

LESSON

5

“OWL’S PROBLEM”



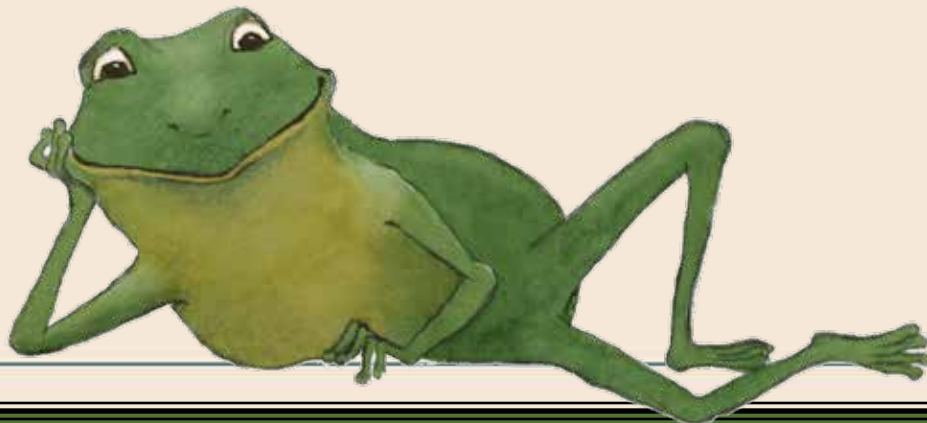
Children’s Ministry
Lessons for ages 5 to 10



Written by Lisa Updike

(Based on the award-winning book *Frog’s Rainy-Day Story and Other Fables*)

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Lesson 5

“Owl’s Problem”

Unit Bible Memory Verse: 2 Corinthians 10:5

We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ . . .

Today:

- Explain: “true obedience” includes our thoughts.
- Memorize: “to obey Christ”
- Moral: “Try to hold onto happiness, and it will surely slip away; But delight yourself in the Lord, and true happiness comes to stay.”
- First Catechism questions 1-4 and 14
- Bible Lesson: Acts 16, Paul and Silas

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Preparation:

- Make a copy of the “At-a-Glance” if you are using it or have other teachers helping you.
- Make copies of the skit and decide who will perform it.
- Decide if you will use the video of the fable or will read it yourself from the book, *Frog’s Rainy-Day Story and Other Fables* (Make sure you have a copy of the book!)
- Decide on a craft option and gather the materials needed.
- Decide whether you will provide snack and gather the items needed.
- Make a copy of the Taking It Home page for each child.

Hello! (Gathering time, 10 minutes):

Teachers or small group leaders welcome children, provide them with their nametags, and introduce them to one another.

“Getting Closer Questions”

- Share one of your happiest memories!
- What are some things that make you sad?
- Do you think it is possible to feel sad or anxious and at the same time have joy? Why or why not?



Getting Started (10-15 minutes):

- Use CDs, DVDs, or a song leader to sing 2-3 songs of your choice with motions. Then seat children.
- Share the unit Bible Verse: 2 Corinthians 10:5

We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ . . .

Teacher: Last week we talked about taking thoughts captive and how we must be alert to our thought-life to do that!

Over these past weeks, we've talked about arguments as a set of ideas we use to convince one another of something, and lofty opinions raised against the knowledge of God being opinions that differ from God's truth. We are learning that our thoughts and emotions do not have to rule us. We are to be the boss of them!

Why? Our Scripture passage tells us: to obey Christ. True obedience is not just how we act. True obedience starts in the heart and mind.

Let's see how this skit can help us understand.

Mini-Skit (3-4 minutes):

(This can be acted out by two volunteers or the teacher and one volunteer. Either way, the **Parent** is holding a sign which reads: "Day of chores—take 1?")

Parent (*Puts down sign as Kid walks in*): Hi, honey! We have a whole list of things for us as a family to get done today before you can go out and play. I'm hoping we can work together and do them really quickly.

