

## The Allure of the Night Sky

My wife, Lola, grew up on a farm 12 miles outside of Cookeville, Tenn., and her parents continued to live in that homeplace for years after we married before they eventually moved into town for convenience in their later years.

I always enjoyed visiting them for weekends on the farm. There was just something refreshing and inspiring about being immersed in the grandeur of nature, enfolding me in the quiet beauty of fields and woodlands around me.

Among the wonders was sitting in a front-porch swing on a dark night, quiet except for the croaks of frogs from a pond or the faraway, soulful sound of a whippoorwill somewhere deep in the forest.

With no light pollution, the heavens sparkled with a brilliance unseen by city dwellers as the moon rose and stars winked at any who would notice. I was spellbound by their allure.

I could spend blocks of time gazing at the night sky and dreaming. I often thought of David, the shepherd boy, as he must have stared into outer space and contemplated these heavenly bodies and the Creator who set them in place.



Science tells us that light travels at 186,000 miles per second, which is 6 trillion miles in a year. The Milky Way is so large that it would take 100,000 light years to travel from one end to the other. Scientists estimate that our galaxy has 100 billion stars.

The closest star to our sun is *Proxima Centauri*, which is 4.22 light years from the earth. Think about it: The light that we see from that star left there about the time Columbus discovered America.

As vast and amazing as the cosmos is, humanity is still God's crown jewel. He created us in His image with purpose, and He gave us the capacity to enjoy fellowship with Him.

God loves humanity so much that His Son Jesus gave His life so all could have opportunity to establish that intimate love relationship through faith in Him.

No doubt David – as he sat on a hillside outside Bethlehem at night – pondered the power and majesty of the ruler of the universe – as he asked the question appearing in his Psalm 8, verse 4: "What is man, that You are mindful of him? And the son of man, that You visit him?"

The answer: He (or she) is loved!

– Beecher Hunter