

We are there! We've finally come to the last step in confronting our fear, using an acronym of the word 'Fear' from Adam Hamilton's book, *Unafraid, Living with Courage and Hope in Uncertain Times*.

Step 4: Release your cares to God.

I don't know about you but this step is hard for me. It's not hard to hand my cares over to God. What's hard is not taking them back!

Something I have found surprisingly helpful has been the idea that when I find myself regurgitating my litany of fears, I can refocus my attention on a positive fear. A positive fear? Sounds strange, right?

Adam Hamilton says: "I'd like [you] to consider a positive fear we're meant to cultivate and be shaped by—a fear that plays a key part in addressing and combatting all our other fears. Scripture speaks of it as 'fear of the Lord'." Hamilton goes on to say, "In scripture, fear of the Lord is not primarily terror evoked by an angry God. It is reverence, respect, and awe inspired by a God who is all-powerful and who not only created heaven and earth but continues to exercise dominion over them."

And so, instead of using the word "fear" he asks us to focus on the word "awestruck" as in being... seized by an appropriate reverence and respect." "Being awestruck is the appropriate response to the beauty, majesty, wonder, glory, and power of God."

"When we fear God—when we revere, respect, and stand in awe of God—we fear everything else a little less. The more we trust in God, the less we fear what anyone or anything can do to us, the more we rest in God's peace, and the more we seek to do his will."

Here's the surprising gift of this kind of fear of the Lord—this *awestruck-ness*, if you will. Fear of the Lord means my being aware that God is God and I am not. So, in those moments when I am feeling overwhelmed, I have a choice. I can choose to redirect my attention from being awestruck at what I am facing at the moment to being awestruck on how great God is (and how small I am). With the proportions now rightly in place, I find I am more able to trust in a God who is always by my side, who is big enough to care for me, and who is stronger than any storm I might be facing. In other words, God's got this. That's worth being awestruck about.

The next time you are feeling overwhelmed, redirecting your focus to awe, wonder and trust in God's power can lead you to not be afraid. As Isaiah said, "Surely God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid, for the Lord God is my strength and my might; he has become my salvation" (12:2).

In the end, living unafraid is not to live without fear; it is, rather, to live without being controlled and consumed by fear. For holy help, we can:

Face Our Fears with Faith  
Examine Our Assumptions In Light of the Facts  
Attack Our Anxieties with Action  
Release Our Cares to God.

May practicing these steps help calm your anxious hearts and increase your trust in God.

Yours in the journey,  
Pastor Kristen