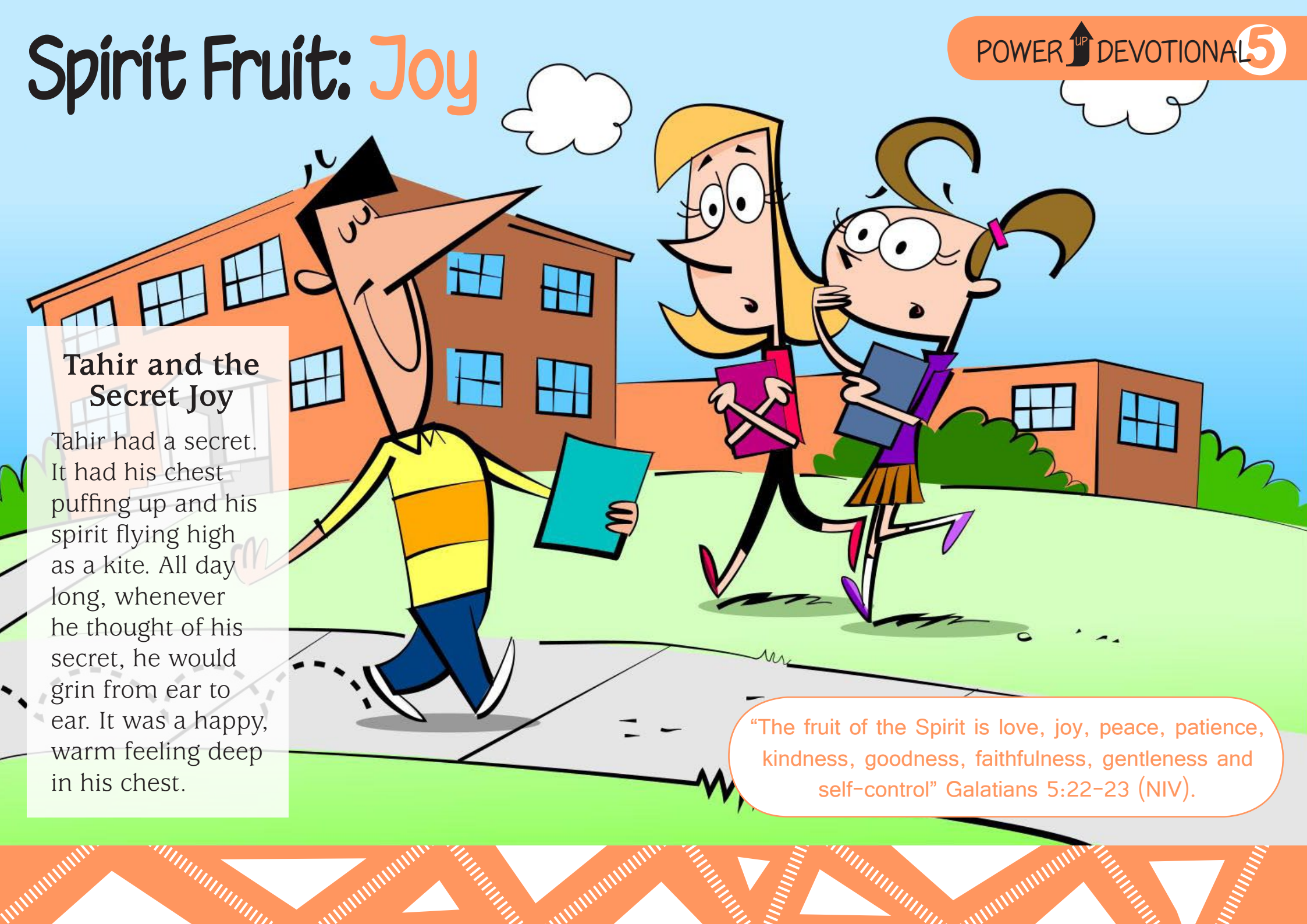


Spirit Fruit: Joy

Tahir and the Secret Joy

Tahir had a secret. It had his chest puffing up and his spirit flying high as a kite. All day long, whenever he thought of his secret, he would grin from ear to ear. It was a happy, warm feeling deep in his chest.

“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control” Galatians 5:22-23 (NIV).



That happy feeling stayed with Tahir when he was late for the second class of the morning, and when Oliver fell and spilled his lunch on Tahir's new sneakers, and even when Tahir didn't ace a test he had studied hard for.



Tahir's friends were puzzled. Today didn't seem like a good day for Tahir—what ever was making Tahir so happy?

In the Bible, in Acts 16:22–36, we read that Paul and Silas had a secret joy as well. Their secret was powerful enough to keep them singing and praising God even though they had been beaten and thrown into prison.



