

# SPIRIT-EMPOWERED DAD

## Lesson 10: A Spirit-Empowered Dad Knows Why His Children Misbehave

**Main Idea:** One of your greatest hurdles as a Spirit-empowered dad is wisely setting and enforcing rules for your children's good. In this lesson, you will begin the process of learning what may be behind children's bad behavior and how to respond effectively.



### SIGHTLINE: Acquire Your Target

Raising children is not easy. One of your greatest hurdles as a dad is setting rules for your children. As a dad who desires to be empowered by God's Spirit in your parenting, these questions may help you assess your current position. First, do you let your kids do as they please? Second, do you gauge your rules by what other parents allow their kids to do? Third, do you have the propensity to be too strict, which can trigger rebellion and lead to losing your influence in their life? Fourth, do you believe it is your responsibility to raise your child with rules and parameters for their life?

Here are some thoughts you might want to consider as you work through this lesson. First, you should not allow rules to be dictated for your kids by anyone other than you and their mother. You and their mother decide what is best for your children. When the rules are set, make sure your children know that you are not trying to be more holy than other people, but that you simply believe God has given you specific wisdom for them. Second, know the difference between opinion and conviction. An opinion can change, based on new information. However, as a Spirit-empowered dad, your convictions should be firm and based on biblical absolutes. Third, you should provide an explanation for the rules you have put into place. Fourth, you should be sure that your children understand there is safety in obeying the rules. Help your children understand the spiritual, emotional, and physical consequences of failing to adhere to the rules. Fifth, do not be afraid to have rules that others do not have. Your children may not agree with your rules, but they will eventually honor you for holding to your convictions.



## CROSSHAIR: Focus On Your Target

What happens when your child breaks the rules? Many times, bad behavior is just a symptom of something else going on with the child. This is particularly true with very young children. In these instances, punishing the child usually doesn't help change the behavior. There are many reasons why children misbehave. Some of the more common reasons are:

- Sickness
- Hunger
- Desire for attention
- Tiredness
- Desire to test the rules
- Not understanding, or forgetting, the rules
- Disbelief that you really mean what you say
- Learning and behavioral disorders

If you see a sudden, unusual change in your child's behavior, it often means something, or someone has influenced them. They may simply be copying someone else's behavior. For this reason, you need to know the people your children spend time with and the activities they engage in.

Bad behavior can also be a result of bad experiences the child has gone through or that are happening currently. Communication is extremely important in these situations. You want your child to feel that they can talk to you about anything going on.

Some bad behavior is preventable. A good first step is to always make sure the rules and expectations are clearly understood. Modeling and rewarding good behavior also helps reduce inappropriate behavior. A Spirit-empowered dad who takes an active interest in his children and who provides a safe physical and emotional environment for them will deal with fewer behavioral problems.



## **BULLSEYE: Zero In On Your Target**

Describe your dad’s “rule book” growing up. How do you think this affects the way you parent today?

Why is it important to know what causes children’s misbehavior?

Describe why healthy relationships with your children are important in disciplining them.

## Next Step:

This section gives you suggestions for how to turn your new knowledge into an action step. Men's Ministries realizes that not all relationships are created equally. If these action steps seem too difficult, adjust your next step so it will fit into your relationship with your child.

- **Courage:** Write and evaluate your rules for your children. Write an "o" for opinion or a "c" for conviction beside each rule.
  
- **Strength:** Write an explanation for each of your rules. Sit down with your children and explain your rationale for each rule, inviting them to give their thoughts. Make any necessary adjustments, and be sure to pray together at the conclusion of the conversation.
  
- **Endurance:** Take each of your children to their favorite restaurant and ask them to tell you what they think and feel about the family rules and your discipline. Be ready to acknowledge areas of weakness and to ask for forgiveness if needed. Be sure to pray together at the conclusion of the conversation.

