



The Birth of Abiding

 **PASSION:** Naturally, we could start in John 15 to begin understanding the heart of God in abiding. But we could also say, abiding doesn't begin in John 15. Go back—way back—to Adam and Eve walking in the garden with God before the fall. Imagine the perfection of the land, the garden, trees, air, animals—all pristine and at peace with one another. Allow yourself to dream about the beauty, safety, and magnificence of all of creation. Walk with God in the cool of the day. This is how abiding started. And this is how abiding will be restored—with the wolf and the lamb nestling side by side, abiding together (Isaiah 11:6-9).

 **PROBE:** Pause for two minutes. Release your five senses to engage as fully as possible. What do you see? What do you smell? What do you touch? What do you taste? What do you hear? Genesis 1,2 capture the vision and passion of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit within the context of purity and perfection. Touch the animals you would never dare touch. Taste the perfectly ripe berries. Drink in the colors, the textures, the shapes.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning wrote:

“Earth’s crammed with heaven,
And every common bush afire with God;
But only he who sees, takes off his shoes,
The rest sit round it and pluck blackberries,
And daub their natural faces unaware.”

Do you worship as you experience creation everyday? We live between the bookends of creation (Genesis 1,2) and the restoration of creation (Isaiah 11:6-9). Our world is full of chaos, pain, suffering, beauty, mystery, confusion, and longing for the Lord all mingled together!

*For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us...²² For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now.²³ And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.
(Romans 8:18,22-23)*

But our God is the **same**, yesterday, today, and forever!

*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and **today** and forever.* (Hebrews 13:8)

The great God of creation and the restorative God of revelation is our God **today**! Hear how our great God of **today** describes Himself and His invitation to abide in Him:

*He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty.
I will say to the LORD, “My refuge and my fortress, My God, in whom I trust!”* (Psalm 91:1,2 NASB)

God chooses to use several very powerful and descriptive names of His in just two verses! Why would He do such a thing? Because He wants to be known! And this is a drastically brief list!

- “Most High,” **Elyon**, pictures God as the exalted ruler of the universe who vindicates the innocent and judges the wicked. (First introduced in Genesis 14:18-20)
- “Almighty,” **Shaddai**, the Sovereign God of the world who grants life/blesses and kills/judges. (First introduced in Genesis 17:1)
- **Jehovah** is most often translated “LORD” with all caps. This is the proper name of the God of Israel, first seen in Genesis 2:4 (**Jehovah Elohim**, LORD God, throughout Genesis 2,3, ff)
- **Jehovah Jireh**, I AM will provide, Genesis 22:11-14
- **Jehovah Shalom**, Yahweh is Peace, Judges 6:22-24

Each name of God is like a treasure chest to be unlocked and enjoyed. **This great God is our Abiding Place!** God doesn't call us to a place for safety and protection. He calls us to a Person! He calls us to Himself! He is our Shelter, our Shadow, our Refuge, our Fortress.

PRACTICE:



- Why do you suppose God uses so many names for himself?
- Are there particular names of God that draw you into him as your safe place?
- Visit one or more of these verses to experience in fresh ways God revealing Himself as your abiding place, rock, stronghold, refuge, etc.

Proverbs 18:10,

Psalms 18:2-3,

Psalms 61:2-4,

Psalms 62:1-2,

2 Samuel 22:3.

Then respond creatively with a word picture from these verses—perhaps a song comes to mind, a drawing, a written prayer, etc.

- Ask God to continue revealing Himself to you as your abiding place. Set aside fresh pages in your journal to capture what He reveals.
- What is God saying to you about abiding more deeply in Him?
- How will you live differently?