



It's All About Dad & Me

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(Chapter 1)

We love because he first loved us. —1 John 4:19

Hello, Girl!

It's no secret: one of your most important and precious relationships is the one with your dad. Right now—when you're no longer a child and almost a teen—is an amazing time to make that relationship stronger and richer between you two.

But how well do you really know Dad? How well do you understand him? And how well does he know you? This book—which you can do by yourself or with Dad—will help you both answer these questions. And solve some mysteries about each other! You'll do lots of talking, reading, thinking, praying, making crafts, and writing. (Keep a notebook or journal handy to jot down your thoughts.)

You'll also discover new things about your relationship with God—and how He's all about you & Dad. After all, you're His precious daughter, too!

BTW: Although the stories and quotations from girls in this book are made up, their situations can help you.

Clue ONE: He's My Alpha Guy

"I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End."
—Revelation 22:13

My evidence . . .

- Dad says the blessing at meals or asks one of us to.
- Whenever I ask him for advice, he gives it to me.
- He says he'd lay down his life for me.
- He's the best-looking, nicest, and best-dressed (older) guy I know!

Dads come in all shapes and sizes. They do all kinds of jobs—including staying at home to take care of you. They live with their daughters or away from them. And no matter whether he's your bio dad, stepdad, or adoptive dad, he cherishes and treasures you. It's the way God made him!

When some types of animals live together—such as a pack of wolves or a pride of lions—one male is always stronger, smarter, and bigger than all the others in the group. (Sometimes, he's the ONLY male in the group.) In the animal world, he's called the "Alpha male."

In a family there is always one leader, one head of the household, or one captain of the ship. Even when a family acts as a team, there's always one leader. This person is usually Dad. He's the one who provides, protects, steers, and guides the family.

The Story of You & Dad

Let's back up a few years...to when you were born.

The light in this place is so bright that you have to squeeze your eyes shut. You've left that warm cocoon where you'd been living for nine months, and this place is bright, noisy, and chilly. You hear voices and harsh sounds. Something warm and rough rubs your skin, and then you feel something soft and warm (a blanket) wrapped around you. This is certainly a strange, scary place, and you want to go back to where you were. But something tells you that you never can.

You hear a soft voice near you. You know that one so well—it's Mom. You hear another familiar voice, only this one is deeper. Something soft and gentle (your parents' fingertips) caresses your ears and eyebrows.

Slowly and gently, two large, strong hands pick you up and cradle you, enveloping your tiny head and body. It feels so safe here. That deep voice in your ear is still talking, saying familiar words. You open one eye just enough to see a large face with loving eyes gazing at you.

"Hello, my darling girl," he says. "You're the most beautiful thing I've ever seen. Do you know who I am? I'm you're dad, and I'm going to love you for the rest of your life—no matter what."

And he will. No matter where you are or where he is, your dad will love you forever.

He couldn't believe that anything so peaceful and pure could be part of his life. When you came home from the hospital, he gazed at you in disbelief that anything so perfect, so beautiful, and so precious could exist on this earth. To him, you're an angel! And as you've grown through the years, his love for you has blossomed and deepened.

You have felt the same about him. You grew to know and love his face, his voice, and his heart. As a toddler, your ears listened for his footsteps at the end of the day, knowing that Dad would soon open the door and greet you with a hug, a kiss, and an “uppie.” He picked you up, swung you high into the air, and carried you on his shoulders to make you taller than he.

Dad listens to all your jokes, worries, and stories. You think he knows just about everything, and you ask him lots of questions. Lately, he has treated you more like a grownup, answering every question and taking every concern of yours seriously and thoughtfully. He:

- Tells you how a computer works and how to recover it from a crash
- Explains the rules of football, baseball, and basketball and why the coaches yell so much
- Explains how someone can sell a house when the bank still owns it
- Knows when someone isn't being honest with you
- Explains why your church does things differently than your friend's church, but assures you that you both worship the same Lord
- Knows exactly how fast he can drive without breaking the speed limit and listens when you tell him to slow down

Mom can certainly do these things, too (and in many families she does). But usually she works alongside Dad and looks to him for the ultimate provision, protection, and leadership of the family. (Mom and Dad aren't “less than” or “better than” each other. God made them equally valuable and gave them both very important jobs to do in your family.)