Kid: Okay! I was hoping to go play now, but I understand that Saturdays are chores-first days. (*Turns with back facing Parent, looking out at kids, and changes expression and tone of voice, speaking in a stage whisper*) I'm obeying you on the outside, so I don't get in trouble! But in my head . . . I am complaining! This is so unfair! My parents knew I had plans with friends. My parents are soooooo selfish! They just want to use me for labor! (*Turns around and cheerfully faces Parent*) So, what's first on this loooooong list, Momsie? (*or Popsie*)

Parent: First thing I need you to do is pick up the dog's business in the backyard. You were supposed to do it last week. Remember, you promised when we got the dog.

Kid: Uh, oh. You're right; I totally forgot last week. I'll start on it now. (*Turns again to speak in a stage whisper*) They always throw that in my face, "You promised if we got a dog, you would take care of it . . ." What did I know? I'm just a kid! They love Pookie Bear as much as I do, but all the work goes to me! Harsh.

Parent: Thanks! Working together, we'll get this list done in no time!

Kid: (*Makes an ugly face behind the Parent's back so only the audience sees*)



Both Actors (*break character and say*): True obedience includes actions and thoughts.

(*The **Kid** picks up a sign on poster board that says: “Day of chores—take 2.”*)

Parent (*entering*): Hi, honey! We have a whole list of things for us as a family to get done today before you can go out and play. I’m hoping we can work together and do them really quickly.

Kid: Okay! I was hoping to go play now, but I understand that Saturdays are chores-first days. (*Turns away from **Parent**, looking out at kids and speaks in a stage whisper*) My attitude stinks, and I’m feeling pretty frustrated. My parents knew I had plans to play. But I also know that my parents work hard too. Part of being a strong family is doing chores. What is it we’ve been learning in Sunday School? Oh, yeah, we are made for the glory of God! (*Turns around cheerfully and faces **Parent***) Okay! Let’s work hard together so we can get on to bigger and better things!

Parent: Great! First thing I need you to do is pick up the dog’s business in the backyard. You were supposed to do it last week. Remember, you promised when we got the dog.

Kid: Uh, oh. You’re right; I totally forgot last week. I’ll start on it now. (*Turning again to whisper to audience*) Pick up the dog stuff! Yuck! But hey, I am thankful for Pookie Bear. I wanted a dog for a long time. I can show my thankfulness by not complaining, even if it is a gross job.

Parent: Thanks! Working together, we’ll get this list done in no time!

Kid: You’re right!

***Parent and Kid** walk off.*

Teacher: It’s not enough just to obey on the outside. For one thing, sooner or later what happens in our minds is going to become our actions. We must train our thoughts to obey Christ! I know this because our Bible verse tells us this. Repeat after me:

2 Corinthians 10:5 (2 Corinthians 10:5)

We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God
(We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God)

And take every thought captive (And take every thought captive)
to obey Christ (to obey Christ)

Let’s put the whole thing together!

2 Corinthians 10:5

We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ.

Great job!



Introduction to Fable Lesson (1-2 minutes):

By now you know a fable is a story that typically uses animals as characters and helps us to understand a lesson or a moral.

Who remembers what happened last week? (*Listen for answers.*) Right! Turtle was boasting! He wanted to make himself grand! But by keeping his eyes on himself and his own “glory” instead of on the Lord, he had quite a spill!

The lesson said, “Those who puff themselves up in their own eyes are likely to have an unpleasant surprise.”

We must remember, we are NOT our own creators. In fact, these Catechism questions are good reminders of Who is! Let’s practice.

Q1. Who made you? (God)

That’s right! So, *HE* gets the credit for anything good in us!

Q2. What else did God make? (God made all things.)

Yes! And . . .

Q3. Why did God make you and all things? (For His own glory!)

Q14. Where do you learn how to love and obey God? (In the Bible alone)

Yes! The Bible is our source for how to live. Great job!

Today we are going to hear another fable, but first, I wonder how many of you like to be happy? Me too! Of course, we ALL want to be happy.

How many of you have ever been sad? Me too. Of course, everyone has been sad at one time or another. We don’t like it, but that is also part of life sometimes, isn’t it?

Can we fix things so that we’re always happy? (*Wait for answers.*) Can anyone else fix our feelings so that we’re always happy? No. Let’s see why that’s a problem for Mr. Owl.



