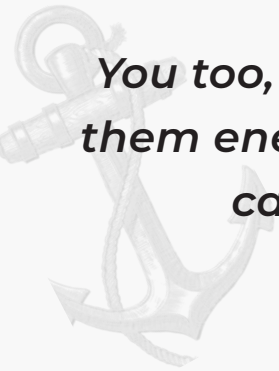


Strengthen Your Heart

What it means and how we do it

ANCHORED VERSE



You too, be patient; strengthen your hearts [keep them energized and firmly committed to God], because the coming of the Lord is near.

— James 5:8 (AMP) —

James tells us to strengthen our hearts, but what does that actually mean? This week I'm looking at the Greek behind James 5:8 and what it looks like to become increasingly established in God when circumstances leave us unsettled.

by Sean Brannan

Friday, 21 August, 2026

Hello my friend,

Welcome back to Anchored. Thank you for taking a few minutes out of your week to read, reflect, and spend some time here with me.

Quick Update: The preorder books and journals are on their way, and I should receive them early next week. If you preordered, you should receive tracking information by the middle of next week. I'm still working through the ebook and Kindle formatting, but my goal is to have both the ebook and paperback available on Amazon within the next 7–10 days. You can also order copies directly from [R3B Press](#) anytime.

I've started a new series on fruit. Instead of a few longer articles, I'm going with more shorter pieces that are easier to sit with and connect. The first two are already up on the website, I've linked them below.

As this keeps growing, I'd really love your input. If something on the site could be clearer, if there's a topic you'd like to see, or if you're walking through something that might shape a future reflection, please tell me. We're a community of believers, and part of that is simply helping, encouraging, and building one another up.

Strengthen Your Heart

I've been sitting with three words found in James 5:8 this week: *“strengthen your hearts.”* I've read that verse plenty of times, but this time I stopped there. James tells us to do something, which raises a pretty practical question (at least it did for me). What does it actually mean to *strengthen my heart*, and how do I do it?

The Greek word translated as *“strengthen”* is *stērizō*. It carries the sense of making something firm, establishing it, or setting it firmly in place. When I hear *“strengthen your heart,”* I can instinctively think I need to toughen up, become less affected, or somehow make myself emotionally stronger. James paints a different picture. **A strengthened heart is an established heart.** The question shifts from *“How tough am I?”* to *“What's my inner life becoming established in?”*

The same Greek verb shows up in Luke 9:51 when Jesus sets His face toward Jerusalem. Most English translations capture it as Jesus being resolute or determined. His direction had been firmly set. I think that's a useful picture of a strengthened heart. My circumstances may still affect me. I may still feel:

- » [fear](#)
- » uncertainty
- » grief
- » disappointment
- » pressure

Strength doesn't require me to pretend those things aren't real. The deeper question is whether they get to decide the direction of my heart.

That's made me pay attention to what I reach for when I feel unsettled. I often think I need more information, a clearer answer, some reassurance about the outcome, or enough control to feel secure again. If I can just know what's going to happen, then maybe I can settle down. ***But when my stability depends on knowing the outcome, the outcome has become the thing holding my heart steady.***

This is where Psalm 46:10 keeps coming back to me: ***“Be still and know (recognize, understand) that I am God.”*** (AMP) The psalm isn't describing peaceful circumstances. The earth is moving, mountains are shaking, waters are roaring, and nations are raging. The invitation is to know God in the middle of what is unsettled. I may not know what happens next, but I can return to what I know about Him. I can bring my attention back to His character, His presence, His faithfulness, His goodness, and what He has actually entrusted to me today.

I think, at least in part, that repeated return is how we strengthen our hearts. When I notice that fear, control, another person, or an expected outcome has become the place I'm looking for stability, I can bring my heart back to God and to what I know is true about Him. I don't have to do it once and then stay perfectly steady forever. I just return as often as I realize I've drifted. Over time, my heart becomes more and more established in the One who doesn't change simply because my circumstances do.

Strengthening our hearts doesn't mean learning how to never be shaken; it means becoming so established in God that, when we are shaken, we know where to return.



A strengthened heart is an established heart.



This Week's Articles

Fruit is what a life produces. This new What Is entry looks at fruit as the developing pattern of character, responses, behavior, relationships, choices, and outcomes that gives visible expression to what has been growing within us and shaping us.



[What Is: Fruit](#)

We don't manufacture spiritual fruit through our own effort. Branches don't bear fruit on their own. This article looks at Jesus' picture of the vine and branches and asks what our fruit may reveal about what we're actually connected to and drawing life from.



[How Does Fruit Grow](#)

Anchored Prayer

Abba,

Thank You for being steady when I am not. Show me where I've been looking for certainty, control, or outcomes to give me the security that belongs in You. Teach me to return my heart to You and establish it more deeply in who You are. Lead me in what is mine to do today, and help me trust You with what is not mine to control.

Hallelujah. Amen.

My Own Prayer:

Anchored Breathwork

Return Breathing (5–5) for Reorientation

Purpose: To create a steady rhythm for returning your attention to God when you notice your heart becoming fixed on fear, uncertainty, control, or an outcome.

Posture: Sit comfortably with your feet grounded. Relax your shoulders. Open your hands in your lap as a physical reminder that you don't have to hold everything so tightly.

1. **Inhale** through your nose for **5 seconds**.

Quiet cue: *"You are my God..."*

2. **Exhale** slowly for **5 seconds**.

Quiet cue: *"I return to You."*

Repeat for 5–7 cycles.

Pro Tip: If the counts feel too long, shorten the rhythm slightly. That could look like 3–3 or even 4–4. The goal is regulation, not pressure. A steady rhythm helps your body settle and gives your nervous system a simple pattern to follow.

What I Noticed:

After completing this breathwork practice, take a moment to notice what changed, if anything. Simply pay attention to what was happening within you before the practice and what you notice now.

What did I feel in my body before I began?

What do I notice now?

Where did my mind go during the practice, and what did I find myself returning to?

Is there anything I'm trying to control, understand, or secure that I need to place back into God's hands?

Anchored Reflection

Strengthening the heart begins with noticing where I'm already looking for stability. These questions aren't about judging whether I'm doing it right. They're simply an invitation to slow down, pay attention, and honestly consider where my heart has been settling lately.

What have I been looking to for stability lately?

When I become unsettled, do I reach first for control, certainty, reassurance, or God?

What do I know to be true about God even when I don't know how my circumstances will turn out?

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:

 [PDF Newsletter Archive](#)



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