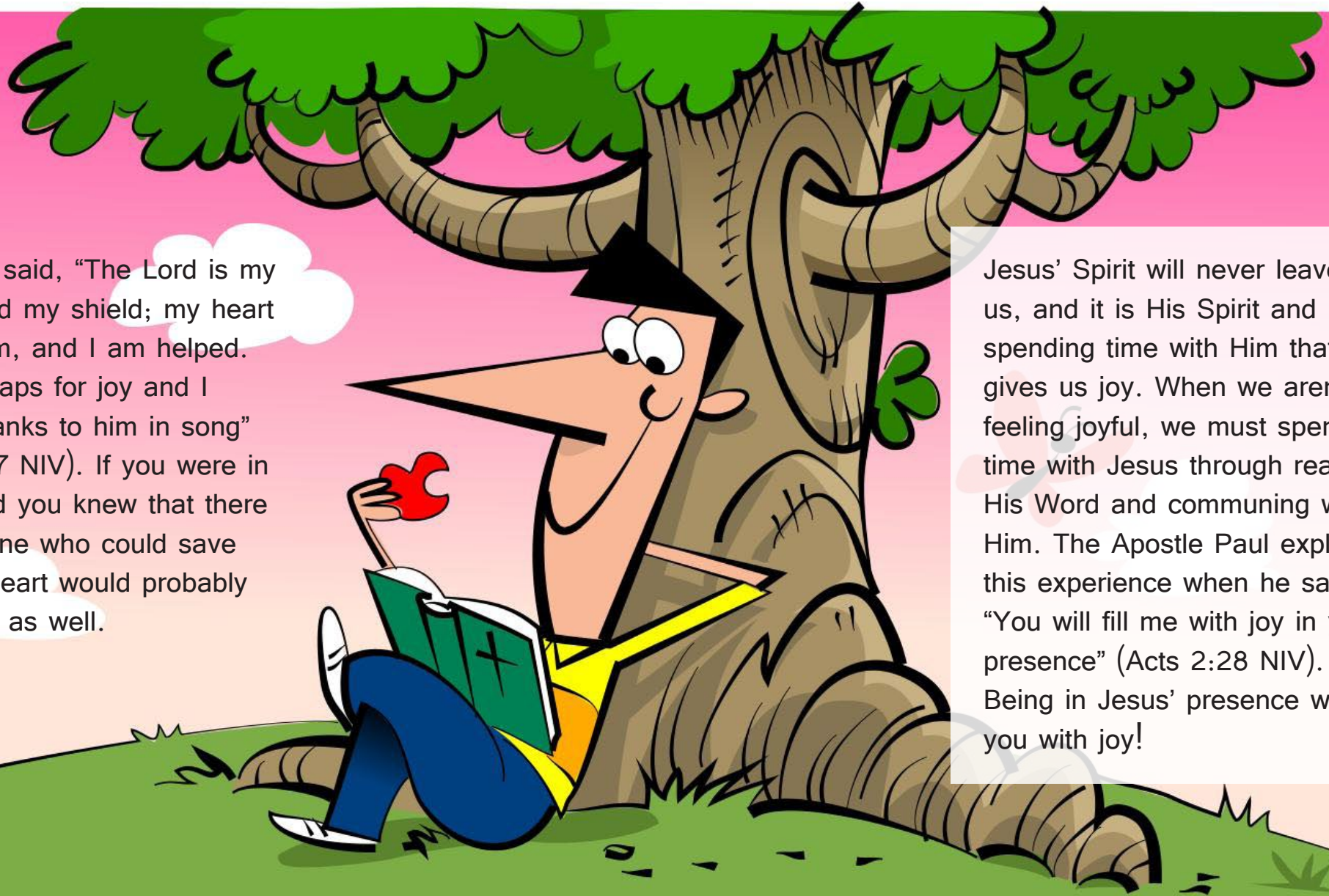
In 2 Corinthians 7:4b (NIV), Paul says, “I am greatly encouraged; in all our troubles my joy knows no bounds.”

Have you ever had a secret that kept you happy all day long despite the difficulties that came your way, like what happened with Tahir?



Maybe it was that your parents had promised you something you'd been wanting, or an outing to your favorite amusement park, restaurant, or another great place. While that might keep you happy for a little while in spite of difficulties that you might face, the joy that Paul and Silas had gave them strength to endure very difficult situations. That secret joy was the knowledge of Jesus.

Who Jesus is and what He brings into our lives fills believers with joy. We rejoice in His promises to us "like one who discovers a great treasure" (Psalm 119:162 NLT). All that Jesus does for us is a source of joy that doesn't run out.

