# Chapter 1

1. **In what ways might a person be misled by observing only the physical world and remaining ignorant of the spiritual world? Consider Hebrews 11:1,27; 1 John 4:20.**

Nothing seemed right. The stone was too light, pebbles too smooth. The soil didn’t dirty his hands. Everything beyond arm’s reach appeared … flat-like pictures on the pages of a storybook. Things seemed real enough up close, but the farther a tree or a rock was from him, the less real it appeared.

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1. **2 Corinthians 4:17–18 calls us to fix our eyes on the unseen. What would be a specific, practical example of that in an everyday situation?**

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1. Unbelievers live as though what they experience with their senses is all there is, ignoring spiritual realities. What are some ways that approach to life produces sin? See Psalm 73:2–4; 13–17; Proverbs 7:21–23; 9:17–18.

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In the distance, purple, red, and yellow rays shot upward. And there were other colors-colors he had never seen. They were rising from … an old, ramshackle cottage. ... they moved, shimmering like light reflecting off water. No, not like water. This movement was different. Like the movement of a living thing.

1. What are some factors that determine how much of God’s glory you will be able to see in his Word? See Luke 8:18; Jeremiah 29:13; Psalm 119:18; Matthew 13:15.

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#### Dig Deeper – God’s Word

Why is it so hard to see the glory of God? See 2 Corinthians 4:4; 1 Corinthians 2:14; Romans 1:18.

In what sense is the Word of God “living”? See Hebrews 4:12; 1 Peter 1:23.

1. **What are some methods God uses to draw people to himself?[[1]](#footnote-1) See Hosea 11:4 and Amos 4:6–11.**

He turned again toward the cottage. In time, a few of the colors reappeared. Something about them tugged at his spirit, drawing him despite his fear-almost as though it were a person, beckoning him.

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1. **What are some means God has used to draw *you* to himself?**

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1. **What is it in this world that tends to be most dazzling to you, competing with God’s glory for your attention?**

Something rustled behind him … A dark, churning cloud rolled toward him. The cloud resolved into a massive flock of birds … circling in a kaleidoscope of brilliant, dancing color. While the strange hues of the cottage had frightened Adam, these colors delighted him.

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#### Dig Deeper – Wisdom and Folly

Read Proverbs 9:1–6; 13–18 and watch for similarities in the way wisdom’s banquet and folly’s banquet are described.

What is the significance of the fact that both are described as a banquet and both offer identical invitations?

1. **In the parable of the sower (see Matthew 13:1–9; 18–23)[[2]](#footnote-2) what is Satan’s first tactic when someone hears the Word, (illustrated as the hard ground)?**

If he trained his eyes on the cottage and kept a straight course, it shouldn’t take long to get there. … Whenever he stopped, the birds circled him, then resumed their progress as if drawing Adam along were a game. For Adam, it was a game. He waited for the birds to encircle him, watched them go again, and ran after them, laughing.   
 He turned back toward the cottage … A blinding flash and a crack of thunder made him jump. Pouring rain pelted him. Adam dashed for shelter under the trees.

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1. **What are some ways Satan might accomplish this?**

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1. **What is the second tactic (shallow soil)?**

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1. **What are some specific examples of how this could happen in your heart?**

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1. **What is the third tactic (thorny soil)?**

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1. **What is the lie wealth tells *your* heart?**

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1. Have you ever slacked off from seeking God, then when you sought him again found yourself much farther from him than you expected? Why does that happen? See Psalm 119:155.

He turned back toward the cottage, now a tiny dot in the distance. That’s impossible. I didn’t wander that far. He sighed. Now it’ll take forever to get there.

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Adam realized he was … ravenously hungry. The void of longing seemed to arise from deeper inside than his stomach.  
 *The cottage can wait,* he thought as he liberated the delicacy from the branch.

1. **What insights can you glean from Isaiah 55:1–2 about our appetite for God and our appetite for sin?**

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1. **The flesh’s appetite for sin is literally insatiable. See Ephesians 4:19 (CSB “…with a desire for more and more”). Even after becoming disgusted with our sin, we return to it time and again even after a sin proves unsatisfying (See 2 Peter 2:22). Why is this? See Galatians 5:17**.

He bit into it. Pleasure coursed through him … He had the strange thought that he would fight to the death for this peach. And yet, he didn’t finish it. … He dropped the first in search of a bigger, juicier one. Every bite made him want two more. But even after stuffing himself, he didn’t feel full. In fact, he felt empty. Not hungry, but hollow and unsatisfied.

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1. Why does indulgence in sin so often result in irritability? For a case study, see 2 Samuel 13:1–2, 14–15.

He took another bite. Ugh! He threw it against a tree. It ricocheted and rolled to a stop in the dirt. Adam stared at the thing and hated it.

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1. **Even after becoming disgusted with our sin, we return to it time and again (See 2 Peter 2:22). Why is this? See Galatians 5:17**; **Matthew 26:41.**

He went to kick it into the bushes … But when he reached it, he paused. He picked it up and examined it again. He cleaned the dirt off … and devoured the rest of it.

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1. The world is not content to merely sin. They want us to join them. When we don’t, they are suspicious. What insights can you gain from Psalm 1:1–2 and Romans 12:2 about how to avoid conforming to the world?

The man pulled an orange from his bag and held it out … as if offering a morsel to placate a dangerous animal.  
 Adam took a tentative step toward the man, then another, and accepted the gift. The man watched as he …slipped it into his mouth. … The man smiled, relaxed his posture, and extended his hand. “I’m George.”

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1. In the story, the cottage draws Adam. Scripture speaks of God himself drawing us (John 6:44,65, 12:32). To see the close relationship between God and his Word, see John 1:1, Hebrews 1:3, and Psalm 138:2. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. This parable is also found in Mark 4:1–20 and Luke 8:1–15. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)