

# SPIRIT-EMPOWERED DAD

## Lesson 11: A Spirit-Empowered Dad Helps His Child Learn Self-Control

**Main Idea:** Spirit-empowered dads have a clear responsibility to help their children develop self-control. This lesson will help you assist your children in learning self-control.



### SIGHTLINE: Acquire Your Target

The Bible's perspective on self-control is clear. Consider Proverbs 29:11: "A fool gives full vent to his spirit, but a wise man quietly holds it back" (ESV). The New Testament shows the importance of self-control, as it is listed as one of the fruits of the Spirit. A Spirit-empowered dad has a clear responsibility to help their children develop self-control.

The earlier a child learns self-control, the more likely the child will grow up to be a productive and mature adult. One of the dangers dads must avoid is the natural tendency to use discipline just for the sake of controlling behavior. The primary purpose of discipline should always be to change and positively shape behavior, not just to punish or control unwanted behavior. Dads who use only threats, intimidation, and the fear of punishment to try to control behavior will only temporarily control behavior at surface level. But the development of self-control is internal, and unless a dad focuses on shaping the internal values of the child, he will have minimal success at developing self-control in his child. Self-control is largely a learned behavior. Patience is required because the development of self-control continues through life.



## **CROSSHAIR: Focus On Your Target**

The ability to regulate one's behavior varies from child to child. Depending on the child's age, their ability to control their impulses is naturally greater or less. For a dad with children who have behavior disorders or developmental impairments, teaching self-control can seem overwhelming. With God's help, community assistance programs, school support, and sometimes medication, it is possible to make it through trying years and help your child learn self-control.

A Spirit-empowered dad plays a major role in helping his children learn self-control. It begins with dad staying in control of himself. When you lose control, it sends the message that it is okay to be out of control. As a Spirit-empowered dad, you can help create an atmosphere where self-control is rewarded. Take note of instances where your preschool child has to wait for something (even if only for a minute or two), and praise them. Praise the self-control of older children when they do homework or chores without complaining, or when they keep their words respectful even when upset. Children have a desire to please and often respond well to the smallest gestures of love and approval that parents give. You can also play games and do activities that require self-control. These games and activities can be great teaching tools.



## **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:** Look up three or four games and activities for kids that teach self-control.
  
- **Strength:** Once a month, play a game or do an activity with your children that teaches self-control. Make sure you have a conversation with your children afterward about how well they did or did not display self-control, keeping it light-hearted and fun.
  
- **Endurance:** Have a discussion with your children about a time when you did not display self-control. Make sure you tell the lessons you learned and the consequences you experienced.

