

Joni - The True Story of Joni Eareckson Tada

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. Romans 8:28 NIV

*Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.
Romans 8:35,37-39 NIV*

When Joni Eareckson was a teenager she loved horseback riding, swimming, art and music. In the 1960s Joni was swimming, dove off of a raft, and ended up paralyzed. In one instant her life went from vibrant and active to hospitalization, therapy, and a wheelchair. Joni's life changed completely.

What would change in your life if you needed a wheelchair?

Joni's legs were completely useless. Her hands no longer worked but she had some movement in her shoulders. Inside she was still an active and enthusiastic person but she was trapped inside a body that no longer worked. Since Joni loved art she learned how to paint holding the brush with mouth. Her sister helped with her physical care.

Who are the people you help? Have you considered how important you are to those you serve?

When Joni was at her lowest she wanted to die but was too helpless to end her own life. She asked one of her friends to help her, but the friend wouldn't. As time went on Joni learned how to live with her disability and even how to enjoy life again.

Have you known someone who didn't want to live?

Throughout Joni's struggles she gained strength from God. Although she didn't know why the accident had happened, she was willing to trust that He would guide and sustain her in the future. After the book Joni was written, she played herself in the movie, Joni. Since that time she has written several more books, done high detail paintings that are sought after and collected, has an international ministry to help people with disabilities, records radio & TV programs, and has spoken in 35 countries around the world.

Since the time of the movie Joni has married and lives an active and busy life. Although her life seemed unbearable and hopeless in the months following her accident, because of the accident Joni has gone on to become one of the world's leading spokespersons for people with disabilities. Joni has made a difference in the world. Her own personal tragedy opened the door for her ministry.

Are there weaknesses in your life? Trust that God can use them to bless you and encourage others.

Proverbs 31:9 says, "Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy." The idea behind the Christian Institute on Disability began in 1982 when a Down syndrome child with mild complications was starved to death in a hospital. At that time Joni thought, "The life of every disabled person is now in jeopardy!" Today most Down syndrome children are aborted before they have a chance to live.

Do you think this is fair?

Dear Lord, teach us how to speak up and judge fairly. Show us how to defend the rights of the of those who cannot defend themselves. Help us to live our lives in ways that will make a difference in the world around us. Give us the complete confidence that nothing can ever separate us from Your love. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.