Fable Story (4 minutes):

(You may use the video or read “Owl’s Problem” from the book, *Frog’s Rainy-Day Story and Other Fables*.)

Fable Follow-Up (5-6 minutes):

Teacher: We will look at the Wisdom of the World and the Wisdom of the Word in just a moment. First, let’s talk about the story.



1. **What was Owl's new business?** (Solving everyone's problems)
2. **Why did Mole come to visit Owl?** (He was sad and lonely and didn't have a goal in life.)
3. **What was Owl's advice?** (Think positive thoughts, don't think about yourself.)
4. **What would be some good advice to give to Mole?** (Pray, remember how special you are to the Lord, reach out to others and be friendly, . . .)

Owl was right about some things. Thinking about ourselves all the time won't make us happy. And sometimes being unhappy is a clue that we need to change something. But Owl did not help Mole to remember something very important. Here is what I want you to remember: Mole and each one of us **does** have a purpose! Who can tell me what our purpose is? (*Listen for answers.*)

Right! To glorify God! In fact, the *Westminster Shorter Catechism* asks, "What is man's chief end?" and the answer is, "Man's chief end (or goal) is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever!"

5. **Why did Owl become sad?** (Mole didn't like his advice.)
6. **What's wrong with having happiness as a goal?** (We are not going to be happy all the time; sometimes God's plan for us is suffering.)

Our emotions can change quickly from one moment to the next. Happiness can come and go! But God is unchanging, and His plans for us are always good, even if they are hard for a while.

Let's compare and contrast the Wisdom of the World with the Wisdom of the Word. The world says: **"The purpose of our lives is to be happy."** (The Dalai Lama) and **"Happiness is life's most cherished goal."** (Dr. Robert Holden, British psychologist and author)

Wow, those quotes sound pretty good, don't they boys and girls? Really, everyone wants to be happy! But think about what you have learned. Why did God make you and all things? (*Listen*) Right! For His own glory! **NOT** for our own happiness. Living for our own happiness will only end in disappointment.

As you can see, this wisdom of the world is not really wisdom at all! So, let's look at the Wisdom of the Word:

You will show me the way of life, granting me the joy of Your presence and the pleasure of living with You forever. – Psalm 16:11 (NLT)

Even though the fig trees have no blossoms, and there are no grapes on the vines; even though the olive crop fails, and the fields lie empty and barren; even though the flocks die in the fields, and the cattle barns are empty, yet I will rejoice in the Lord! I will be joyful in the God of my salvation! – Habakkuk 3:17-18 (NLT)

You see, the Bible tells us about something deeper than being happy: delighting ourselves in the Lord and finding joy in Him instead of circumstances. Being happy is great. I love to be happy! But we all know, happiness comes and goes with circumstances. What we need is something deeper that doesn't come and go like the wind. We need something unchanging, so that whether we are happy or sad, we still know that we have a purpose, we still have a sense of being right and whole.

We need to have our hope in Jesus and to be able to rejoice in the LORD, no matter what is going on. In



fact, you can find joy in God even in hard circumstances, just as our Bible lesson will show us.

Bible Lesson from Acts 16 (5-10 minutes):

In Acts 16, we read about Paul and Silas, two followers of the risen Savior, Jesus! They were going from city to city sharing the good news of the gospel. While many came to believe, others were not pleased by their actions.

One time there was a poor slave girl who had a demonic spirit that was able to tell people's fortunes. People would pay her owners good money to have her tell their fortune. As Paul and Silas were on their way to prayer one day, this slave girl cried out, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation." Well, this went on for many days. They were trying to preach, and she, under the compulsion of that evil spirit kept shouting out, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation!" Now, you might think, "Wow! This evil spirit is telling the truth! Maybe that will help people believe!" But the constant interruption was becoming disturbing! And God's people never need help from evil spirits. So, Paul commanded the spirit to leave her in the name of Jesus! How wonderful for the girl! But her owners were very angry. Now they could not make money from her "gifts"! After having Paul and his friend Silas beaten with rods, they had them thrown into prison where their feet were fastened in stocks (like handcuffs for their feet).