Your dad was the very first man you ever loved. He knows how important he is to you. He knows that what he says and does for, to, and around you—and how he treats your mom and other women—will influence how you expect to be treated by other guys as you get older.

Dad isn't perfect. He makes mistakes just like all humans do. But, having a daughter like you helps him become more of an Alpha guy every day.

~ The MO ~

“MO” is short for *modus operandi*—which is the way a person does things. Detectives often try to figure out a suspect's MO, so they can then predict what that person will do next.

By knowing Dad's MO, you can also understand why he does certain things. These girls are trying to figure out their dad's MO.

Q: My dad is great. But sometimes he treats me like I'm still a little girl and won't let me do the things I want to unless he either knows all about it or goes with me. What can I do?

A: Dad protects you more than anyone else in your life. He knows how difficult the world is. At the same time, he knows he can't protect you as much or as often as when you were little. And that thought can scare even the toughest man! You can help him feel better about giving you more freedom by making sure he knows your friends (introduce each other at the first opportunity) and their parents, and telling him about what's happening in your life. That way, where you are and what you do won't be such a mystery. Also, if he wants to drive you to events and activities, welcome him and be glad he wants to do those things for you.

Q: My dad always used to do everything with me, but now he doesn't seem to be interested. What's going on? What did I do?

A: Your dad senses that you're growing up and are becoming interested in things he can't do with you. He's also sensitive to your need for privacy. If you want him to keep doing things with you, tell him so. Let him know that you're basically the same girl you always were—only older and wiser. Ask him questions about things that confuse or interest you, or make a date with him to do something fun together. (For ideas, see the "Dad Wants to Know Me Better" chapter, later in this book.)

Q: I have no idea what my dad thinks of me. He never tells me. I want him to think I'm special—or think something of me. Am I wrong?

A: If your dad truly understood how important his influence is on you at this time in your life, it's a good bet he'd try harder to give you the attention and feedback you crave. But, for many men, talking about their feelings is hard—even uncomfortable. Many dads assume their actions are more important than their words. This does not mean he loves you any less than if he lavished you with praise every day (which you might grow tired and skeptical of, if it's overdone).

You can make a game of getting him to talk more. Write some statements about yourself on a piece of paper, along with three or four possible short answers. Then ask him to circle the one he'd use to describe you. His answers might spark a conversation between you. You can also write a note to him, telling him about your feelings and how he can help you. If he doesn't respond right away, be patient. You can be certain that he'll think about it and answer in his own way when he's ready.

God Loves Me—From A to Z

Dad was the first human man to love you, but God loved you first. He loved you long before you were born—since the time He created the world. And He will love you long after the world ends. He loves you 24/7, always and forever.

God has called Himself many things. Among them is “the Alpha and the Omega.” Do you know why?

Alpha and Omega are two letters in the Greek alphabet. Much of the Bible was written in Greek. Because God always speaks to us in a way we can understand, it made sense for Him to use examples about Himself from the Greek language.

When God says that He’s the Alpha and Omega, it’s another way of saying He is everything—first to last, beginning to end, least to greatest. With God, nothing is left out, nothing can be added to, or taken away from Him. He is all, A to Z. And He is all you’ll ever need!

Bible Bio: Abram/Abraham

His name means: Exalted father/Father of a multitude

Born: About 4,000 years ago in Ur of the Chaldeans (a city in Babylon)

Husband of: Sarai/Sarah

Father of: Ishmael and Isaac, father-in-law of Rebekah

Occupation: Farmer, herder, and father of a nation

God promised Abraham (born as Abram) the Promised Land. When he was seventy-five years old, Abram moved his entire family (which included a lot of people—brothers, nieces, nephews, aunts, uncles, and cousins) to Canaan, the land that God promised he would inherit.

