As a child, Carl Sagan fell in love with the stars.  
“The scale of the universe opened up to me. It was a kind of religious experience. There was a magnificence to it, a grandeur, a scale that has never left me.”

When asked, “Do you believe in God?” Sagan replied: “If by God you mean the physical laws that govern the universe, then clearly there is a God. But I don’t find such a God very satisfying. I mean, it really doesn’t make much sense to pray to the law of gravity, does it.”

Three things biblically wise men and women know about stars

I. THERE ARE STARS AND THERE ARE STARS

A. This Star was Unusual

Wise Men trafficked in stars. It’s what they did for a living. But something was different about this star. The magi may not have known much about God, but they knew stars. When they saw this star they knew something extraordinary was happening. And they took note.
B. “Unusual” Events are a Pattern in Scripture

Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, and he led the flock to the far side of the desert and came to Horeb. There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. So Moses thought, “I will go over and see this strange sight — why the bush does not burn up.” When the Lord saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush. — Exodus 3:1-4

**QUESTION:** What’s ‘Out of the Ordinary’ in Your Life Right Now?

- A piece of news you’ve received recently
- A vivid impression during prayer
- A past event you can’t forget
- An illness, or a hurt, or a loss

Wise men and women pay attention to such things. They are often God’s way of getting our attention.

II. FOLLOWING GOD’S STAR TENDS TO BE INCONVENIENT AND CONFUSING

A. Inconvenient: “We saw his star in the east and have come” (v. 2b)

“When the Magi saw the star, they followed it. They didn’t know where it would lead. They didn’t know how long it would take. They rearranged their schedules, found someone to water their plants and feed the cat, and they followed the star. The Magi were willing to rearrange their lives to check out what God was doing in their world. When the star appeared, the Magi followed it.”

**QUESTION:** Why are God’s stars so inconvenient?
B. Confusing: “After Jesus was born in Bethlehem . . . Magi came to Jerusalem” (v. 1)

According to Matthew, following God’s star tends to be a mixture of things supernatural, common sense, and getting advice.

QUESTION: Why are God’s stars so confusing?

I asked the Lord that I might grow in faith and love and every grace,
Might more of his salvation know and seek more earnestly his face.
’Twas he who taught me thus to pray and he,
I trust, has answered prayer;
But it has been in such a way as almost drove me to despair.
I hoped that in some favored hour at once he’d answer my request,
And by his love’s constraining power subdue my sins and give me rest.

Instead of this he made me feel the hidden evils of my heart,
And let the angry powers of hell assault my soul in every part.
Yea more, with his own hand he seemed intent to aggravate my woe,
Crossed all the fair designs I schemed, blasted my gourds, and laid me low.

Lord, why is this, I trembling cried, wilt thou pursue this worm to death?
‘Tis in this way,’ the Lord replied, ‘I answer prayer for grace and faith.
‘These inward trials I employ from self and pride to set thee free,
And break thy schemes of earthly joy, that thou mayest seek thy all in me.’
— John Newton

III. GOD’S STARS ARE DESIGNED TO BRING US TO JESUS AND THEN SEND US AWAY CHANGED
“We have come to worship” (v. 2b, 11)
“They returned to their country by another route” (v. 12)

We can summarize Matthew’s point by saying:
• The star brought the wise men to Bethlehem; Jesus brought them to their knees
• When the wise men left Bethlehem, they were changed

CONCLUSION

“We when my husband died, people would ask if Carl changed at the end and converted to a belief in an afterlife. They ask if I think I will ever see him again. The answer to both questions is no.” – Carl Sagan’s wife

What a waste of God’s stars.

God has better intentions for his stars than that.
• He sends them to get our attention
• He designs them to be instruments of growth
• He uses them to bring us to Jesus and to be changed

Are you letting God’s stars do their work?