmares happen when we are awake but not for Joseph. The nightmares we experience are rude, disrespectful, and impolite. They just show up and disrupt everything that's going all too well.

Nightmares occur without consulting us. Joseph had dreams but the dreams were interrupted and transformed into nightmares.

1. He Is Met With Disturbing News

Mary is pregnant with a child. Yet she and Joseph had not slept together. While we know what happened, Joseph did not get the chance to read the news.

The nightmare in Joseph's mind was that Mary was unfaithful. Have you ever been there, in the midst of preparation and anticipation of dreams coming to fruition only for a nightmare to occur?

1. The Nightmare Of Disbelief And Disappointment

Everything in Joseph's life was going well until he hears the news about Mary being pregnant. His first response was possibly disbelief. How could Mary be unfaithful to him leading to the nightmare of disappointment? These conditions are not easily repaired.

1. The Nightmare Of A Dilemma And Decisions

The laws of that day would allow Joseph to have Mary stoned to death, or give a public or private notice of divorce. While he did not ask for the nightmare, he was faced with these dilemmas and decisions.

When the Lord is involved in your life, He can turn a nightmare into a daydream.

The Lord puts Joseph to sleep in order to set the record straight in Joseph's mind. The angel of the Lord tells Joseph what was to occur and then tells Joseph what must be done according to the desires of the Lord. In fact, the angel tells Joseph to marry Mary and call the child Jesus.

For some of us, we have to go through the nightmares of life in the mist of our own dreams in order for the Lord to transform the nightmare into a daydream for His glory and our benefit.