

# SPIRIT-EMPOWERED DAD

## Lesson 5: A Spirit-Empowered Dad Loves His Children Like God Loves Him

**Main Idea:** A Spirit-empowered dad will see the importance of expressing love, as well as the need to express love in different ways. In this lesson, you will begin the journey of loving your children like God loves you.



### SIGHTLINE: Acquire Your Target

A dad who is a follower of Christ is actually a child himself, since he is in a relationship with his heavenly Father. These dads can look to their relationship with God the Father for direction and guidance in their relationship with their own children. Dads often are weak in this area. Most see the importance of expressing their love, but Spirit-empowered dads also see the need to express that love in different ways. Here are some ways God loves His children.

First, God knows His children. Psalm 139:1-3 says, “O LORD, you have searched me and known me! You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar. You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways” (ESV). What we learn from these verses is this: God desires to know all about His children, and God is active in His pursuit to know all about His children, all because He loves them.

Second, God provides for His children. Philippians 4:19 says, “And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus” (ESV). God desires to make sure His children have the necessary provision for life.

Third, God is accessible to His children. Hebrews 4:16 says, “Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need” (ESV). God the Father invites His children to come to Him. You can approach Him with confidence knowing that He cares for you and His ear is open to your cry.

Fourth, God has His children’s best interests at heart. Jeremiah 29:11 states, “For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope” (ESV).



Fifth, God's love for His children never changes. James 1:17 says, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change" (ESV). The gift of God's love is unchanging. It cannot be bought or earned. It is given freely.



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

You may think, "I am not like God and cannot know my child(ren) like He knows me." However, when a Spirit-empowered dad takes a strong interest in all aspects of his child's life, it assures the child that they valued and loved by their dad. Get to know your child's likes and dislikes. In other words, study each child. You cannot assume they are all the same, and you should strive to know what is different about each one of your children.

Providing for your children's physical needs is essential. However, being a provider is not just putting food on the table and a roof overhead. A Spirit-empowered dad is a critical provider of the emotional and spiritual needs of their children. Be present for your child. Too many dads assume providing for their child means making money to pay the bills; that is just part of what you need to do to provide for your child. Provide a shoulder for them to cry on. Provide a smile to brighten their day. Provide an encouraging text message to help them on a tough morning. Provide for all your child's needs. As a Spirit-empowered dad, you can develop an attitude of availability to your children. Each of your children should feel as if they can come to you with their questions, with their fears, with their hopes and dreams.

A dad who loves the way he is loved by God is always looking out for his children's best interests. A lot of tension in the home occurs when that love is not expressed. A child often does not have the maturity to see what is in their best interest. They focus on the present moment, whereas a loving, Spirit-empowered dad will focus not just on the moment but on the future as well. He won't give in when he sees that the child he loves will be harmed if a particular course of action is taken. This is particularly applicable to younger children. As a child matures and comes of age, loving dads may give more freedom to make decisions. Children may make some wrong choices with this freedom and choose not to accept your guidance. However, learning from their mistakes is an important part of their growth process.



Ultimately, a Spirit-empowered dad’s love should follow the example of Christ’s love, which is unchanging, cannot be bought or earned, and is given freely. There is great security in the father-child relationship when the child understands that they are loved because of who they are not because of what they might do. Do not misunderstand; this does not mean that if the child does wrong, a loving dad will not discipline them. You may strongly disapprove of some behavior and still love your child. In fact, many times, Spirit-empowered dads “speak the truth in love” (Ephesians 4:15).





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

- Describe how love was expressed in your home as a child.
  
- Describe how approachable your dad was in your childhood.
  
- How can you become more accessible and approachable to your children?
  
- Read through the five ways God loves His children in the Acquire the Target section. Rate yourself on a scale of 1-4 with 1 being great and 4 needs improvement. Write a plan to improve.

## **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:** Sit down with each of your children and ask them what their favorite drink, candy, or activity is. Then, take the opportunity to enjoy it with them.
  
- **Strength:** For the next 30 days, sit down with each of your children and ask them what went well and what didn't go well in their day.
  
- **Endurance:** Take each of your children to their favorite restaurant and ask them how you can express your love to them better.

