

SHARING *Hope* THROUGH HARDSHIP

“Mourn with those
who mourn.”

ROMANS 12:15

Our hearts are broken as, all around us, disabled people are suffering trauma upon trauma because of deadly Southern California wildfires. Your love in action shows them that they are not alone and, because of Jesus, there is hope for the future.

from the heart

“Mourn with those who mourn.”

ROMANS 12:15

Deadly Southern California wildfires are a disaster beyond comprehension. With gale force winds, a severe drought, low humidity, and the hills thick with dry brush... this fire disaster happened so fast—so violently—that everyone was caught off guard.

The fires erupted on January 7th, sweeping across greater Los Angeles and killing more than twenty people. Thousands have been displaced, more than 12,000 homes and businesses have been destroyed and, as we publish this newsletter, first responders are still actively fighting flare-ups as winds continue to gust. There's no doubt—this is a tragedy.

We have been praying for dear friends who have lost their homes, and for countless others who've lost even more. Then there are schools and nursing homes, grocery stores, gas stations, all of them destroyed. Perhaps you saw the footage of the long stretch of Malibu beachfront properties, all of them on the edge of the ocean—virtually every house gone up in smoke. I've heard people wonder about God's purposes and plan. And I've pondered the same.

But this early on? I have no idea what God is doing. But I do know this: He is moving in people's hearts.

Neighbors are coming together and helping each other. Food and clothing are being distributed, and the Gospel is on display as churches set up distribution centers in their parking lots—providing water, bags of groceries, and diapers. Christians are sharing God's comfort, consolation, and eternal hope.

There will come a time when God may make his plan more clear. But for now, the Gospel is going forth. And you and I can partner with God's will through our prayers. We can ask the Lord to pour out his consolation and comfort. For the Holy Spirit to mercifully draw families to Jesus Christ. And vulnerable disabled individuals and families who are struggling with trauma in the wake of this catastrophe.

Pray for Joni and Friends as we actively reach out to people with disabilities who need help. People with disabilities and their families have unique needs, and our ministry stands ready to provide Christ-centered love, Gospel encouragement, and practical resources. If you want to know how you can come alongside us and help families who deal with disability here in greater Los Angeles, just go to our website at joniandfriends.org/disaster.

May our actions of practical care and compassion prove that Jesus Christ is our hope. He is the only hope for this devastated region. Jesus is the only hope in your community, and for all the world.

And now, as you turn the page, let us share with you how Joni and Friends is giving his wonderful, eternal hope in other parts of the world...



Thank you, dear friends, for praying for God's will to be done here in Los Angeles and all over the world. And his will?... His Word tells us to weep with those who weep. And then to pray without ceasing.

You sent
God's love
to Kalyani in Nepal

Rejected by her family, Kalyani lived on the streets and had to beg to survive. “I was alone in my time of suffering,” she explains. “I was in much pain and poverty.”

Kalyani recalls her older brother carrying her on his back when she was unable to keep up as a young child. But in time, her family abandoned her—unable to see her value as a human being and lacking the means to care for her.

Living with dwarfism in a culture that largely views people with disabilities as sub-human, Kalyani was given no opportunity to get an education. “When I heard the students reading at school, I wept because I could not attend school,” she says.

Kalyani often had no way to meet her most basic needs. “When I had nowhere to stay, I went around in the caves, hills, and bridges. There was a time when I couldn’t get water. I would ask and people would throw water and dirt at me. I don’t like to think about those times.”

When she met our *Joni’s House Nepal* team, Kalyani found the kind of support she had ached for her entire life. We constructed a shed and pen for Kalyani to raise chickens, offering her dignity in her community and a sustainable source of income. *Joni’s House* also provided the chicken feed, feeding pots, and materials Kalyani needs to grow her business. But more than economic help, Kalyani has also gained new hope and a sense of belonging.

