

SHARING *Hope* THROUGH HARDSHIP



God Bless You
for your faithfulness!

Disability can feel like a wilderness—a wasteland of one hardship after another. But Jesus is using you to make a way through those hardships and blaze fresh, hope-filled paths into the wilderness of suffering.

from the heart

“My comfort in my suffering is this:
Your promise preserves my life.”

PSALM 119:50

What are your first thoughts in the morning? Is your schedule so loaded that you're already on automatic before you get out of bed? Maybe pain or hardship makes you feel overwhelmed, like you can't even face the day.

If that's so, I want you—no, rather, God wants you—to move beyond merely resigning yourself to your schedule with a stiff upper lip or submitting to your hardships with a “woe is me” attitude.

Responses like these fall so far short of how God wants you to move into the day. Your hardships can provide a glorious pathway to genuine joy, contentment, and a more intimate friendship with Christ.

So, how do you get there? Well, after decades of living with quadriplegia, and almost half of that time living with chronic pain, I have learned to live on what God says. If he said it, I must live it! His Word must have its way in my life—and yours, too.

Heaven is a reservoir of strength, guidance, hope, and encouragement, but how do we appropriate all that? Well, Psalm 119:50 helps me. “My comfort in my suffering is this: Your promise preserves my life.”

When life feels overwhelming, every blood-bought promise in God's Word can provide life, grace, energy, perspective, and strength. Every Bible promise gives the power to not only survive, but thrive in your afflictions. I mean, God pledges to you in Jeremiah 32:40–41, “I will never stop doing good to them, and I will inspire them to fear me, so that they will never turn away from me. I will rejoice in doing them good.”

Oh, friend, start believing God and what he says! Jesus died to provide you the grace—that is, the Spirit-blessed ability—to actually live on his promises. When I am overcome by pain, I cling to Psalm 119:140... “Oh, God, your promises have been thoroughly tested, and your servant loves them.” I love God's promises and choose one to live on each day.

When I feel weak I might choose 2 Chronicles 16:9, “For the eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him.” Then, throughout the day, I know that God is working to strengthen me. Or, if I'm in physical pain, I could choose Psalm 34:19, “The righteous person may have many



Joni and Friends President, Shawn Thornton, believes God's promises right alongside Ken and me. *And I pray you do, too!*

troubles, but the Lord delivers him from them all.” I take that promise and lift it before the Lord in prayer saying, “God, you promised to deliver me, to rescue me in my troubles today, so I'm bringing this promise before you in exchange for the blessing it guarantees.”

I may have to breathe that prayer a few extra times that day to remind myself to look for the blessing, but when I do? God delivers me. He gives me courage to endure. He may raise my pain level tolerance for the day or help me miraculously persevere. And sometimes, he removes the pain. That is how biblical promises help me live. And when I live this way—every day, on a promise from God's Word—I have joy knowing that I'm pleasing the Lord.

So, tomorrow, wake up ready to rely on the promises of God, saying, “I can't do this hard thing in my life, but I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” That's Philippians 4:13 and, oh, what a powerful promise to start your day tomorrow morning... and the next day and the next. Be the one who thoroughly tests God's promises, and you will come to love them. *And that's a promise!*

Ripples of Grace

Around the World

If you could visit eight-year-old Diana at the compound in Lusaka, Zambia where she lives, her bubbly personality would outshine the struggles she faces. Diagnosed with spina bifida, Diana's spine forms a noticeable hump on her back. She can't walk, but disability doesn't get in the way of Diana's joy—or her hope of becoming a doctor when she grows up.

While she has parents and siblings, it's Diana's beloved Aunt Doris, a retired social worker, who has cared for Diana full-time for the past five years. Not everyone in their community—or even family—understands that disability can be part of God's good plan.

Doris first encountered Joni Eareckson Tada decades ago when she read Joni's autobiography.

Moved by her story, Doris wondered if God was preparing her for life with a significant disability. Now, years later, she believes Joni's story was preparing her to love and raise Diana.

Beyond Joni's story, Doris has found deep comfort, wisdom, and purpose through the Joni and Friends *Beyond Suffering* curriculum. *Beyond Suffering* is rooted in the truth that all people, regardless of ability level, have equal dignity and value as God's image-bearers. Our Christ-centered curriculum has helped Doris educate those around her, making a way for Diana—and other children with disabilities in their community—to find belonging.

