

STAYING STRONG

THE OAK TREE - By Johnny Ray Ryder Jr.

How do we respond when faced with adversity and the powerful “storms of life?” Here is a poem about how we can deal with challenges and hardships we all face:

*A mighty wind blew night and day
It stole the oak tree's leaves away
Then snapped its boughs and pulled its bark
Until the oak was tired and stark
But still the oak tree held its ground
While other trees fell all around
The weary wind gave up and spoke,
“How can you still be standing Oak?”
The oak tree said, “I know that you
Can break each branch of mine in two
Carry every leaf away
Shake my limbs, and make me sway
But I have roots stretched in the earth
Growing stronger since my birth
You'll never touch them, for you see
They are the deepest part of me
Until today I wasn't sure
Of just how much I could endure
But now I've found, with thanks to you
I'm stronger than I ever knew!”*

1. What does this poem about the oak tree say in regard to where our strength comes from when we face the “storms of life?”
2. Where do your “roots” come from in your life?
3. Who are some of the people in your life who have helped your “roots” to grow and give you added strength when troubled times appear?
4. Who have you helped in strengthening their “roots” and life foundation?
5. What can you do to help strengthen the “roots” of this team?

Like branches on a tree, our lives may grow in different directions, yet our roots remain as one.