One might think Paul and Silas would be weeping. Surely, they were in pain from the terrible beating they had received and feeling awfully uncomfortable with their feet in stocks. They must have been sad to be in prison away from their friends. They may have felt frightened, not knowing what would happen to them. All of those things are reasonable emotions and appropriate to what they were going through. It is not sinful to feel pain, sad, or frightened. Still, while they may not have felt happy about their circumstances, they had a deep-down joy and trust in God. Really? How do we know? Well, the Bible tells us that they were doing what God's people have done for thousands of years! They were *praying and singing* hymns to God! Paul and Silas responded to whatever God brought their way by worshiping!

They were not seeking happiness. They were seeking to give God glory. Their eyes were not on their circumstances but on the goodness of God!

That's really the most important part of the story, that after being beaten and thrown into jail, Paul and Silas still prayed and sang songs to the Lord . . . However, guess what happened next. In the midst of their praising God, there was a great earthquake, which opened the doors and broke the prisoners' bonds.

When the jailer woke and saw that the prison doors were open, he pulled out his sword and was about to kill himself, because he thought the prisoners had all escaped. But Paul cried with a loud voice, "Do not harm yourself, for we are all here."

The jailer could not believe it! He fell down before Paul and Silas in awe and humility. He asked them, "What must I do to be saved?"

You know, boys and girls, don't you? What must we do to be saved? Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you



will be saved.

The jailer did believe and there was great rejoicing . . . and maybe even some more singing too!

Lesson Discussion (10-15 minutes. This may be done at tables while students busy their hands with the craft, in small groups, or still part of large group.):

1. **Happiness is a good thing, so why is it wrong to live your life trying to get happiness?**
 2. **How is it possible to have joy in the Lord when you are sad and life is hard?**
 3. **What are some ways we can encourage one another?**
-

Craft Options (15-20 minutes):

Option 1: Joyful Chimes (happiness comes and goes with the wind, but the joy of the Lord can always be with us)

Materials:

- One decorative mini-wooden chime kit per child (Can be purchased online for less than \$2 each)
- Paints and paint brushes, paint markers, or permanent markers, enough for small groups to share
- Optional: Using a “fun font” type the phrase, “Happiness comes and goes with the wind, but the joy of the Lord is steadfast.” Make copies for each child to attach at the top of their chimes.



Before Class:

- Spread a table or the floor with paper to protect surface.

During Class:

- Hand out the chime kits.
- Allow each child to decorate his or her chime kit as desired.
- Remind children that even as the wind comes and goes, our emotions are fleeting, but joy rooted in the truth of God’s Word is everlasting.

Option 2: Encouragement Cards (Create cards to encourage someone going through a hard time to remember the faithfulness of Christ and the joy found in Him.)

Materials:

- Construction paper or cardstock
- Copies of Bible verses
- Crayons, markers, stickers



Before Class:

- Cut and fold construction paper or cardstock into desired size for a card.
- Print out several Bible verses (found at the end of the lesson) about the faithfulness of the Lord, hope, and joy as references for students to choose and copy. Alternatively, choose an attractive font, desired size labels, and print several Bible-verse labels for children to use in their cards.

During Class:

- Instruct each child to think of a person whom he or she would like to encourage.
- Instruct the child to pray for that person and then create an encouraging card using the Bible verses and decorations.

Snack (optional):

This may be passed out as kids arrive, eaten during welcome, or eaten during discussion or activity time, or at the end.

- Cookies with smiley faces drawn on them with icing
- Any snack laid out on a paper plate to look like a smiley face (For example: two crackers for eyes and an apple wedge smile)

Dismissal

- Stretch Activities
- Prayer
- Take Home: Coloring sheets and/or study guide



“Owl’s Problem”



Faithful Fables

At-A-Glance

(LESSON 5)

Hello!

- ☐ Welcome Students
- ☐ Check Name Tags
- ☐ Take Attendance
- ☐ “Getting Closer”

Know! What’s going on today?