“I used to have no one to help me,” says Kalyani. “I used to weep and wander around. I had no parents to love and care for me. Now I feel like I found my parents whose love I did not have. I used to have no shelter and would get soaked by the rain. Now I have this shelter. Now I can raise some chickens and make money. I am happy.”

When Kalyani recalls the exclusion and cruelty of her past, she points to her heart and says, “I am not scared... there is God *in here*. Men may try to despise us, but God does not despise us.”

Thank you for sending immediate help and hope to people like Kalyani. Together, we are reaching into places where people with disabilities have little-to-no chance of hearing about Jesus!



God is doing a new thing in Kalyani's life through the chicken raising business you provided.



“See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.”

ISAIAH 43:19

Joni's House Blesses the Whole Family!

Surya is fifteen years old and has significant intellectual disabilities. He is largely nonverbal but can say “mom,” “dad,” “brother,” and “sister.” He also suffers from epilepsy. “Surya suddenly falls down,” explains his father. “Sometimes he is as good as dead. Sometimes it leaves quickly—sometimes he suffers for an hour.” This can happen up to ten times a day.

Surya needs someone with him at all times. He is unsafe on his own and won't cry out in pain or ask for food when he's hungry. His needs must be anticipated by his caregivers. And while it makes earning income extremely difficult, Surya's parents remain dedicated to their son.

“What shall we do?” his father asks. “We can't abandon him. We love our son. Until I die, I will look after him!”


For Surya's safety, his parents must keep him in a safe, enclosed space whenever they can't

attend to him. But a year ago, while he was briefly unsupervised, he fell into a fire and severely burned his hands. His father recalls, “He did not cry. He just came to me and said, ‘Dad.’ I went to get some paste for the burn. I felt very bad. I searched for medicine the whole day.”

To help Surya's parents earn the income they need to survive and care for their son, *Joni's House Nepal* helped them establish a goat-raising business. Through *Joni's House*, Surya's family received goats, and the training needed to rear them for income. Our team also provided construction materials and hands-on help to build a shed for the goats.

“Thank you very much, *Joni's House!*” says Surya's mother.

“We got much support. Thank you all!” adds Surya's father. “As long as there is life, there is hope!”



Surya's injury was so severe that doctors had to amputate his burnt fingers. He can no longer feed himself. Here he waits for his parents to visit him inside his enclosed space.



Among the 420 families now receiving help through *Joni's House Nepal*, Surya's family has received the vocational training and economic support they so desperately needed. And they have been empowered with hope for a better future! This is all part of the new things your love and prayers accomplish through *Joni's House!*

Finding Dignity, Hope, and Means to Survive



Without *Joni's House*, families like Biraj's are left unseen and forgotten—struggling with unmet needs and no hope for a better future. But through your love and support, families suffering under the strain of disability and poverty find a reason to hope again! *God bless you for your partnership!*

Living in a remote and rugged district in Nepal, Biraj's family hardly had the means to survive. And because Biraj is deaf, his family faces challenges far beyond their poverty. They do their best to provide for their three children, but every day they wonder... *Will we be able to feed our sons today?*

In the community where Biraj and his family live, people with disabilities are often marginalized and treated with disdain—even cut off from access to basic necessities. This is why our *Joni's House Nepal* team searches for families living with disability like Biraj's—to show them someone cares, give them hope, and provide vocational training and tools for them to make a living.

Each family in rural Nepal has unique needs. After getting to know Biraj and assessing his family's situation, *Joni's House* gave him a

tilling tractor to plough his field and neighboring fields to earn steady income. This key piece of equipment has made a meaningful difference in Biraj's life.

"We used to borrow a tractor from others for ploughing," says his wife. "We are very happy to get this tractor. With the money we earn we can buy clothes for the children. Thanks to *Joni's House* for the support!"

