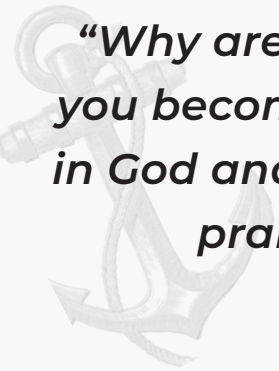


Messengers

Messengers, Not Masters

ANCHORED VERSE



“Why are you in despair, O my soul? And why have you become restless and disturbed within me? Hope in God and wait expectantly for Him, for I shall again praise Him for the help of His presence.”

— *Psalm 42:5 (AMP)* —

Feelings are real, but they were never meant to run the show. This week I’m working through how to listen honestly to what our emotions may be revealing, without letting them decide what’s actually true or dictate how we respond.

by Sean Brannan

Friday, 28 August, 2026

Welcome back to another installment of the Anchored Newsletter my friend.

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

A Quick Update: The preorder copies of *From Survival to Surrender* and the *Companion Journal* shipped this week. Seeing those books finally heading out to people who supported this project before there was even a finished book in their hands was pretty special. Thank you for your support and trust. I'm looking forward to hearing what stands out to you as you begin reading. You can still order directly from [R3B Press](#).

I'm also still developing the series on fruit, on what our lives actually produce. There's more coming next week. This week, though, I found myself thinking about something that sits just upstream of our fruit: our feelings, and what we actually do with them.

Messengers

I've been sitting with a question about feelings lately. I'm not asking whether they're good or bad, or whether having them makes me more or less spiritual. I'm asking something more basic: *what are they actually for, and what am I supposed to do with them once they show up?*

Here's where I've landed, at least for now. I don't think feelings are something to fight off or distrust on principle. I also don't think they're a reliable narrator of what's true. They're something in between: real, worth paying attention to, and not automatically accurate.

Psalm 42 is what got me thinking about this in the first place. The writer is honest about his struggles. He names the despair and restlessness he feels inside, and he doesn't try to talk himself out of feeling them, nor does he pretend they aren't there. But he does something else in the same breath: *he addresses those feelings directly*, almost as if he's talking back to them, and he reminds himself to hope in God and wait for Him rather than let despair set the terms. He's not shaming himself for what he feels. He's also not letting what he feels in that moment decide what he believes about God.

That's the distinction I keep coming back to. **Feelings can be honest without being the final word.**

Here's how I've started thinking about it: feelings function like messengers, not like the one giving the orders. When I feel afraid, something in me is picking up on a perceived danger, whether or not the danger is actually real or as large as it feels. When I feel angry, it usually means something in me feels threatened, violated, ignored, powerless, or hurt. When I feel rejected, it could mean an old wound was just touched, an expectation went unmet, or

something genuinely unhealthy is happening in a relationship. The feeling is telling me that something is happening. It isn't automatically telling me what that something is.

This is close to what psychologists call *cognitive appraisal*, the idea that an emotion isn't a direct readout of reality but the result of how my mind interprets a situation in the moment. Two people can face the same event and have very different emotional reactions because they interpret it differently, often based on past experience, expectations, or beliefs. That means the feeling is real, but the underlying interpretation can still be wrong. Feeling unsafe doesn't automatically mean I am unsafe. Feeling rejected doesn't necessarily mean someone actually rejected me. Feeling anxious doesn't mean the outcome actually requires my control. Feeling angry doesn't guarantee that my read on what happened is accurate. The feeling is data. It still has to be examined.

So I'm learning to slow down before I act and ask a different question: *what is this feeling telling me, and what does God say is true?*

I can get this wrong in two directions, and I've done both. I can suppress what I'm feeling, cover it with a Bible verse, call that faith, and never actually look at what's happening in my heart. Or I can swing the other way and hand my emotions full authority over how I interpret everything, every decision I make, and every way I respond to people. The first one looks like control. The second one looks like honesty. Neither one actually requires me to slow down and discern anything.

Emotional honesty, as I'm trying to practice it, means I acknowledge what I feel without immediately obeying it. I listen to what the feeling is pointing to; I examine what I actually believe beneath it; I bring all of that honestly before God; and then I choose how I want to respond rather than react on impulse.

Paul writes about taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ in 2 Corinthians 10:5. For a long time I read that as a verse about thinking more positive thoughts. I don't think that's actually what it's saying. I think it means what I think, what I believe, and what I feel can all be brought under the authority of Christ instead of quietly becoming an authority of their own. Anything I consistently let outrank God's truth and govern my choices starts occupying a place in my life it was never meant to hold. Feelings are no exception to that, even the ones that feel completely justified in the moment.

This connects back to what we've been talking about with fruit. The feeling itself usually isn't the fruit.

» I might feel angry, and that feeling isn't the problem by itself. The question is what repeatedly grows out of me when I'm angry.

- » I might feel afraid, and what matters most is what happens next: do I trust, withdraw, control, manipulate, attack, hide, pray, ask honest questions, or stay present with the people around me.

The feeling is the messenger showing me something is happening inside. What I do in response is what actually reveals what I'm connected to.

I don't think I need to fear my feelings, worship them, or silence them. I can listen to what they're revealing, bring what I find honestly before God, and choose my response from truth rather than impulse. **My feelings still get a seat at the table in that process. They just aren't the one running the meeting.**

This Week's Resource

This week I published a new resource called **Do Not Fear**. It's a Scripture-based practice for recognizing fear when it shows up, understanding what it may actually be telling you, and returning to what's true about God instead of staying stuck in the feeling.

The resource includes guided Scripture declarations, personal responses of trust, and a worksheet to help you slow down and process fear in a real moment rather than after the fact. If fear has been loud for you lately, this may be a good place to start practicing the distinction we've been talking about. Be sure to download the PDF so you have the full resource and worksheet available.

 [Do Not Fear](#)

Anchored Prayer

Abba,

Thank You for meeting me honestly in what I feel. Help me listen without being ruled by my emotions. Show me what's happening in my heart, expose what I'm believing that isn't true, and teach me to bring every thought, feeling, and response under Your care and authority.

Lead me to respond from truth, trust, and connection with You instead of fear or impulse.

Hallelujah. Amen.

Anchored Breathwork

Release Breathing (4–6) for Creating Space

Purpose: To help your body settle enough that you can actually notice what you’re feeling instead of reacting to it right away.

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 **4 seconds**.

Quiet cue: *“I notice what I’m feeling....”*

2. **Exhale** slowly for **6 seconds**.

Quiet cue: *“I bring it to You, oh Lord.”*

Repeat for 5–7 cycles.

Pro Tip: You aren’t trying to make the feeling disappear. The point is to create enough space between what you’re experiencing and how you respond to it. If the 4–6 count feels uncomfortable, shorten it. Finding a rhythm you can actually sustain matters more than hitting the exact numbers.

“ *A feeling can be honest without being the final word.* ”

Anchored Reflection

Before you answer these, give yourself permission to be curious instead of critical. The goal isn't to judge what you feel. It's to understand what may be happening underneath it and bring that honestly before God.

What feeling has been showing up most often for me lately, and what might it be trying to tell me?

What belief, fear, wound, expectation, or desire might be underneath that feeling?

When that feeling shows up, what does my usual response actually produce?

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.



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