- As students arrive, do the things in the “Hello!” box.
- Lead by example! Encourage student participation in singing songs and memory work time.
- Lesson time! Help students pay attention and engage in the lesson.
- “Grow!” Discussion and application of the lesson.
- Activity time! Set up the activity supplies. Help students complete the activity so they can “Show!” others what they learned.
- “Go!” Follow the instructions below to make sure we send the students off well.

Grow! Application discussion questions for small groups

- Happiness is a good thing, so why is it wrong to live your life trying to get happiness?
- How is it possible to have joy in the Lord when you are sad or when life is hard?
- What are some ways we can encourage one another?

Getting Closer

(Discussion Starters)

- Share one of your happiest moments.
- What are some things that make you sad?
- Do you think it is possible to feel sad or anxious and at the same time have joy? Why or why not?

Show! Activities that show what you know!

- Use today’s craft activity to review the lesson with the children.
- Have them tell you how they will use this craft to explain the lesson to their parents and friends!



GO! Before dismissing children to parents, make sure they put away all materials, clean up their area and gather all their belongings including their “Taking It Home” papers.



"Owl's Problem"



Questions! For the Car

- How did you participate in class today?
- What was "Owl's Problem" about?
- What was more important to Paul and Silas, and other Christians too, than finding happiness?
- Happiness is good, but why should it not be your highest goal?
- What should be your highest goal?

Questions! For Later

- What is the difference between godly joy and happiness?
- How can you have joy in the Lord if you are experiencing sadness?

Bible Lesson TODAY

In **Acts 16**, Paul and Silas were beaten and imprisoned for preaching the good news of Jesus Christ. Even so, they praised the Lord with prayers and songs, for they had been counted worthy to suffer for the name of Christ. Their hope was in the kingdom to come and their joy was in Jesus!!

Bible Memory

We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ...

— 2 Corinthians 10:5

TAKING IT HOME (LESSON 5)

Lesson from Today's Fable

Try to hold on to happiness, and it will surely slip away, but delight yourself in the Lord, and true happiness comes to stay.

Wisdom of the WORLD

What's wrong with these thoughts?

The purpose of our lives is to be happy.

— THE DALAI LAMA

Happiness is life's most cherished goal.

— DR. ROBERT HODEN, BRITISH
PSYCHOLOGIST & AUTHOR

Wisdom of the WORD

How are these thoughts different from what the world says?

You will show me the way of life, granting me the joy of Your presence and the pleasure of living with You forever. — PSALM 16:11 (NLT)

Even though the fig trees have no blossoms, and there are no grapes on the vines; even though the olive crop fails, and the fields lie empty and barren; even though the flocks die in the fields, and the cattle barns are empty, yet I will rejoice in the Lord! I will be joyful in the God of my salvation! — HABAKKUK 3:17-18 (NLT)



OWL & MOLE



What do you think about Mole's attitude?
What do you think about Owl's attitude?
What would be your advice to each of them?



WEEK 5
BIBLE MEMORY

We destroy arguments and every
lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of
God, and take every thought captive
to obey Christ ...

2 Corinthians 10:5

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2 Corinthians 10:50

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SOMETHING TO
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To Obey Christ:

We have control over our mind, not
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Lesson 5

Materials List

Every Lesson

- Curriculum Guide
- Bible
- *Frog's Rainy-Day Story and Other Fables* book or audio-visual file
- Choice of music
- Prepared Bible Memory Cards for current week's lesson (1 per student)
- At-a-Glance (for each small group leader if using in a large group context)
- Taking It Home Papers for current week's lesson (1 per student)
- Coloring sheets for each week as desired

Lesson 5

- **Skit Props:** Signs saying, "Day of chores—take 1," and "Day of chores—take 2," mop, bucket, rag, etc.
- **Craft Option 1, Joyful Chimes:**
 - Small wind chimes hanging from balsa wood sets—1 set per child
 - Paint brushes—1 per child
 - Acrylic paints—several colors
 - Small cups to hold paints and rinse water—several per group of children
 - Paper towels
 - Alternatively, paint markers or magic markers, several colors per child
- **Craft Option 2, Encouragement Cards:**
 - 8 ½" X 11" sheet of colored paper—1 per child
 - Bible verses printed on labels—1 to 3 per child
 - Colored pencils, crayons, and markers—several per child
 - Optional: a variety of stickers
- **Snack Option 1, Smiley Face Cookies:**
 - Round plain cookies (such as sugar cookies)—1 or 2 per child
 - Icing to be piped on each cookie
- **Snack Option 2, Smiley Face Plate:**
 - Smile: apple wedges or ½ banana—1 per plate
 - Eyes: round crackers, or large slices of banana—1 pair per plate
 - Nose: strawberry, baby carrot—1 per plate