**"Because of the Lord's great love
we are not consumed, for his
compassions never fail.
They are new every morning;
great is your faithfulness."**

LAMENTATIONS 3:22-23



Thanks to *Joni's House* and your love, Gita and Aarav are no longer left to linger in despair—facing hunger and long, lonely hours that feel empty. *Joni's House* has set Aarav up with a grocery store adjacent to their home. He now runs a business that provides income, as well as a sense of meaning and purpose.

Aarav and Gita used to have conversations, but since Gita's stroke two years ago, she can no longer speak, walk, or care for herself. For her husband Aarav, who is in poor health himself, their situation often feels bleak.

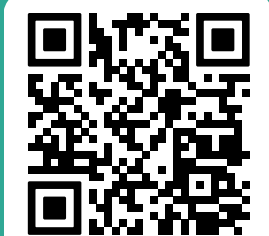
"We spent much money on her treatment, but to no avail. She is like a corpse," says Aarav. "I cannot go anywhere. She can't be left alone at any time."

The couple's eldest son sometimes comes to take a turn sitting with Gita. And Aarav asks his daughters-in-law to help bathe her. A year and a half after Gita's stroke, Aarav taught her to use her own hands to eat. Much of her food falls on the ground and goes to waste.

For people living under the crushing weight of poverty and disability in the Hindu and Buddhist culture of Nepal, hope easily runs dry. The leader of our *Joni's House Nepal* team explains, "People see disability as a result of wrongdoing in their family. So usually, they are treated as a burden by their families and society. We have seen many people with disabilities living a life of isolation—just waiting for death to come. The way we at *Joni's House* treat people with disabilities gives them a sense of worth and dignity. Instead of feeling like animals, they feel like people, with value and purpose in their lives."

**Bless your loved ones &
share the love of Jesus!**

Your gift given **in honor** or **in memory** of a loved one shares the hope of the Gospel with people living with disabilities worldwide! View your loved one's name on our online Digital Tribute Wall at joniandfriends.org/tribute or by using this QR code!



Family Retreat Brings *Gospel-Joy!*

From The San Francisco Bay Area ▼



Young Emma has Down syndrome, and her family faces many challenges as a result of her disability. Her mother describes seasons of their lives as “very hard and vulnerable.” And like many couples living with disability, Emma’s parents have struggled with incredible strain in their marriage. But then this special family attended *Family Retreat*.

“Good grief! I was so tired,” says Emma’s mom, whose name is also Emma. “But since *Family Retreat*, the tiredness my husband and I felt has been different. God obviously wanted us there! It was all part of his perfect plan. *Family Retreat* is a place where everybody cares!”

“I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the Gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.”

PHILIPPIANS 1:3-6

Thank you for giving families struggling with disability a place of belonging— at *Family Retreat* and through all our Christ-centered programs!

From Central California ▼

Family Retreat brings Christ-centered respite and joy to 22-year-old Jaycee, who has cerebral palsy, and her parents, Deborah and Russ. It provides them with a treasured opportunity to spend time with families who understand life with disability. And, more importantly, they enjoy the company of fellow believers who know that every person is a masterpiece created in God’s image.

When Russ came to *Family Retreat*, he especially appreciated the opportunity to connect with other dads and talk about the unique challenges that come with disability—the financial impact of specialized vehicles and equipment, the rigors of daily caregiving, and the things special needs parents miss out on. For Russ, that was hiking.



“My family goes on flat paths to the river,” says Jaycee. “But at *Family Retreat*, I went where we never could go—all the way up to the boulders. It was awesome!”

When Russ learned that his family could go on a substantial hike at *Family Retreat*—complete with the specialized equipment Jaycee needed—he was delighted. While he often takes Jaycee out on flat trails that are accessible with her wheelchair, he never expected the kind of adventure they enjoyed at *Family Retreat*.

Russ choked up expressing his gratitude for the opportunity to hike with Jaycee in a way he had thought would never be possible—taking in the views of God’s beautiful creation atop Lake Tahoe. And as Russ finished sharing his appreciation for the amazing opportunity to hike with Jaycee, he added that he also really appreciated the opportunity to spend time alone with Deborah, adding, “It was nice to have a date night.”