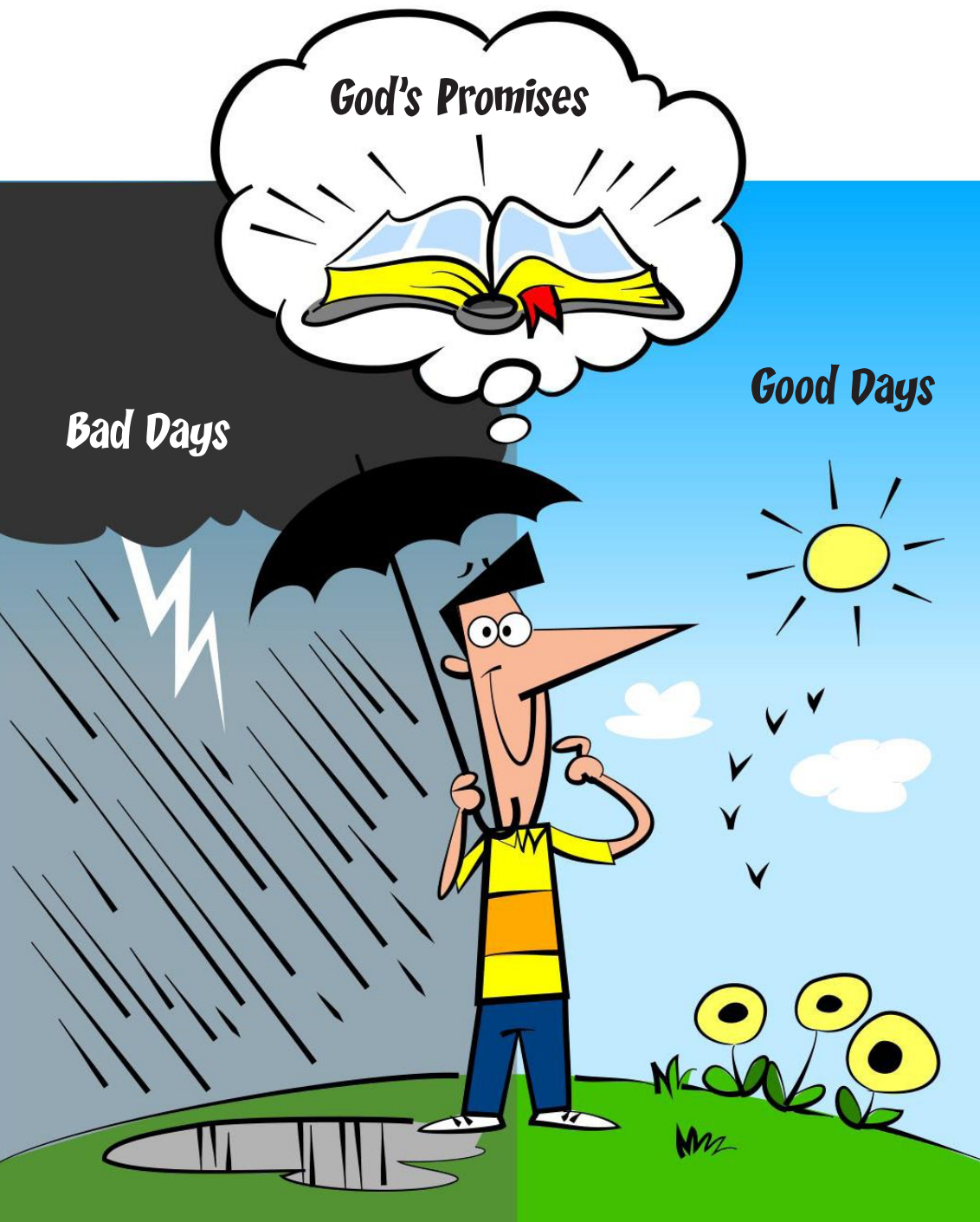


King David said, “The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and I am helped. My heart leaps for joy and I will give thanks to him in song” (Psalm 28:7 NIV). If you were in trouble, and you knew that there was someone who could save you, your heart would probably leap for joy as well.

Jesus’ Spirit will never leave us, and it is His Spirit and spending time with Him that gives us joy. When we aren’t feeling joyful, we must spend time with Jesus through reading His Word and communing with Him. The Apostle Paul explained this experience when he said, “You will fill me with joy in your presence” (Acts 2:28 NIV). Being in Jesus’ presence will fill you with joy!