With the nurturing care Doris provides, Diana has flourished. She is full of creative

Doris doesn't just advocate for Diana. She delights in Diana and knows her niece is God's divine image bearer.



baking ideas, embraces her studies enthusiastically (she can speak three languages now!), and has an undeniable knack for making friends.

But with limited resources, Doris has struggled to meet Diana's needs—especially when she outgrew her toddler wheelchair, leaving her legs to drag dangerously on the ground.

When Doris learned that Joni and Friends was holding a *Wheels for the World*™ outreach in Zambia, she brought Diana—and our team instantly fell in love with Diana and her

cheerful laugh.

“Diana is somebody that just lights up the room when she enters,” says our *Wheels for the World* volunteer, Kaylee. “She has a presence about her... She's full of joy.”

As time went on, we learned more about the gentle, loving care from Doris that had helped to cultivate Diana's vibrant character. “Doris is super special,” says Kaylee. “You can tell her love for Diana is pure. She loves Diana like her own child and pays close attention to her needs.”

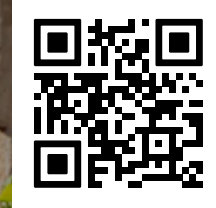


As a child of God, Diana is a true princess. And thanks to you, she now sits proudly in a seat of dignity.

“See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!”



Diana's voice will melt your heart! Just scan this QR code and you'll see!



Chi Chi received a specialized pediatric wheelchair with a tray that will allow her to study and write easily. She also hopes to learn to play basketball now that she has a wheelchair of her own.

Along with their specialized wheelchairs, both Diana and Chi Chi also received Bibles and Gospel bracelets made of colored beads representing each part of God's salvation plan. The girls quickly learned the meaning of each bead and together they celebrated the love of Jesus in their lives.

Diana overflowed with excitement to share the Gospel message with others. Diana's passion sparked a powerful movement that day as she

invited other children to hear the Gospel story. And, seeing her God-given gift for evangelism, our team prayed that Diana's wheelchair will help her reach new places to share the joy of Jesus with others.

Thank you for changing the lives of children like Diana and Chi Chi! Your prayers and support are transforming entire communities with the joyful message of the Gospel! From pediatric wheelchairs to biblical education through *Beyond Suffering*, you are sending the love of God and ripples of grace to people who might never otherwise meet Jesus and embrace the eternal life he offers.



When her fitting was completed, Chi Chi wheeled herself forward—a radiant smile spreading across her face. And she has a message for you: "Thank you for the wheelchair and God bless you!"

"May the Lord repay you for what you have done. May you be richly rewarded by the Lord, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge."

RUTH 2:12

At first, there didn't seem to be an ideal wheelchair available for Diana.

But even as multiple wheelchairs didn't fit her well, nothing could dim Diana's joy. And the hours at our *Wheels for the World* outreach provided the perfect opportunity for Diana to make friends with fourteen-year-old Chileleko—Chi Chi for short.

Chi Chi arrived in a makeshift wheelchair borrowed from her school. It was nothing more

than a lawn chair with wheels affixed to it. She was quiet at first, but Chi Chi quickly opened up in Diana's warm company.

Like Diana, Chi Chi has high hopes for her future and loves school. And as they both waited for their custom-fitted wheelchairs, Diana and Chi Chi became inseparable. These fast friends both experienced powerful life changes because of Joni and Friends and because of your love!

While Diana and Chi Chi chatted and enjoyed blowing bubbles together, our *Wheels for the World* team selected and customized wheelchairs for each of the girls.

Sharing Christ

in Tangible Ways

Charles is 21 years old and has hydrocephalus, which causes both physical and intellectual disabilities. He suffers daily with headaches and joint pain. And his legs are uncomfortably stiff, as is his left arm. His mother, Maris, sells fruit to support Charles and her other children. When Maris needs to transport Charles—inside their home or out in their community—she carries him.

“I was struck seeing a 21-year-old man being carried by his mother,” says Amelia, a physical therapy student who served on our *Wheels for the World* team in Zambia. “Twenty-one. That’s how old I am.”

