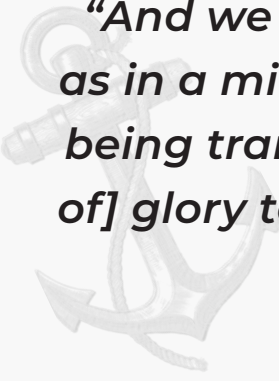


The Image

The image we create to protect ourselves can keep us from surrendering to the One who transforms us.

ANCHORED VERSE



“And we all, with unveiled face, continually seeing as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are progressively being transformed into His image from [one degree of] glory to [even more] glory, which comes from the Lord, [who is] the Spirit.”

— 2 Corinthians 3:18 (AMP) —

We were created to bear the image of God, but fear, shame, and self-protection often lead us to construct an identity we believe will keep us safe, accepted, or in control. The adaptation itself may have formed before we understood what we were doing. The spiritual danger begins when we trust, defend, and serve that image instead of allowing God to tell us what is true. We approach Him guarded, protecting the image we created instead of allowing Him to reveal and transform what is happening within us.

by Sean Brannan

Friday, 7 August, 2026

Welcome friend,

Thank you for taking the time to read this week's Anchored Update. I never take your time or attention for granted, and I'm grateful to have you walking alongside me as these ideas continue to unfold.

A Quick Update:

The proof copy of the **From Survival to Surrender Companion Journal** arrived, and it looks great. I'll begin fulfilling preorders Monday morning, August 10, so the preorder window will remain open through Sunday evening, August 9.

I'm also learning how to format **From Survival to Surrender** for Kindle and ebook distribution. Print production and reflowable ebooks are very different worlds, and there has been a learning curve. I'm also working to make both the book and companion journal available through Amazon. My goal is to have that process completed by the end of next week.

I would genuinely appreciate your input as this ecosystem continues to grow. If there are topics you'd like to see explored, something on the website that could be clearer, or something you're walking through in this season, I'd be grateful to hear from you. We're a community of believers who can encourage, strengthen, and build one another up.

The Image

We were created in the image of God. Before we achieved anything, proved anything, or learned how to make ourselves acceptable to other people, our identity began with Him. We were created to reflect the One who made us.

Somewhere along the way, many of us learned to create something safer to present instead.

Most of us didn't consciously decide to manufacture a false identity. We adapted. We learned what

- » gained approval,
- » avoided rejection,
- » reduced conflict,
- » earned affection,
- » or helped us feel safe.

Some of us became strong and self-sufficient. Others became agreeable, useful, successful, spiritual, funny, quiet, or endlessly dependable. The image may have looked different, but it often served the same purpose: protect the vulnerable places we didn't know how to entrust to anyone else.

Genesis 3 gives us an early picture of this pattern. After Adam and Eve became aware of their nakedness, they covered themselves, hid, and became afraid of being seen. Their covering didn't change what was true. It simply gave them something to stand behind.

Once we create an image, we have to manage it. We become careful about what others see, how our stories are told, and what parts of us remain concealed. We may explain away unhealthy fruit, resist correction, avoid vulnerable conversations, or distance ourselves from people who see beneath the version we have presented. The image may have formed as protection, but maintaining it eventually requires control.

Healthy privacy and boundaries still have value. We don't owe everyone complete access to every part of our lives. The deeper problem begins when we need people to believe something about us that we are unwilling to examine ourselves, honestly.

That's where this moves past psychology and into the heart. Those adaptations may have helped us survive something real. The spiritual danger begins when we trust the identity we created to provide our worth, security, acceptance, or control. At some point, the image can stop being something we use and become something we serve. We protect it from truth, defend it against correction, and resist anything that threatens the person we need others to see.

Psalm 51:6 says that God desires truth in our innermost being. He's inviting us into honesty, not a more convincing presentation.

I can learn how to look faithful without allowing God to transform what's happening on the inside. I can manage my language, habits, appearance, and reputation, but I can't manufacture fruit. Fruit grows from the root and reveals the vine I'm actually connected to. When life's pressures start exposing what's beneath the surface, the difference between image and transformation becomes difficult to hide. I may be able to manage what people see for a while, but the fruit of my life will eventually tell the truth.

We can spend years polishing the window through which others see us while refusing to look honestly into the mirror. Jesus confronted this pattern in Matthew 23 when He addressed religious leaders who had carefully managed the outside while neglecting what was happening within. Their presentation looked clean, disciplined, and faithful, but the image

they maintained allowed them to avoid the truth God was exposing in their hearts.

- » Where have I become more committed to appearing strong than admitting I need help?
- » Where do I defend my intentions instead of examining my fruit?
- » Where have I used knowledge, service, spirituality, humor, independence, or competence to keep people from seeing what I'm still afraid to face?

The image doesn't keep God from seeing us. It keeps us from surrendering to what He sees. God saw Adam and Eve beneath the covering. He knew where they were when He called to them. In the same way, our defenses do not conceal us from Him or prevent Him from loving us. They keep us guarded within the relationship He is inviting us to experience. We approach Him protecting the image we created instead of allowing Him to expose, heal, and transform what is actually happening within us.

Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 3 that when we turn to the Lord, the veil is removed. His immediate context is the freedom and clarity found in Christ, yet the image also confronts the coverings we bring into our relationship with God. We are invited to behold Him with an unveiled face and allow the Holy Spirit to transform us into His image.

That transformation doesn't come through polishing or perfecting the image we created. It begins as we surrender our need to protect it and allow God to tell us what's actually true.

This Week's Articles

This week's article continues the conversation we began in last week's newsletter. It explores how fear, wounds, unhealthy patterns, self-protection, and the demands we carry can restrict our capacity to love, connect, receive truth, and respond well. The article also asks what our limitations may be revealing about where God is inviting us to heal, grow, and surrender.

 [What Limits Our Capacity](#)

“We can spend years polishing the window through which others see us while refusing to look honestly into the mirror.”

Anchored Prayer

Abba,

Thank You for seeing me fully and loving me without requiring me to perform. Show me where I have learned to hide behind an image of my own making. Give me the courage to receive what You reveal without defending, explaining, blaming, or running away. Teach me to trust Your love more than I trust the version of myself I have learned to protect. Lead me into truth, surrender, and the transforming work of Your Spirit.

Hallelujah. Amen.

 *The image we create doesn't keep God from seeing us.
It keeps us from surrendering to what He sees.* 

Anchored Reflection

Take a few quiet moments to sit with what this may be revealing. The goal is not to condemn the ways we learned to protect ourselves, but to notice where those protections may now be keeping us guarded, resistant, or unwilling to face what God is bringing into the light.

What image have I learned to present in order to feel safe, accepted, valuable, or in control?

What am I protecting when I resist correction, vulnerability, or an honest look at what is happening within me?

What does the fruit of my life reveal about the image I am protecting and the vine I am actually connected to?

Your Ideas are Important

Every newsletter, article, and Anchored Reflection begins with a real question or burden.

If something is pressing on your heart, send it my way. Each week I choose a focus for the newsletter, an article, or a reflection. What you share could be the catalyst for someone else's breakthrough. I would also love your feedback on recent articles.

 [Share What's on Your Heart](#)



Save or Share This Newsletter

I'm creating PDF versions of these newsletters so they're easier to save, revisit, and share. If this week's email encouraged you or brought something into focus, you can download the PDF version from the archive here:

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