

SHARING *Hope* THROUGH HARDSHIP



“You are the
light of the world.”

MATTHEW 5:14

Godfrey sits proudly in the seat of dignity you sent him. Across the globe, your faithful partnership is multiplying good deeds in the name of Jesus, bringing glory to the Father! *God bless you for your faithfulness!*

from the heart



“You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead, they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.”

MATTHEW 5:14–16

I often say, “It’s not disability ministry until people with disabilities are serving.” Of course, for me—a quadriplegic who has enjoyed bringing help and Gospel hope to people struggling with disabilities around the world—this saying is personal. But the mandate to celebrate and call forth the gifts of disabled people within the body of Christ is also biblical...

As disciples of Jesus, Christians with disabilities are called by God to partake in—and contribute to—the body of Christ. As divine image bearers, disabled believers possess spiritual gifts that are meant to *shine*... like the lamp we read about in Matthew 15—high on its stand and casting light to everyone in the house.

And as church leaders provide Christians with disabilities a platform, the power of God displayed through their weakness brightly shines in the whole church and even illuminates the community. Oh, how our dark and broken world *needs* this Gospel light!

And when people with disabilities fully participate in church community, they bless everyone around them—through their service and good deeds—and they make our Savior Jesus look *awesome!*

My dear friend Scott Bankhead is a perfect example. This faithful brother in Christ and beloved Joni and Friends teammate recently completed his earthly race at only thirty-three years old after a valiant battle with cancer.

During his eight years working with us at Joni and Friends, Scott invested his time ministering to people struggling with all sorts of disabling conditions, illnesses, grief, and mental health issues. In addition to providing solid biblical encouragement through weighty phone conversations, Scott wrote over 12,000 individual messages to people searching for hope—pointing each hurting person to a relationship with Jesus Christ.

I’m certain that when Scott arrived home in heaven, he “received a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter



Scott was born with spina bifida and, like me, used a wheelchair. But Scott never let his condition slow him down. He did the God-glorifying thing, always yielding his disability to the Lord as a vehicle to spread the Good News in powerful ways.

1:11). I can only imagine the reception he received. Now, as his family shared, Scott is praising Jesus—maybe even “dancing,” as I will one day—enjoying his reward for a life faithfully and beautifully lived.

Our dark and fractured world needs more people like Scott—people of all abilities and disabilities willing to lean into Christ and dedicate their gifts to His kingdom service. It’s why I’m excited for you to read the remarkable stories in this newsletter about how our friends

with disabilities, and the next generation of global Christian leaders, are being empowered by Joni and Friends to shine the light of the Gospel of Christ, all for the Father’s glory!

JONI EARECKSON TADA

You sent the *Love of Jesus* throughout Africa!

At our recent *Wheels for the World*® distribution in Kenya, we invited physical and occupational therapists from nine African countries—including Madagascar, Mozambique, Uganda, and Ghana—to be trained on how to custom-fit people in wheelchairs. Our goal is to equip local leaders in sharing the Gospel while providing mobility equipment to people in their home countries—transforming lives and cultures for Christ.

Precious, a practitioner from Ghana, shared

about her experience saying, “The training helped me gain knowledge on how to be an advocate for persons with disabilities and how to bring them to Christ and bring them to church—making the environment comfortable and accessible to them so that they will feel included.”

Andrew from Uganda said, “As I go back to my home country, it’s something that I really teach people. It’s whole-person healthcare... you’re not only healing this person physically but also spiritually.”

Andrew, on the left, is now equipped to share the Gospel and properly fit disabled children and adults in much-needed wheelchairs. Thank you for sending God’s love to nine different countries in Africa through *Wheels for the World*.



Rebecca and her sons, Godfrey and Mike, received hands-on care and powerful Gospel hope at this outreach. Seven-year-old Godfrey and four-year-old Mike both have cerebral palsy and needed mobility equipment. As a single mother, Rebecca works hard to support her family by doing other people’s laundry, but she could never afford the wheelchair and walker her boys needed.

Our seasoned team member, Veronica, demonstrated—both to the trainees working with her and to Rebecca’s family—that God had a perfect plan to meet Godfrey and Mike’s needs.