God also promised Abram that he would become the father of a new nation, Israel, which included all God’s chosen people. Even though Abram and his wife, Sarai, were both very old, God continued to promise these things to Abram. Despite how unrealistic and ridiculous they must have sounded to Abram, he responded with faith, trusting God’s words and obeying Him.

God said to Abram, “Number the stars, if you are able to number them. So shall your descendants be.” (Genesis 15:5)

When Abram was ninety-nine years old, God changed his name to Abraham and changed Sarai’s name to Sarah. Their first son, Isaac, was born a year later. When Isaac was still a boy, God told Abraham to take his son to a place in the mountains of Moriah and offer Isaac as a sacrifice to God.

Although Abraham must have been in complete shock at this command, he obeyed God and took Isaac to the spot that God had chosen. While Abraham and Isaac built an altar for the sacrifice, Isaac asked, “Where’s the animal we’re gonna sacrifice?”

Abraham said, “God will provide the lamb to sacrifice,” as he prepared his son on the altar.

Convinced of Abraham's complete faith, trust, and obedience, God told him to stop preparing Isaac for the sacrifice. Just then, Abraham noticed a ram (male sheep) caught in the woods nearby. Realizing that God had placed the ram there for them, he and Isaac sacrificed it to God. God then repeated His promise that Abraham would be the father of the nation of Israel.

* Read all about Abraham in the book of Genesis.

! Dig It !

(Time to open your notebook or journal and dig deeper into your mind and heart. First, ask God to help you.) This story of Abraham shows how much we must be willing to give up for God. Letting go of a child is probably the most drastic sacrifice, but God wanted to know for sure how completely Abraham—the future father of a nation of chosen people—could trust and obey Him.

1. What do you think Abraham was thinking and feeling as he walked with Isaac to the mountain?
2. What things might God be asking you to give up (sacrifice) for Him?
3. What would be the pros and cons of obeying Him?
4. What things does Dad sacrifice for you?

> Read <

Psalm 66

* Pray *

Dear God, thank You for my dad. Thank You that he loves me in ways he might not be able to express in words. Thank You for being the best example to Dad of a loving father, so that I can know what an Alpha guy is all about. Amen.

! Pop ! Quiz

Answer the following questions about Dad.

1. What 5 things make your dad an Alpha guy and father?
2. What 3 things would you like him to change?
3. What 3 ways can you and Dad make your relationship better?

No matter what state your relationship is in, remember to pray for wisdom, healing, and guidance. God will give you what you need!

Gettin' Crafty! Bloomin' Joy

Make this bouquet of paper flowers. It will remind you of the "clues" whenever you look at it.

You will need:

- Sheets of patterned or solid-color paper
- 2 sheets of white vellum paper (a stiff, translucent paper)
- Double-sided tape
- Tracing paper and a pencil
- Pens in different color inks
- A small pair of sharp scissors
- Craft ribbons, ¼" to ½" wide in colors that mix and match with the papers
- Craft chenille (pipe cleaners) in colors that mix and match with the papers
- A clean glass jar about 3" tall
- Colored or plain sand

How to make it:

Making the parts:

1. Using tracing paper, trace the circle and flower shapes shown after these steps. Then cut out each shape.
2. Place the flower pattern on the **WRONG** side of a sheet of patterned or solid-color paper. (The wrong side doesn't have the pattern or color. If the paper doesn't look like it has a wrong side, place the pattern on either side.) Carefully trace around the edges, and cut out the shape.
3. Repeat step 2 to make another flower shape from the vellum paper. (You can trace on either side of vellum.)
4. Place the circle pattern on the wrong side of a piece of solid-colored paper. (Use a solid color for the circle so the writing shows clearly.) Trace around the edges and cut out the shape.