Truly, a mother’s love knows no boundaries. Yet despite the best efforts of Maris and her willingness to sacrifice everything for her son, selling fruit doesn’t bring in enough income to feed and support a family—let alone purchase a wheelchair. That’s where Joni and Friends and your love come in...

Through your prayers and partnership, Charles has been blessed with his very own wheelchair. Now he and his mother have new hope that Charles can go to school and church. With this new seat of dignity, Charles will be able to join his family at

the table during mealtimes and feel fully included. Yet what Charles is most grateful for is the fact that his stiff legs are now comfortably and properly separated due to the custom fitting he received.

Now, Charles has the mobility and independence a man his age craves. And Maris no longer has to carry her adult son. *Your faith-in-action has shown them both the power of God’s love. Thank you!*



“In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.”

MATTHEW 5:16

Resurrected Dreams

Isaac is an active teenager who loves sports. His life—and his goals for the future—took a dramatic turn after a somewhat minor soccer injury.

The routine and timely medical attention that others often take for granted never came for Isaac. Things are just different for his family in Zambia. And by the time they were able to get Isaac to the hospital—weeks after his initial injury—he had gangrene in both of his legs. There was no alternative: Isaac’s legs had to be amputated.

When Isaac lost his legs, he thought his dream of being an athlete had been lost, too. But God resurrected Isaac’s dreams when our *Wheels for the World* team custom-fit him with a specialized sports wheelchair. As soon as he was seated in his new wheelchair, Isaac started zipping all around our distribution site. And right then and there, Isaac declared his new goal: “to be a basketballer.”



Isaac didn’t just get a new wheelchair that day. He enthusiastically received the Gospel and a copy of Joni’s autobiography. God gave Isaac new dreams and new hope in Christ!

Everyone leaves a legacy. What will yours be?

When you remember Joni and Friends as part of your legacy, you change the lives of disabled people like Charles and Isaac forever. If you’re interested in partnering with us through a gift in your will, please email our Planned Giving Team at plannedgiving@joniandfriends.org or call 818.707.5664.

“Don’t Doubt that God *Loves* You”

From North Carolina ▼

Everything changed when five-year-old Carlito stopped breathing.

It all started with Carlito getting sick and that illness turning into pneumonia. But nothing could prepare his parents, Carlos and Lucile, for their child’s body reacting to routine pneumonia treatment with a heart attack. Carlito stopped breathing for ten agonizing minutes.

By God’s grace, Carlito survived. But when he awoke, everything had changed. While deprived of oxygen, Carlito had suffered severe brain damage.

Over the next five years, the realities of disability hung heavily on his family. Carlito needed round-the-clock care seven days a week. His medication required 60 administrations each day, and every six months his tracheostomy tube had to be replaced.

Carlos and Lucile longed to buy a wheelchair for Carlito but could not afford one. When they learned that our *Wheels for the World™* team was coming to the Dominican Republic, they traveled three hours to join us with hope in their hearts.

At first Carlos doubted that the right chair could be found to fit Carlito’s specific needs. The chair would need to tilt in space to accommodate Carlito’s scoliosis and rounded upper back. Our seating therapists found a wheelchair that seemed promising for Carlito, but realized several modifications would be necessary to achieve the right fit.

Our volunteer mechanics rose to the challenge and began cutting, bending, attaching, and fitting various critical

parts together to ensure a safe and comfortable fit for Carlito. Carlos was amazed and said, “I have never seen a wheelchair like that!”

Carlito’s wheelchair is one of a kind, just like him. And more than the wheelchair, as Carlos says, his family’s experience with Joni and Friends provided fresh new hope and deepened their faith. Before taking his family home, Carlos shared a word God put on his heart for others: “Don’t doubt that God loves you.”



From Louisiana ▼

Stepping out in faith, Adam and Ashley adopted their son Robbie through the foster care system. Living with autism and carrying the weight of early childhood trauma, Robbie is non-verbal and struggles with sensory processing and emotional regulation.

At first their family found solace and connection in their church community. But when Robbie grew too old for the children’s ministry, they heard what no parent should be told about their beloved child: “We don’t have a place for him here.”

Heartbroken and isolated, Adam, Ashley, and

Robbie found a place of belonging—first at our Splash Day event co-hosted by Fellowship Church, and then at *Family Retreat*.

