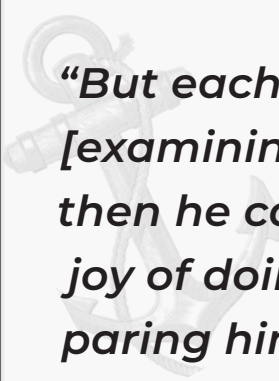


Carrying What's Mine

What we mean by independence, and how that definition shapes what we practice and resist

ANCHORED VERSE



“But each one must carefully scrutinize his own work [examining his actions, attitudes, and behavior], and then he can have the personal satisfaction and inner joy of doing something commendable without comparing himself to another. For every person will have to bear [with patience] his own burden [of faults and shortcomings for which he alone is responsible].”

— Galatians 6:4-5 (AMP) —

When you hear the word independence, what comes to mind? This week we slow down and examine our definition before deciding whether independence is healthy, because the way we define it shapes what we’re willing to practice. Paul’s words in Galatians 6 help us tell the difference between the burdens we share and the load that is ours to carry.

by Sean Brannan

Friday, 9 October, 2026

Welcome friend,

Thank you for making room for this week's Anchored Update. I know your inbox is crowded and your attention is pulled in a lot of directions, so the fact that you open this and sit with it means more to me than I can easily say.

A Quick Update: This past week I spent a lot of hours behind the wheel, driving from Montana down to Arizona, across to California, and back home to Montana. It was a long loop, and along the way I got some good, unhurried time with my son.

Now that I'm back, I'm excited to dig into work on my next book and the articles I have planned for the coming weeks, including the one on healthy independence you'll see mentioned below.

Carrying What's Mine

When you hear the word independence, what comes to mind? Someone who handles their own responsibilities? Someone who refuses help? Maybe you picture a person saying, *"I don't need anybody,"* while keeping everyone at arm's length.

Before we decide whether independence is healthy, it helps to slow down and examine what we actually mean by it. Your definition matters because it shapes what you're willing to develop in yourself. If independence sounds like isolation, pursuing it will feel like walking away from the relationships you value, and you'll probably resist it. If needing people sounds like weakness, you may end up carrying things alone long after you should have asked for help, and calling that strength. Most of us picked up our definition somewhere along the way, from the home we grew up in, from what got praised or punished, or from a culture that admires the person who never seems to need anything.

I've come to see healthy independence as the capacity to take responsibility for our choices, needs, and responses while remaining open to connection and support. In everyday life, that looks like:

- » Listening to someone's perspective and still making your own decision.
- » Asking for help without handing someone else the job of running your life.
- » Caring deeply about another person while recognizing that each of you has responsibilities and limits that belong to you.

Paul holds both sides of this in a single chapter. In Galatians 6:2, he tells us to bear one another's burdens, and three verses later he says each person will carry their own load. On the surface, that sounds like a contradiction, and many translations, including the Amplified above, even use "burden" in both verses. The difference shows up in the two Greek words Paul chose:

- » **Burden** (*baros*, v. 2): a heavy weight that presses a person down. In context, Paul has just described someone caught in sin who needs to be gently restored (v. 1), and the principle reaches to every season that is too heavy to carry alone.
- » **Load** (*phortion*, v. 5): a word used for cargo or a pack a person is responsible to carry. Jesus uses the same word when He says His burden is light (Matthew 11:30).

In verse 4, Paul tells each of us to examine our own work instead of measuring ourselves against someone else, and the future tense in verse 5 points to the day each of us gives an account to God for what was ours. Paul is describing a community where people help each other with what crushes them, and where each person still owns what is theirs to carry. *Healthy independence* comes down to learning which is which.

Imagine you're in a heavy season. A parent's health is declining, work is asking more of you, and you've told everyone you're fine. Some of what you're carrying really is yours: showing up, making decisions, and managing how you respond when you're exhausted. Some of it has become a burden no one person should carry, and the signs are there: you're snapping at people you love and lying awake at 2 a.m. running through everything that could go wrong. *Healthy independence means sorting those two honestly.* You keep owning your choices and your responses, and you ask a sibling to cover two appointments a month or let a friend bring dinner on Thursdays. Asking for that help is one way you take responsibility, *because your limits are part of what you're accountable for.*

For those of us following Christ, this raises a deeper question. Jesus said that apart from Him we can do nothing (John 15:5), so *what does independence even mean for a disciple? How do we develop personal responsibility while depending on God and participating in the relationships He calls us into?* I don't think the answer is choosing between owning our lives and leaning on Him. Depending on God makes honest ownership possible, because I no longer have to protect myself by pretending I can handle everything, and I no longer have to hand my life to someone else to manage for me.

So let's bring this back to where we started: *when you hear the word independence, what comes to mind now?* Notice whether your answer has shifted, and where you might be carrying a burden alone or handing off a load that belongs to you.

Key Takeaways

- » Galatians 6 separates the crushing burden we're meant to share (*baros*) from the load each of us owns before God (*phortion*), so healthy independence starts with learning which one you're holding.
- » Asking for help is part of taking responsibility, because your limits are part of what you're accountable for.
- » Depending on God makes honest ownership possible, because you no longer have to pretend you can handle everything or hand your life to someone else to manage.

This Week's Articles

Coming soon: *Owning Your Life Without Going It Alone*. Asking for help, owning our responses, and staying connected without losing ourselves

We'll also look at what family systems therapist Murray Bowen called differentiation of self, which is the ability to stay emotionally close to people without losing track of your own thoughts, feelings, and responsibilities.

If you haven't already, you can check out the [Guided Series](#) or [Anchored Reflections](#) on the site. More is coming soon.



*Your definitions matter because they
shape what you're willing to develop in yourself.*



Anchored Prayer

Abba,

Thank You that I was never meant to carry my life alone, and thank You that You trust me with what is mine to carry. Teach me the difference. Where I've kept people at a distance to protect myself, give me the courage to ask for help. Where I've handed others responsibilities that belong to me, help me pick them back up without shame. Lead me into relationships where I can give and receive freely, and keep me rooted in You as the One I depend on most.

Hallelujah. Amen.

My Prayer

“Paul is describing a community where people help each other with what crushes them, and where each person still owns what is theirs to carry.”

Anchored Breathwork

Grounding Breath (4 – 2 – 6) for Holding Your Own

Purpose: To help your body settle into what is yours to carry today, so you can respond to others from steadiness instead of pressure or withdrawal.

Posture: Sit with your back supported and both feet flat on the floor. Rest one hand on your chest and the other on your stomach, as a reminder that you are present in your own body and you are not alone in it.

1. **Inhale** through your nose for **4 seconds**.

Quiet cue: *"This is mine to carry..."*

2. **Hold** gently for **2 seconds**.

Quiet cue: *"...and I'm not carrying it alone."*

3. **Exhale** slowly for **6 seconds**.

Quiet cue: *"I bring the rest to You."*

Repeat for 5–7 cycles.

Pro Tip: If holding your breath feels uncomfortable, skip the pause and breathe 4 in, 6 out. Slow breathing with a longer exhale tends to engage the parasympathetic nervous system, the part of your body that handles rest and recovery, so protect the slow exhale and let the rest stay flexible.

"I've come to see healthy independence as the capacity to take responsibility for our choices, needs, and responses while remaining open to connection and support."

Anchored Reflection

Our definitions usually run underneath our choices without us noticing them. Take a few minutes this week to bring yours into the light.

How do I define independence, and what has that definition encouraged me to practice or resist?

Where am I carrying a crushing burden alone that I need to let someone help me with?

Where am I expecting someone else to carry a load that actually belongs to me?

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](#)



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