Making the flowers:

1. (See the drawings after the steps.) Lay a patterned (or colored) flower on a flat surface, with the right (pattern) side facing you. Stick 2 strips of double-sided tape, like an X, in the center of the flower (pattern side). Press the end of a chenille against the tape.
2. Place a vellum flower over it so that the patterned petals show between the vellum, and press hard.
3. Stick a few pieces of double-sided tape on the wrong side of a circle piece. Place the circle piece in the center of the flower (on the vellum) and press hard.
4. Carefully copy the "clue" and the Bible reference from the beginning of this chapter onto the circle. For example, on the first flower, write: He's my Alpha guy and then Revelation 22:13.

5. With the ribbon, tie a bow around the chenille to look like leaves. Trim the edges to about the same length as each side of the bow. (You can prevent the ends from fraying by dabbing a thin line of white glue along each edge.)
6. Make 10 more flowers, using the same or different patterned papers. As you read each chapter, copy the "clue" and Bible reference onto the center of each flower.

Making the vase:

1. Fill a clean glass jar about 1/3 full with colored or plain sand.
2. Tie a bow around the rim of the jar. To keep it in place, stick small pieces of double-side tape between the jar and the ribbon in a few places.

Finishing:

As you complete the flowers, push them into the sand in the vase to hold them in place.

Tip: You can cut the chenille to different lengths.

Ch@ ROOM

You see this section in each chapter. It has questions to ask Dad. (And there are some for Dad to ask you!) They're a great way to get to know each other better or simply fill in the silence. You can have a formal "interview time" or pull the questions out when the time is right. So, turn off the radio, shut off the TV, give him your attention, and ask away!

BTW: Always say a prayer before you start, asking God to help you two share what's in your hearts. Pray especially if talking to each other like this feels strange or uncomfortable at first. It will get easier and feel more natural the more you do it.

Here's the first set of questions. You can also think of your own to ask.

For you to ask Dad:

1. What did you admire about your father when you were my age?
2. What did you think and feel when you saw me the first time?
3. Tell me about something that surprised you about being a dad.
4. What kinds of things do you talk to God about?
5. How do you think you can improve as a dad?

For Dad to ask you:

1. If you could choose anyone but me as your dad, who would that be, and why?
2. What kinds of things do you talk to God about?

3. What was the best time we ever had together? (It could be a whole day of fun, or just a few minutes of silliness!)
4. How do you think you and I are most alike?
5. How are we most different?

Daddy-Oh!

My dad takes almost too good care of me. I used to be scared of vacuum cleaners when I was really little, and he still checks the closet for them! (But I think he's just joking now.)
—Kimmie P., age 12 (Ohio)

My dad is a stay-at-home dad. At first he didn't do things like my mom, but now he's doing great.
—Leora L., age 10 (Rhode Island)

Dad says I'm his "beard tester." He rubs his cheek on mine, and if I say it's scratchy, then it's time for him to shave.
—Kana O., age 9 (Arizona)

Dad loves to go out in his boat and fish. If he can't find a friend to go with him, he takes me. At first, I don't like to go, but once we're out in the ocean catching fish, I like it. He showed me how to bait the hook and pull in a fish.
—Marianne P., age 13 (Maine)

My dad and mom are divorced, and I go to his house for half the month. He made my room up just like it is at home, so I feel comfortable there. He's really strict about doing homework, but I can stay up later than at home with Mom, even on school nights.
—Brittany M., age 12 (Oregon)

. . C.n.ct.ng the D.ts . .

Get out your notebook or journal and take a breather to "connect the dots" and examine the evidence so far.

1. What did you learn about your dad or your relationship with him?
2. What did you learn about your relationship with God?
3. Is Dad your Alpha guy? How can you be sure, or how can you find out?
4. How can you be sure that God is all you really need? (Read 1 Chronicles 29:10-13.)
5. Write a prayer about Dad as your Alpha guy. Your prayer can be praise, a request, an observation, or a complaint.

Planet Dad

Just when you think you have him figured out, Dad surprises you with something new. It's like he comes from another planet! Here's a glimpse of Planet Dad.

Dad used to be able to hold you in one hand, like a football. Your head rested in his palm and your tiny body along his arm. No matter how old you become and how much you grow, he remembers that little tiny girl who rested in the crook of his arm and close to his heart.

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