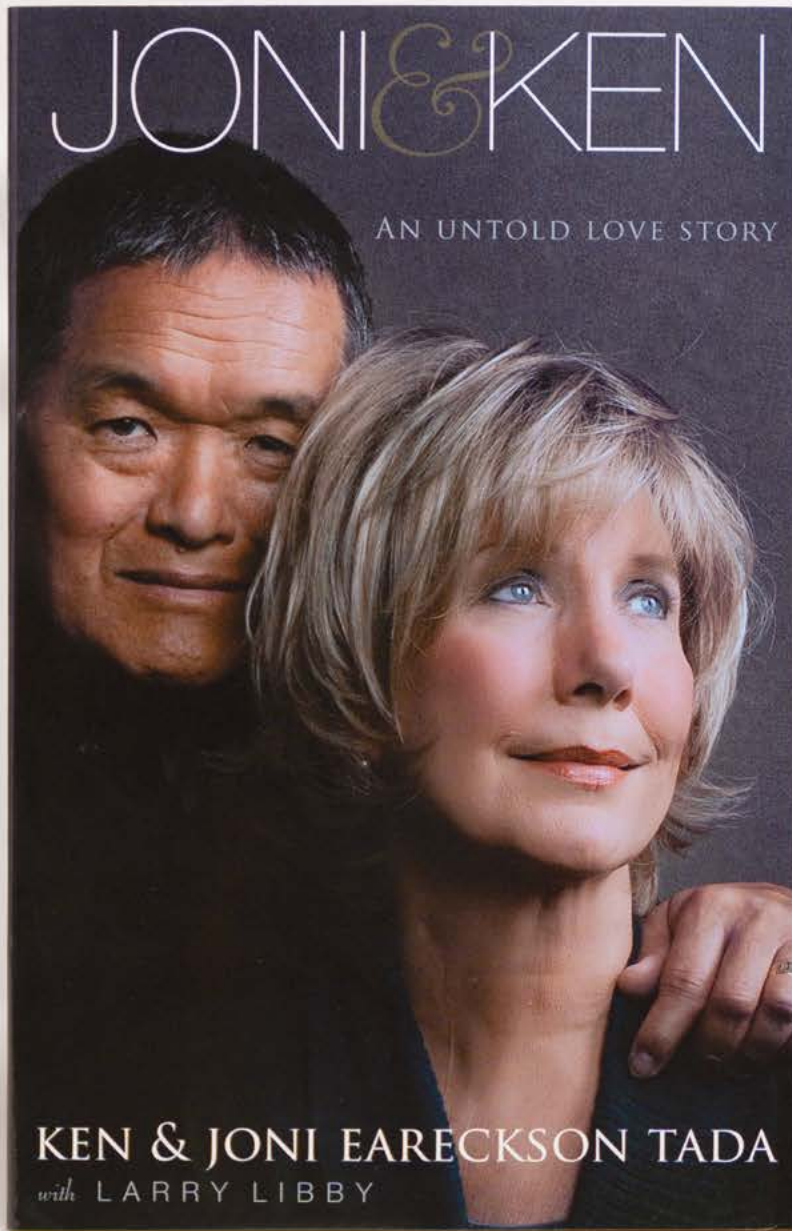


When we asked Jaycee what she loves best about *Family Retreat*, she said with a smile, “Hanging out with friends in the adult program. It gave me a break from my parents, and it gave them a break from caring for me.”

JONI & KEN

AN UNTOLD LOVE STORY

After decades of marriage, Ken and Joni offer readers a rare and candid account of their journey through quadriplegia, depression, pain, and cancer—and reveal a hope founded on God's grace alone. Let their story inspire and encourage your own life and marriage on Valentine's Day and all year long!



Product Details:

- Softcover
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\$12

*100% of proceeds go directly to
advance ministry to children and families living with disability.*

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