

Ideals Are Like Stars

“Ideals are like stars; you will not succeed in touching them with your hands. But like the seafaring man on the desert of waters, you choose them as your guides, and following them you will reach your destiny.” – Carl Schurz

STARS

One could say the closest I ever got to the stars was at BYU.

It’s hard not to, studying astronomy as I did.

I knew them by name – Sirius, Beteguse, even Delta Scuti.

Although, as Mr. Schurz described, I wasn’t able to grab hold of them directly. I searched between them into the emptiest pockets of space.

What was I searching for? Galaxies. Heretofore undiscovered galaxies that broader surveys may have missed. And which should have been there.

Despite the late nights and early mornings searching the dark skies, they never appeared.

Even so, I continued to search.

Now, years later, astronomy research is no longer a part of my life. As such, I sometimes find myself farther from the stars than I would like.

Even while I grasp for them, the stars slip through my fingers.

Where are you, Orion? Andromeda? Where are the Pleiades?

IDEALS

One could say the closest I ever got to my ideals was at BYU.

It’s hard not to, with the religion classes I had.

I knew them by name – faith, charity, even patience.

Although, as Mr. Schurz described, I wasn’t able to grab hold of them directly. I searched between them into the emptiest pockets of myself.

What was I searching for? Perfection. Heretofore undiscovered perfection that broader surveys may have missed. And which should have been there.

Despite the late nights and early mornings searching within me, it never appeared.

Even so, I continued to search.

Now, years later, religion classes are no longer a part of my life. As such, I sometimes find myself further from my ideals than I would like.

Even while I grasp for them, these ideals slip through my fingers.

Where are you, humility? Generosity? Where is my charity?

I mourn the closeness I once had with my stars.

It's just, when life keeps you too busy, it's hard to find the energy to look up.

But when I do, the stars I see are familiar. Like old friends.

They call to me.

And I follow.

I let that herald reverberate in my soul, as I push myself closer to them.

Sometimes I falter. Sometimes I lose energy to continue or even try to go another way.

But I always turn back.

Look! There is Ursa Major! I can bring myself a little closer to it. Now, where does it lead me?

It directs my gaze towards Ursa Minor. Yes, that's it!

And follow it along to Polaris, the North star – this feels right.

This is a part of me, even if it doesn't always show.

Yes, one look upward at my stars shows me exactly where I want to be.

So I would disagree. I may have learned about the stars at BYU, but that wasn't my closest encounter with them.

The closest I get is each time I choose to look up.

I mourn the closeness I once had with these ideals.

It's just, when life keeps you too busy, it's hard to find the energy to look up.

But when I do, the goals I see are familiar. Like old friends.

They call to me.

And I follow.

I let that herald reverberate in my soul, as I push myself closer to them.

Sometimes I falter. Sometimes I lose energy to continue or even try to go another way.

But I always turn back.

Look! There is faith! I can bring myself a little closer to it. Now where does it lead me?

It directs my gaze towards kindness. Yes, that's it!

And follow it along to charity, the pure love of Christ – this feels right.

This is a part of me, even if it doesn't always show.

Yes, one look upward at my ideals shows me exactly where I want to be.

So I would disagree. I may have learned about my ideals at BYU, but that wasn't my closest encounter with them.

The closest I get is each time I choose to look up.