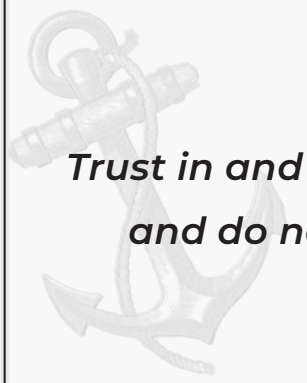
Anchored Update [74]

When I Need to Control the Outcome

What might the urge to control reveal about what I fear, and what I believe about God?

Anchored Verse



Trust in and rely confidently on the LORD with all your heart and do not rely on your own insight or understanding.

— Proverbs 3:5 (AMP) —

Some of what we call responsibility is really an effort to make sure an outcome can't hurt us. This week we look at the loop that keeps the urge to control coming back, and at what Proverbs 3:5 means when it asks us to lean our full weight on the LORD.

by Sean Brannan

Friday, 13 November, 2026

Welcome to Anchored,

Thank you for taking the time to read this issue. I've had several conversations about control this week, and they've stayed with me because I recognize how easily I call something *"being responsible"* when, underneath it, I'm trying to make sure an outcome can't hurt me.

Quick Update: I'm back from five days on the Oregon coast and among the redwoods of northern California. It was a rewarding trip full of new experiences, and I'm grateful for every mile of it. Now I'm home and waiting on a treatment plan for someone I love. Until it arrives, I don't know when things begin or how long they'll last, and those dates shape the rest of this year and how the next one starts. Honestly, it feels like life is on hold. I'm learning again what it looks like to put my full weight on God's timing when I can't fill in the calendar myself. If you'd keep us in your prayers, I'd be grateful.

When I Need to Control the Outcome

What am I afraid will happen if I can't control this? I've been asking myself that question a lot lately. If you've read the last few issues, you've probably noticed a thread. In #72 we looked at staying useful so we feel loved, and in #73 at building our own fortress. I didn't plan a series. Control keeps surfacing because it's what I'm walking through: something new in my life that I care about and can't script, and the waiting I mentioned above. Both are showing me how quickly my hands tighten when I can't see how something will turn out.

Some of this really is ours to carry, and it helps to be honest about which part. Here's how I've been sorting it:

- **Mine to do:** I can prepare well, tell the truth, make a decision, ask for what I need, and set a boundary. None of that is a failure to trust God; it's faithfulness with what He has put in front of me.
- **Not mine to secure:** I can't decide how someone else responds, prevent every disappointment, or know in advance that everything will work out the way I want. When I try, I've crossed from responsibility into control.

I can usually feel that shift before I can explain it. You might recognize some of these signs:

- You replay a conversation again and again, looking for what you should have said differently.
- You look for one more piece of reassurance, even though the last one didn't settle you for long.
- You keep trying to persuade someone who has already heard you, as if the right words could guarantee their answer.

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Each of those actions is small, but the urgency behind them usually points to a fear that hasn't been named yet. Psychologists call part of what's happening *intolerance of uncertainty*: for some of us, not knowing feels threatening in itself, even when nothing bad has happened. Reassurance and rechecking bring quick relief, and that relief teaches the brain that checking is what kept us safe, so the next time uncertainty shows up, the urge returns stronger. Careful planning isn't always fear, and some of us learned vigilance in seasons where it truly mattered. Understanding the loop has helped me treat a strong urge to control as a reason to get curious about what's happening within me. Shaming myself only gives my nervous system one more threat to manage.

Proverbs 3:5 speaks right into that loop. The word translated "rely" is the Hebrew *sha'an*, which means to lean your weight on something for support. It's the word used in one account of Saul's final battle, where he is found leaning on his spear (2 Samuel 1:6), holding himself up on the weapon he had trusted. Proverbs is full of calls to seek wisdom and understanding, so this verse can't be asking us to stop thinking. What it warns against is putting our full weight there. My understanding is a good tool, but it was never built to hold me up when I can't see the outcome. In *From Survival to Surrender* I put it this way: *"Faith does not eliminate risk, but it changes where we place our weight."*

When fear makes its case (If this person says no, I won't be okay; if this plan changes, God has failed me), Paul's call to take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ (2 Corinthians 10:5, AMP) gives me somewhere to bring it. I don't have to suppress the thought or shame myself for having it. I can tell Christ the truth about it, ask what's actually mine to do, and do that part: make the call, have the conversation, or ask for support. Then I'm left facing what I can't do for anyone. I can't choose for them, and I can't guarantee the future.

So I come back to the question I started with, and I'm asking it slowly this week: ***What am I afraid will happen if I can't control this?*** Some days the honest answer is that I'm afraid of losing something precious. Underneath that is a second question I'm still working out, which is what I'm leaning my full weight on. I don't have a tidy answer yet. I'm learning to notice when my grip tightens and to shift my weight back onto Him, one more time.

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Key Takeaways

- Preparing, telling the truth, deciding, and asking are yours to do, while how others respond and how things turn out belong to God.
- Reassurance brings quick relief, but that relief trains your brain to keep checking, which is why the urge to control comes back stronger.
- “Rely” in Proverbs 3:5 means leaning your full weight, so trust comes down to what you’re resting on when you can’t see the outcome.

This Week’s Articles

There’s no new article this week. New articles are limited until the new year while some changes come together behind the scenes. If you missed them, Issues #72 (Useful or Loved?) and #73 (Who Is Your Fortress?) pair well with this one.

> ***Each of those actions is small, but the urgency behind them usually points to a fear that hasn’t been named yet.***

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Anchored Prayer

Abba,

thank You for receiving me honestly, even when I'm afraid. Help me see when I'm acting with wisdom and when fear is driving me to grasp for an outcome I can't command. Show me what's mine to do, and give me the courage to do it. While I wait on answers I can't rush, teach me to lean my full weight on You and to trust You with what remains beyond my hands.

Hallelujah. Amen.

My Prayer

"I'm learning to notice when my grip tightens and to shift my weight back onto Him, one more time."

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Anchored Breathwork

Sigh Breathing for Loosening Your Grip

Purpose: To slow your body down long enough to notice when control is running the show, and to hand back what isn't yours to hold.

Posture: Sit or stand with your feet grounded. Notice where you're gripping: your jaw, your shoulders, your hands. Let your hands rest open in your lap.

1. Inhale through your nose until your lungs feel mostly full.

2. Take a second, shorter inhale through your nose to top them off.
   Quiet cue: *"I lean on You..."*

3. Exhale slowly through your mouth until your lungs feel empty, letting the exhale run longer than both inhales together.
   Quiet cue: *"...not on my own understanding."*

Repeat for 5 cycles, or for 1 to 3 minutes.

Pro Tip: After your last breath, ask yourself, ***"What am I trying to control right now?"*** and answer honestly before you act. If the second inhale feels strained, keep it small. The long, slow exhale is what helps your body settle.

> ***My understanding is a good tool, but it was never built to hold me up when I can't see the outcome.***

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Anchored Reflection

Before you act on an urgent need to fix or secure an outcome, give yourself a moment to ask:

What am I trying to control, and what part of this is actually my responsibility?

What am I afraid might happen if the outcome is different from what I want?

What am I believing about God as I face that possibility?

If this issue stirred something, Chapter 7 of *From Survival to Surrender, "When Surrender Feels Unsafe,"* goes deeper into waiting and uncertain outcomes, and the Chapter 7 Pattern Check in the Companion Journal can help you see where control shows up in your own life. You can find both on **Amazon** or at **R3B Press**.

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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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