



Season 3 | Episode 41

## Reflections: How God Provides Abundantly When You Are Generous

### Crystal Keating

---

NOVEMBER 25, 2021

Crystal Keating:

I'm Crystal Keating, and this is the Joni and Friends Ministry Podcast. Each week we're bringing you real conversations about disability and finding hope through hardship and sharing practical ways that you can include people living with disability in your church and community. Be sure to subscribe wherever you listen to podcasts or find us at [joniandfriends.org/podcast](http://joniandfriends.org/podcast).

On this Thanksgiving Day, I'm reflecting on the many wonderful conversations we've had this year, the remarkable people we've met along the way, and how grateful I am for their willingness to share their stories with all of us. I'm amazed at the way our friends have persevered through the hardships of their disabilities and chronic conditions and have leaned on the Lord for his strength along the way. I especially think of our guests who sacrificed their energy to talk about their lives, reminding us of God's faithfulness no matter how challenging the situation or circumstance.

Friends like [Jennifer Ji-Hye Ko](#) who lives with tremendous pain and mental health challenges and brought us a powerful reminder about lamenting to our God through seasons of grief... or I remember my conversation with [Heather Hart](#) who, on the morning we recorded, had been in the ER with one of her daily migraines. And I think of my sweet friend [Abigail Brown](#) who used a communication board to share her testimony of God's unseen purposes for her suffering. And of course, [Stephanie Magness](#) who spoke with us even though her Friedrich's ataxia would not allow her to talk for more than about 10 minutes. And I'll never forget my conversations with [Tara Groff](#) who serves the Lord as a wife and mother through her daily episodes with schizophrenia. I give thanks to God for each one of you, and the many more not mentioned, for the kindness you showed to us by sharing your hearts on this platform.

Living with a disability is not easy, but each guest reminds us that the hope of heaven, the help of other Christians, and the grace of God is sustaining. God's heart is to welcome people of all abilities into his church and that's why I'm so excited to share about a special way Joni and Friends is making this possible. You know that for those with disabilities, creating access (both physically and relationally) requires churches to remove the physical and social barriers that can make it difficult—even impossible—to participate in worship services and programs. So how can we make the gospel accessible in our churches and communities?

Joni and Friends has been making this possible through a modest grant program called the [Christian Fund for the Disabled](#). The CFD is a matching grant program of Joni and Friends that demonstrates Christ's love by meeting practical needs of people living with disability. The grant serves to strengthen the relationship between a person living with a disability and his or her congregation by partnering with their church in meeting disability-related needs. I especially



appreciate that these modest grants are also available to help churches and Christian organizations start or expand their ministry to individuals impacted by disability.

Just this year, a church in New York was able to install a stairlift to help those with mobility challenges access the upper and lower levels of their building. This makes more connection with the church community possible and provides an entrance to all of the classrooms where God's word is taught, and prayers are lifted up.

Another church in Arizona was excited to see God grow their special needs ministry with the help of the CFD grant. They were able to create a sensory-friendly room, complete with a fish tank to provide a calming element for children with autism or other sensory disorders. These children may feel overwhelmed during the main service. The church also installed a TV to stream sensory-sensitive worship songs for the students who thrive in a less stimulating environment.

And one more story. This is truly incredible, the love of Christ in action... Youth leaders Mike and Elaine started praying for Jeremy, a young man with cerebral palsy who had lost his caregiver and became essentially homeless earlier this year. They wanted to help him, but their home wasn't built to accommodate Jeremy's wheelchair. But praise God, they reached out to Joni and Friends and learned about the small grant through the CFD. Mike and Elaine applied, began retrofitting their home, and invited this young man to join their family. With the help of their church and this grant, Mike and Elaine made their home accessible for this young man, clearly demonstrating the care of the Lord.

I just love what Joni and Friends is doing across the United States through the Christian Fund for the Disabled. And if God is touching your heart and you want to be a part of supporting this grant, you can! If you feel led to give, please go to [joniandfriends.org/podcast](http://joniandfriends.org/podcast) to learn how to donate to this fund for expanding ministry to people living with disability. Or if you're a church who would like to apply, go to [joniandfriends.org/podcast](http://joniandfriends.org/podcast) to review the guidelines and download the application.

The needs of people living with disabilities around the world are so great. If you feel compassion for those with disabilities living in poverty, there is a special way to give this season... we call it the [Perfect Gift](#) because it's so much more than a wheelchair!

We are giving life-changing mobility and sharing Jesus, the hope of the world, with each recipient and their family, also giving them an opportunity to connect with a local church and find their place in the body of Christ. To this end, our desire is to make God's house full, and I can't wait for that day!

So now as I close season three of the Joni and Friends Ministry Podcast, I want to share some encouragement about God's provision for us when we give generously and consider the needs of others. This is so encouraging to me! I love how the Apostle Paul encourages believers to give generously in 2 Corinthians chapters 8 and 9. He is giving thanks to God for churches who gave, even out of their poverty, to help other churches and the poor who were in need. They trusted that God would provide for them abundantly as they gave to meet the needs of other believers. Listen to this encouraging promise... and it's one that I've banked my life on and have seen God bless time and time again!

Paul writes, "God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work." What a promise!

And I love how he continues... stay with me here, "Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every



occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God. This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of the Lord's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God.”

So what's Paul saying here? Basically, as we give generously and strategically to meet the needs of other Christians and those God is directing us to care for, the Lord will provide for us. That is a promise that we can hold fast to. And when we see his provision in a tangible way, it increases our faith, deepens our love for Jesus, and fills our hearts with thanksgiving.

So on this Thanksgiving Day, if you are sensing God directing you to help provide for the specific needs of other Christians who have disabilities, or churches who want to expand their capacity to reach the disability community with the Gospel so every person finds place in the body of Christ, go to [joniandfriends.org/podcast](http://joniandfriends.org/podcast) to learn how to [donate](#) or [apply for the modest CFD grant](#).

Well friends, I hope this season is filled with evidence of God's hand as you continue to trust in him. Happy Thanksgiving to you all and thank you again for listening to the Joni and Friends Ministry Podcast.

© Joni and Friends  
[Listen to the episode](#)