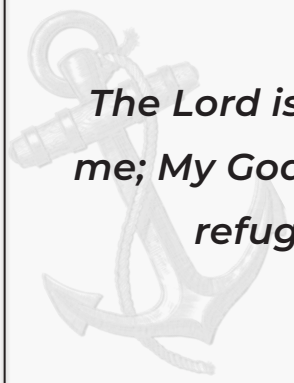
Anchored Update [73]

Who Is Your Fortress?

Control, Trust, and David’s Strongholds

Anchored Verse



The Lord is my rock, my fortress, and the One who rescues me; My God, my rock and strength in whom I trust and take refuge; My shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower—my stronghold.

— Psalm 18:2 (AMP) —

Control can feel like the responsible way to stay safe. This week, Psalm 18 and Chapter 2 of *From Survival to Surrender* help us notice where we’ve become our own fortress, with a Pattern Check from the companion journal to take it further.

by Sean Brannan

Friday, 6 November, 2026

Welcome friend,

Thank you for being here this week. Wherever this finds you, I'm grateful you've made a few minutes of room for it.

A Quick Update: Last week we looked at over-functioning from Chapter 5 of *From Survival to Surrender*. This week steps back to Chapter 2, *"The Lie of Self-Protection,"* where I write about the armor we learn to wear when life hasn't felt safe.

The changes I mentioned are still on their way, and this weekly rhythm isn't going anywhere. As we head toward the new year, I'd also love your help shaping what comes next. If there's a question, struggle, or passage you'd like to see explored in 2027, *send a note*.

What Am I Trusting to Keep Me Safe?

This week, a family member had a radiation planning scan, the CT their care team uses as a baseline to build the treatment plan. Lung cancer is serious. I'm not bracing, but I can see the stress they're carrying. Most of us never decide to become guarded. It happens gradually, after enough disappointment, loss, or being caught off guard, until staying in control simply feels like the responsible thing to do. So the question I've been sitting with this week is a simple one: *what am I actually trusting to keep me safe?*

In Chapter 2 of From Survival to Surrender, I describe control as one of the most common pieces of survival armor. It says, *"If I can predict it, I can prevent it"* (p. 25). Counselors often connect this pattern to *hypervigilance*, a state where the nervous system stays on alert and keeps scanning for the next threat even after the original danger has passed. That alertness can help us get through a season of chaos. The trouble is that it rarely switches off on its own, and over time we start trusting our own watchfulness more than we trust God.

It tends to show up in ordinary days, so here are a few signs that control may have become our shield:

- We keep rehearsing conversations and outcomes in our heads, because being prepared for every possibility feels safer than being surprised.
- We find it hard to rest even when the work is done, because some part of us is still on watch.
- We pray about something and then keep gripping it, asking God for help while staying in charge of the timeline.

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I don't think any of these make someone a bad person. They usually formed for good reasons, and they deserve compassion before they deserve correction.

David understood what it meant to need protection. Psalm 18 opens with a note that he sang it on the day YHWH rescued him from his enemies and from Saul, after years of being hunted. The Hebrew word translated "*fortress*" in verse 2 is ***metsudah***, a stronghold on high ground. It is the same word used for the stronghold David hid in while Saul pursued him (1 Samuel 22:4-5), and it gives us the name Masada, the rock fortress above the Dead Sea. David knew real strongholds because he had slept in them. Yet when he looked back on how he had actually been kept safe, he didn't credit the rock walls or his own vigilance. He said YHWH was his fortress. Trusting God as our fortress doesn't mean pretending the danger isn't real. David's enemies were real, and he still named YHWH as the place he was kept safe.

Planning, wisdom, and healthy boundaries still have their place. What Chapter 2 asks is where we're placing our weight. As I wrote there, *"Safety in the Kingdom is not earned through vigilance. It is received through trust"* (p. 26). So I'll leave you with the question I started with: ***what are you trusting to keep you safe this week?***

Key Takeaways

- Control often forms as protection during painful seasons, so it deserves to be understood with compassion before it is surrendered.
- Hypervigilance keeps the body on watch long after danger passes, which is why rest can feel unsafe even when the work is done.
- David knew real strongholds firsthand and still named YHWH as his fortress, which shows that our safety rests on who God is rather than on how well we stay on guard.

This Week's Articles

There's no new article this week. Behind the scenes, I'm building a new home for this work, with the same topics and resources organized so they're easier to find and go deeper with. Until then, if you haven't already, you can check out the Guided Series or Anchored Reflections on the site. More is coming soon.

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Anchored Prayer

Abba,

Thank You for being my refuge when I've tried so hard to be my own. Show me where I'm still standing guard over things I've already placed in Your hands. Help me honor what my defenses once protected, and lead me to trust You more than my own watchfulness. Teach my body and my mind to rest, because I am covered by You.

Hallelujah. Amen.

My Prayer

"Safety in the Kingdom is not earned through vigilance. It is received through trust."

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Anchored Breathwork

Refuge Breathing (4–6): I Don't Have to Stand Guard

Purpose: To help your body come off high alert and remember that God is your refuge, so you can rest without needing every outcome settled first.

Posture: Sit with your back supported and your feet on the floor. Let your shoulders drop and rest your hands open in your lap.

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

   Quiet cue: *"You are my refuge…"*

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

   Quiet cue: *"…I don't have to stand guard."*

Repeat for 5–7 cycles.

Pro Tip: If you notice your mind jumping ahead to plans or worst cases, that's normal. Gently return to the count. The longer exhale signals to your body that it's safe to settle.

> ***If I can predict it, I can prevent it.***

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Anchored Reflection

David's question can become ours. Take a few minutes with whichever question fits where you are.

If you're newer to this work: When you feel uncertain or exposed, what do you usually reach for first to feel safe? What might change if you brought that to God before you started planning around it?

If you've been examining these patterns for a while: Where are you still standing guard over something you've already prayed about? What would it look like to let God be the fortress there?

If you want to go further, Chapter 2 of ***From Survival to Surrender*** walks through each piece of the armor in Ephesians 6 and the survival armor it replaces. The matching chapter in the companion journal includes a Pattern Check with the line, *"I control outcomes because uncertainty feels unsafe."* 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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