

“The Light Within: Navigating Life by Another Way”
Matthew 2:1-12

Writer Barbara Brown Taylor tells the remarkable story of Jacques Lusseyran, a French resistance fighter during the Nazi occupation. His memoir, *And There Was Light*, chronicles a life transformed by an unexpected tragedy.

Jacques was an ordinary boy until the age of seven. During a schoolyard scuffle, he fell against a teacher’s desk, shattering his glasses. The accident was catastrophic; he was left completely and permanently blind. In the 1920s, such a diagnosis was seen as a total disaster—a sentence to a life on the margins.

But Jacques’ parents refused to treat him as "unfortunate." They didn't speak of the "night" that had supposedly claimed him. Instead, his father, a man of deep spiritual intuition, gave him a prompt: "**Always tell us when you discover something.**"

Barely ten days after the accident, Jacques made a discovery that would entrance him for the rest of his life. He realized that while he had lost the sight of his eyes, the *source* of light had not been obliterated. He wrote:

“I could not see the light of the world anymore. Yet the light was still there... I felt it gushing forth every moment and brimming over... The source of light is not in the outer world. The light dwells where life also dwells: within ourselves.”

Jacques learned to "see" from the inside out. He could tell trees apart by the sound of their shadows. He could sense the pressure of a wall against his body. But more importantly, he discovered that his "inner sight" was tied to his spiritual condition. When he was angry, sad, or afraid, his inner light dimmed, leaving him truly blind. But when he was joyful and attentive, the light returned. He learned that the best way to remain in the presence of this light was **to love**.

Even when he was later captured by the Nazis and sent to Buchenwald, he found that no one could turn out the light inside him without his consent. When he called himself back to attention and love, the space inside him opened up, and he moved with ease once again. Jacques’ life proved that the world is completely different from what our physical eyes lead us to believe.

This is the same wisdom we find in the Gospel of Matthew. Today, we celebrate Epiphany—the visit of the Wise Men to the Christ child.

The Magi began their journey following an outer star. That external sign led them to the most logical place to find a king: the palace of Herod in Jerusalem. But the palace was a place of surface appearances—superficial, deceptive, and dangerous.

While the outer star got them to Judea, it was their **inner light** that led them to the humble home in Bethlehem. Let’s watch/listen to Matthew 2:1-11

https://youtu.be/rK8_hoDBJlg

It was their inner light that allowed the Magi to recognize a King in a vulnerable child. And most importantly, it was their inner guidance—accessed through a dream—that warned them not to return to Herod.

Without that inner light, they would have walked straight into Herod's trap. Instead, the Bible tells us they returned home **"by another way."**

This kind of inner light is essential for our ability to navigate our own lives. The path through life is rarely a straight line, and the "palaces" of this world—success, power, and surface appearances—often try to blind us to the truth.

From an early age, we are often taught to dismiss our intuition. We are told to discount our dreams, our "gut feelings," and the subtle nudges of the Holy Spirit. We are taught to rely only on what we can see with our physical eyes.

But God has planted a source of light within you. Through the Holy Spirit, God provides guides and messengers to help us go deeper. Today, I invite you to let the Wise Men be your guides.

- **Check in with your inner light:** Take time each day to move past the "surface" of things.
- **Heed the nudges:** Pay attention to your body's wisdom and the signs that appear in the quiet moments.
- **Trust the silence:** When the road ahead is not clear, stay attentive. The answers often come in the places you least expect—not in the "palaces" of grand expectations, but in the "humble homes" of daily life.

As you look toward the journey ahead, I offer this poem by Jan Richardson, **"For Those Who Have Far to Travel."** May it remind you that the star you follow is one that only you can truly recognize.

For Those Who Have Far to Travel: An Epiphany Blessing

by Jan Richardson

*If you could see
the journey whole
you might never
undertake it;
might never dare
the first step
that propels you
from the place
you have known
toward the place*

you know not.

*Call it
one of the mercies
of the road:
that we see it
only by stages
as it opens
before us,
as it comes into
our keeping
step by single step.*

*There is nothing
for it
but to go
and by our going
take the vows
the pilgrim takes:*

*to be faithful to
the next step;
to rely on more
than the map;
to heed the signposts
of intuition and dream;
to follow the star
that only you
will recognize;*

*to keep an open eye
for the wonders that
attend the path;
to press on
beyond distractions
beyond fatigue
beyond what would
tempt you
from the way.*

*There are vows
that only you
will know;
the secret promises
for your particular path
and the new ones*

*you will need to make
when the road
is revealed
by turns
you could not
have foreseen.*

*Keep them, break them,
make them again:
each promise becomes
part of the path;
each choice creates
the road that will take you
to the place
where at last
you will kneel*

*to offer the gift
most needed—
the gift that only you
can give—
before turning to go
home by
another way. Amen.*

Epiphany: My Inner Star Journal

**“The source of light is not in the outer world... The light dwells where life also dwells:
within ourselves.” — Jacques Lusseyran**

1. Surveying the Night

Joyce Rupp reminds us that stars are most visible when the night is darkest. Jacques Lusseyran found his inner light only after losing his physical sight.

- **Reflection:** In what area of your life does it feel "dark" right now? (This could be a place of uncertainty, a difficult transition, or a loss).
- **Prompt:** Write down the "obstacles" or "walls" you feel you are bumping into.

2. Identifying Your "Inner Pointers"

The Magi had a star in the sky; you have "inner pointers" in your soul. These are the subtle nudges, persistent dreams, or quiet intuitions that move you.

- **Reflection:** Think back to a moment this week when you felt a sudden "pull" of joy, curiosity, or peace. What was happening?
- **Prompt:** List three "stars" (inner nudges) you have noticed lately. They don't have to be big—they just have to be yours.

3. Checking the Battery of Your Light

Lusseyran discovered that his inner light grew bright with **joy and love** but dimmed with **anger and fear**.

- **Reflection:** Look at your current inner condition. Is your light shining brightly, or does it feel flickering and dim?
- **Prompt:** What is one "defense" or "angry thought" you can let go of today to allow your inner light to expand?

4. Relying on More Than the Map

The Wise Men learned to "rely on more than the map" of Jerusalem's palaces. They listened to their dreams.

- **Reflection:** Your body and your silence often speak louder than your logic.
- **Prompt:** Sit in silence for five minutes. Afterward, write down any physical sensations (a "push" or a "pull") or words that bubbled up from your intuition.

5. Going Home by Another Way

Epiphany is about transformation. The journey doesn't leave us where it found us.

- **Reflection:** As you look toward 2026, what is the "other way" you feel called to travel?
- **Prompt:** Write a "vow for the road"—a simple commitment to follow your inner star this week (e.g., "*I will trust my intuition when I feel hurried*").

Prayer for the Week

Holy God, thank you for the stars that shine in my night. Help me to be attentive, as Jacques was, to the light that gushes forth from within. Give me the courage of the Magi to follow the star only I can recognize, so that I may find You in the humble, unlikely places of my life. Amen.