“*Family Retreat* is a haven where we receive biblical encouragement, fellowship, and opportunities to connect with other parents experiencing similar hardships. It is a place where friends become family—a place of rest and respite. I never want to leave when it’s time to go home, *Family Retreat* is the best week of our year!” says Ashley.



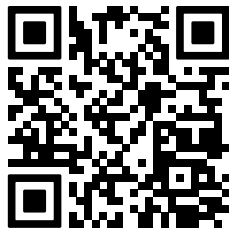
Robbie and his friend Mercy, who also has autism, find their place in the body of Christ at *Family Retreat*.

“And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them.”

1 JOHN 4:16

Bless your loved ones & share the love of Jesus!

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

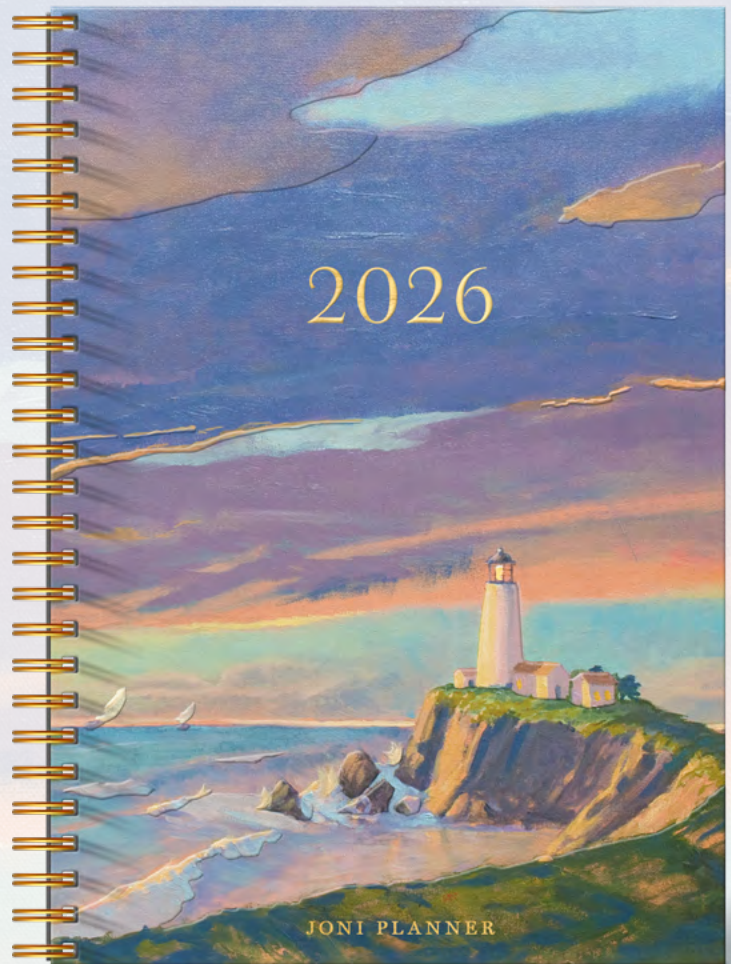


JONI'S 2026 PLANNER IS HERE!

The 2026 Planner features Joni's radiant "Lighthouse" artwork on the cover, hand-picked Bible verses, and inspirational quotes that highlight God as our Lighthouse and the Light of the World, illuminating the path of every believer with his love.

As Joni says: "Many of my childhood summers were spent tent-camping among the sand dunes lining the Delaware shore. On any night, if we stood on the crest of the big barrier dune by the ocean, we could spot the old lighthouse on Fenwick Island. And then around the campfire, we'd sing 'Let the Lower Lights Keep Burning.' My daddy would explain that our Heavenly Father is our Lighthouse and we are his lower lights, marking the channels where it's safe to pass. When I painted the waves, I tried hard to capture the way white foam looks in the sunset when that strange light passes through the curl, giving it an iridescent glow. Every time I see a lighthouse, I think of my earthly daddy and my heavenly one, too."

The Joni Planner sells fast! Get yours, and one for a friend, while supplies last!



Product Details:

- Size: 6.5" x 9.25"
- 12-month agenda planner
- Chronological Bible Reading Plan
- Gold spiral binding
- Lay-flat design
- Interior 2 pocket pages
- Updated monthly & weekly sections
- High quality paper stock

\$19

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

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