Lesson 5

Mini Skit

*(This can be acted out by two volunteers or the teacher and one volunteer. Either way, the **Parent** is holding a sign which reads: “Day of chores—take 1.”)*

Parent (*Puts down sign as **Kid** walks in*): Hi, honey! We have a whole list of things for us as a family to get done today before you can go out and play. I’m hoping we can work together and do them really quickly.

Kid: Okay! I was hoping to go play now, but I understand that Saturdays are chores-first days. (*Turns with back facing **Parent**, looking out at kids, and changes expression and tone of voice, speaking in a stage whisper*) I’m obeying you on the outside, so I don’t get in trouble! But in my head . . . I am complaining! This is so unfair! My parents knew I had plans with friends. My parents are soooooo selfish! They just want to use me for labor! (*Turns around and cheerfully faces **Parent***) So, what’s first on this loooooong list, Momsie? (*or Popsie*)

Parent: First thing I need you to do is pick up the dog’s business in the backyard. You were supposed to do it last week. Remember, you promised when we got the dog.

Kid: Uh, oh. You’re right; I totally forgot last week. I’ll start on it now. (*Turns again to speak in a stage whisper*) They always throw that in my face, “You promised if we got a dog, you would take care of it . . .” What did I know? I’m just a kid! They love Pookie Bear as much as I do, but all the work goes to me! Harsh.

Parent: Thanks! Working together, we’ll get this list done in no time!

Kid: (*Makes an ugly face behind the **Parent**’s back so only the audience sees*)

Both Actors (*break character and say*): True obedience includes actions and thoughts.

*(The **Kid** picks up a sign on poster board that says: “Day of chores—take 2.”)*

Parent (*entering*): Hi, honey! We have a whole list of things for us as a family to get done today before you can go out and play. I’m hoping we can work together and do them really quickly.

Kid: Okay! I was hoping to go play now, but I understand that Saturdays are chores-first days. (*Turns away from **Parent**, looking out at kids and speaks in a stage whisper*) My attitude stinks, and I’m feeling pretty frustrated. My parents knew I had plans to play. But I also know that my parents work hard too. Part of being a strong family is doing chores. What is it we’ve been learning in Sunday School? Oh, yeah, we are made for the glory of God! (*Turns around cheerfully and faces **Parent***) Okay! Let’s work hard together so we can get on to bigger and better things!

Parent: Great! First thing I need you to do is pick up the dog’s business in the backyard. You were supposed to do it last week. Remember, you promised when we got the dog.

Kid: Uh, oh. You’re right; I totally forgot last week. I’ll start on it now (*turning again to whisper to audience*) Pick up the dog stuff! Yuck! But hey, I am thankful for Pookie Bear. I wanted a dog for a long time. I can show my thankfulness by not complaining, even if it is a gross job.

Parent: Thanks! Working together, we’ll get this list done in no time!

Kid: You’re right!

Parent and Kid walk off.



Sample Bible Verses for Encouragement Cards:

Psalm 42:11 (ESV)

Why are you cast down, O my soul,
And why are you in turmoil within me?
Hope in God; for I shall again praise Him,
my salvation and my God.

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Romans 15:13 (ESV)

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing,
so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.

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Psalm 119:114 (NLT)

You are my refuge and my shield;
Your word is my source of hope.

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Nehemiah 8:10b

(several translations)
... for the joy of the LORD is your strength.

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Psalm 95:1 (NLT)

Oh come, let us sing to the Lord;
let us shout joyfully to the Rock of our salvation!

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Psalm 92:4 (ESV)

For You, O Lord, have made me glad by Your work;
at the works of Your hands I sing for joy.

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