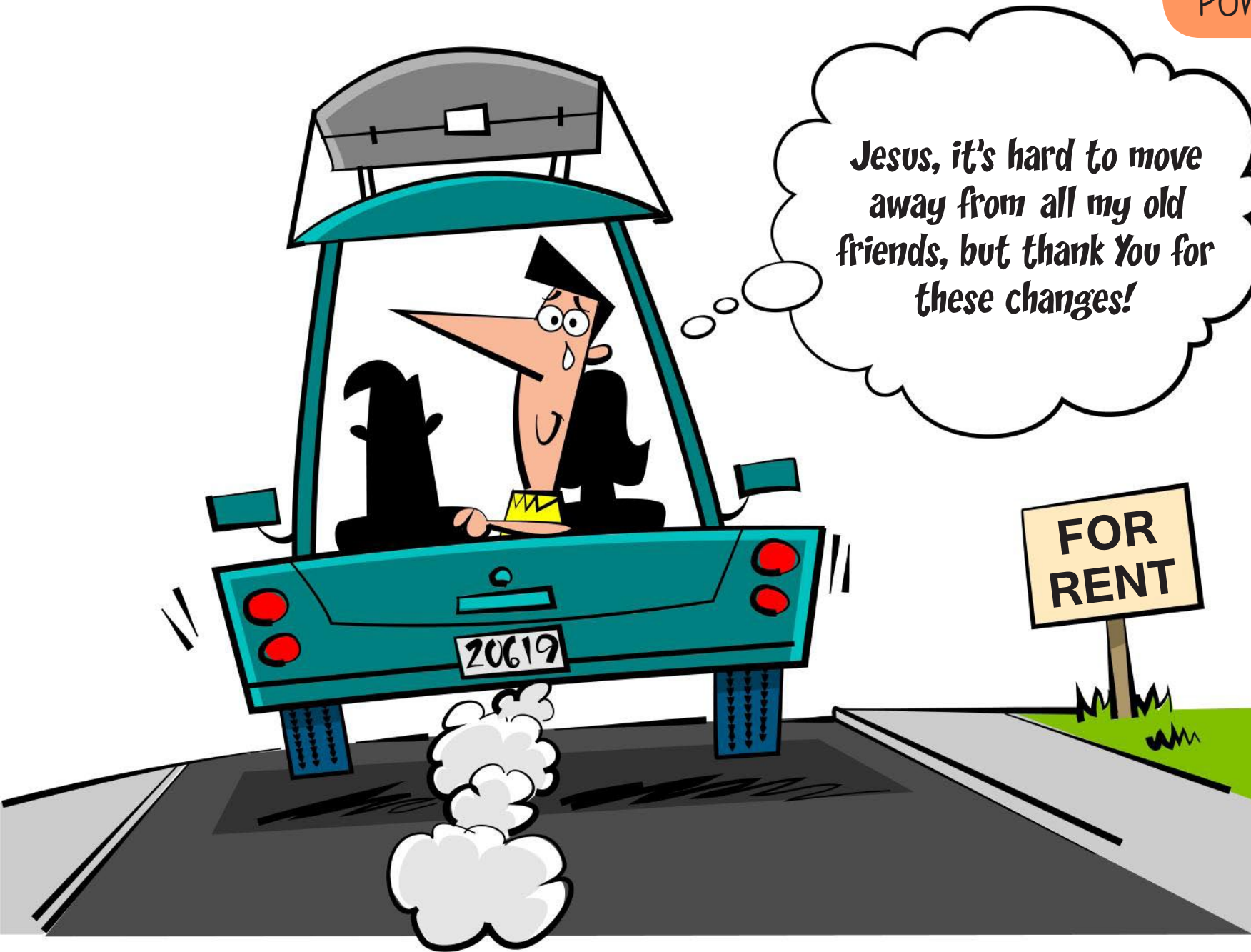
We are told to “be joyful always” (1 Thessalonians 5:16 NIV), and we can do this on both bad days and good days through bringing to mind all that Jesus has promised us in the Bible.





- Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the LORD will personally go ahead of you. He will be with you; he will neither fail you nor abandon you (Deuteronomy 31:8 NLT).
- And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him (Romans 8:28 NIV).
- The name of the LORD is a strong tower; the righteous run to it and are safe (Proverbs 18:10 NIV).

Thanking Jesus for whatever is happening in our lives helps us to recognize this joy that Jesus' Spirit gives us.



Joy isn't a feeling that you have to work up. You don't need to feel overjoyed every minute of the day in order to know that you have this fruit of the Spirit. Joy is deeper than feelings, moods, or circumstances. Joy springs from knowledge of Jesus and His perfect care and plan for everything in your life. Jesus' joy gives you reason to rejoice regardless of feelings, moods, or difficult situations.

Bite-sized: Joy in our lives is a fruit of Jesus' Spirit in us. Just as Jesus has promised to never leave nor forsake you, His joy is something that is yours forever.

Memorize it:

• This is the day the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it. (Psalm 118:24 NIV)

• I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. (John 15:11 NIV)

Action: Find some promises in the Bible that you would like to claim for yourself. Write them down under the heading "My Reasons for Joy." Next time you're feeling sad, anxious, or discontent, pull out this list and spend some time meditating on your reasons for joy.