

Hyun Jin Moon's Family Peace Association: Alan Shepard's Prayer and Fatherhood

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"Perched atop the towering, eighty-three foot tall, Redstone-3, Mercury 7 booster rocket, Astronaut Alan B. Shepard had plenty of time to contemplate and pray before his Freedom 7 capsule was launched into the great unknowns of space. The eyes of every American were glued to a TV set to watch this historic event. On Shepard's shoulders were the combined hopes of a nation. And as he waited for lift-off and becoming the first American in outer space, he uttered a few words that would later become known as, "The Shepard's Prayer." - Ross Engel

'Please, dear Lord, don't let me f**K up.'....."

As a husband to a wonderful wife and father to two gorgeous daughters, I occasionally get asked "Why do you have such a nice family?"

I would like to confess that luck may have had a part, but the truth of the matter is that the driving force behind my efforts in the husband/ parent category is two things: fear and humility.

Let me explain:

Like Shepard, I am aware of the daunting task that is my role, in being a husband and father. Like Shepard, I am also aware of the danger that any misguided actions in either of my roles could cause a "catastrophic event".

My wife is a better person than me. Period. Each morning, I wake up and find myself grateful (and a little bit relieved) that she is still there by my side.

Mind you, I am not a bad person. I just feel I am way out of my league in this marriage. When I see that she is still willing to awaken next to me each morning, I resolve to earn her trust and hand in marriage as if it is our first morning together. This has not changed since our vows. I am truly humbled that God found a way to bless me in having her in my life and I feel the need to earn God's trust with this gift.

Yeah, and about that "Trust from God" - during my time seeking to earn and honor the gift of my marriage, my wife bore two daughters, who are now young adults.

As if I wasn't at my limits in seeking to keep my debt of gratitude in alignment with Heaven's expectations, I am given two more souls that rise above my comprehension of love, beauty and joy.

I am grateful that I was not asked to decide on what would be my perfect children. I sit here now realizing my mind and heart did not have the capacity to comprehend such perfection that is embodied in my children.

So God put me in a home that I feel woefully unqualified to be part of, yet, here I am.

Each day, as a father and husband, I seek to earn my place by trying to tune in to the will of Heaven for my family, and not stepping on what to me is clearly God's hand in their lives. I feel as if I am an under-qualified au pair to God's children, but being entrusted with His progeny compels me to do my best and guide them to listen to and trust their true "Parent". It is clear to me that this family is "lent" to me to learn how to love, how to offer, and how to serve in a better way. Their existence in my life also teaches me how to love, attend, and cherish others, as what I learn with my family is clearly meant to be manifested in the world outside our home.

I am not offering these thoughts to compare or compete with any other family. I am merely offering that in the matter of being a husband and a father, my ability to be "Good" in those roles is not about my attributes. It is in my efforts to avoid usurping the Spirit and offering support to God's will in the lives of those more closely embraced by Heaven.

My value as a father or husband lies directly in the unique value, love and the trust bestowed upon me by God and my loved ones, not in my own presumption of importance.

I am nothing without them.

So as we approach another day of recognizing "fathers", let me be the first to say that we fathers are good because those in our lives are great, and I, like Naval Officer Shepard, desperately pray with all my heart I can stay worthy of their greatness and, for the love of God - 'please don't let me F**k Up'.