



CHRONIC JOY® DEVOTIONAL

TREE RINGS

By Kara Plett

What does a tree need to grow strong and healthy? Did you think of sunlight, water, room to spread its roots...?



One of the ways we can tell how healthy a tree has been through its life is by looking at its tree rings. Maybe you've seen some tree rings on an old stump.

Trees add a new layer of wood every year. A thicker ring may show that there was a lot of rain and sunlight that year. A thinner ring may mean the tree didn't get as much water or sun—or, it was crowded by other trees, slowing its growth.

What if we pictured our lives like tree rings? What would cause thicker or thinner rings?

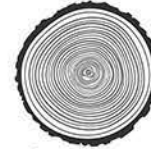
A thin ring might happen when we don't have time for God. A thicker ring may grow as we pray or as we spend time with God. This year, on your birthday, stop to think about what kind of year you'd like to have.

Psalms 1:2-3 (ERV) says:

...They love the Lord's teachings and think about them day and night. So they grow strong, like a tree planted by a stream –



Let's try to be like a tree planted by a stream so we grow strong and healthy. There are going to be tough times, but if we spend time by the stream (God's Word), we know we can face hard things with Him.



Draw the 'rings' of your life on this page. Start in the middle and draw a ring for each year of your life. Think about which rings will be thick or thin. Label the rings with ideas of why they are thick or thin. Talk to God about spending time with Him to give you all you need for the days ahead.

Talk to others about the *tree rings* tree rings in their lives.