

Tree Huggers

*“(The Messiah’s mission was to include)... comfort to those who mourn in Zion, giving them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; **that they may be called Oak trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified.**” Isaiah 61:3*

I. Introduction

*“Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, and whose trust is the Lord. **“For he will be like a tree planted by the water,** that extends its roots by a stream, and will not fear when the heat comes; but **its leaves will be green,** and it will not be anxious in a year of drought...”*

Jeremiah 17:7-8 (NASB)

*“But I am like **a green olive tree in the house of God.** I trust in the mercy and steadfast love of God forever and ever.” Psalm 52:8 (ESV)*

II. The Four Characteristics of Healthy Trees

1. Healthy trees grow a _____.

*“But **since they don’t have deep roots, they don’t last long.** They fall away as soon as they have problems or are persecuted for believing God’s word.” Mark 4:17 (NLT)*

*“Just as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to live together as Christ’s people. **Now sink your roots down deep into Jesus and build on Him.** Be strengthened by the faith that you were taught, and overflow with thanksgiving each day.” Colossians 2:6-7*

*“Then Christ will make His home in your hearts as you trust in Him. **Your roots will grow down into God’s love and keep you strong.**” Ephesians 3:17 (NLT)*

Key thoughts:

- o The average tree has roots that extend downward 1 ½ times the height of the tree!
- o Character development is more important than gift development
- o Behind every outward success story, there is a much longer developmental process that precedes it
- o Overnight successes are usually followed by some very public failures
- o Sometimes God’s blessings and protection are in His “No” instead of His “Yes!”

2. Healthy trees _____ as well as tall.

*“Another parable Jesus put forth to them, saying: “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field, which indeed is the least of all the seeds; but **when it is***

grown it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches. Matthew 13:31-32 (NKJV)

"Therefore **encourage one another and build each other up**, just as in fact you are already doing."
I Thessalonians 5:11

"...Speaking the truth in love, **we will grow to become** in every respect **the mature body** of Him who is the head, that is, Christ." Ephesians 4:15

"All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but **they shared everything they had.**" Acts 4:32

3. Healthy trees say, " _____ !

"The righteous will flourish like a palm tree, and grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Planted in the house of the LORD, they will flourish in the courts of our God. In old age they will still bear fruit; healthy and green they will remain, to proclaim, "The LORD is upright; He is my Rock, and in Him there is no unrighteousness." Psalm 92:12 (Berean Study Bible)

"For there is a root of sinful self-interest in us that is at odds with a free spirit, just as the free spirit is incompatible with selfishness. These two ways of life are antithetical, so that you cannot live at times one way and at times another way according to how you feel on any given day. Why don't you choose to be led by the Spirit and so escape the erratic compulsions of a law-dominated existence?"
Galatians 5:17 (Mess.)

4. Healthy trees remain _____ !

"Even in old age they will still bear fruit; healthy and green they will remain." Psalm 92:14-15

"His anger lasts only a moment, but His favor lasts a lifetime. **Weeping may last for the night, but a great shout of joy will come in the morning.**" Psalm 30:5

"Then Nehemiah said to the people, "Go your way, eat the fat, drink the sweet, and send portions to those for whom nothing is prepared; for this day is holy to our LORD. **Do not sorrow, for the joy of the LORD is your strength.**" Nehemiah 8:10 (NKJV)

Answer Key:

1. deep root system
2. grow wide
3. My roots are right here
4. planted through every season