“We found a perfect small wheelchair for Godfrey with a table and a chest strap, which will provide support needed because of his decreased trunk control,” says Veronica. “We taught Godfrey how to self-propel his wheelchair. It was beautiful to witness him discovering independent mobility for the first time in his life!”

She added, “We also instructed Rebecca how to use the wheelchair so she could continue teaching her son how to negotiate ramps, curbs, and stairs. She was very mechanically inclined and understood the instructions very well.”



Thank you for delivering the love of Jesus to Rebecca and her sons, Godfrey and Mike! The wheelchair, walker, and Bible you sent to this precious family have changed their lives forever.

“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

That same day that Godfrey received his new wheelchair, our team customized a walker for his brother Mike, providing him with fresh independence and dignity. And best of all, like every person who receives a wheelchair, a walker, or new skills from Joni and Friends, Rebecca and

her boys received Bibles and the love of Jesus! **Friend, when you stand shoulder to shoulder with Joni and Friends, God multiplies the impact of your generosity—for His glory and the good of people struggling with disability.**



Veronica, our faithful *Wheels for the World* team member, helps Mike stand as he gets measured for his new walker. It was beautiful to witness Godfrey and Mike discovering independent mobility for the first time in their lives! *Thank you for making this possible through your love, prayers, and support!*



When you support Joni and Friends, you not only provide wheelchairs and the hope of the Gospel to disabled children worldwide, you also train in-country partners like Precious, a practitioner from Ghana, shown here sharing the gift of mobility in the powerful name of Jesus.

God can do *miracles* through you...

Kelvin, a young man with cerebral palsy, came to our *Wheels for the World* outreach in Kenya—not to receive a wheelchair, but to minister to other people struggling with disability. Sharing his own story, Kelvin brought joy to each person he met with a powerful Gospel message...

“I’m Kelvin. I am a person living with disability from Kenya. I am physically challenged. I was born that way, but through God’s grace, I have managed to overcome my challenges. And now, I’m working as a volunteer with Joni and Friends. And I want to thank them because they have been a support in my life in accepting the way I am, accepting how I walk, how I talk...

and, therefore, we are looking forward to impacting many, many more people living with a disability.”

When Kelvin thanks Joni and Friends, he is thanking you! While his past is full of painful rejection from family, friends, and fellow students, Kelvin turned to Jesus and asked, “Will you use my disability so I can equip others who are disabled?”

Today, Kelvin is enrolled in seminary, loves serving with Joni and Friends, and encourages other people living with disabilities to step out in faith and use their gifts for the glory of God. “No matter what rejection you are facing,” he says, “may you focus on God.”



Like Kelvin, you can put the light of Christ on a stand, shining Gospel light with every wheelchair and Bible delivered, and every life transformed by the love of Jesus!

Let Your *Light Shine!*

Emma, who has spina bifida, severe scoliosis, and other disabilities remembers how difficult it was to grow up in an orphanage until age eleven—feeling different and being excluded. Volunteering with Joni and Friends gives her a deep sense of calling to help disabled children—showing them they are loved and never alone.

Being part of *International Family Retreat* and *Joni's House® Brazil* gave Emma new confidence and purpose. “I am a shy person,” Emma says. “But I don't want to use that as an excuse not to serve people, especially kids with disabilities, even though it's not my comfort zone. And I do it all for Jesus. I think this experience changed me. We are all created for a purpose, and it's okay to ask for help.”

When you support the ministry of Joni and Friends, you're helping people with disabilities discover their gifts and shine the light of Christ in places of deep need. *Thank you for giving Emma new confidence in Christ!*

By the end of the week, Emma said she looked forward to serving again—and she encourages others with disabilities to do the same.



Thank you for your support!

Because of your generosity, children like Scarlett receive the wheelchairs they so desperately need, Bibles in their own language, and lasting hope in Jesus!

God is using you to change lives—now and for eternity!

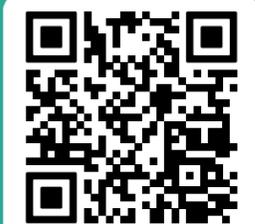


“I can do all things through him who gives me strength.”

PHILIPPIANS 4:13

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!



God is at work through *Family Retreat*... *and through you!*

From New England ▼

Annie and her husband, Jim, have three children. Their youngest, Joshua, who is now 21, lives with physical and intellectual disabilities. Adding to the family's challenges, Annie herself has severe rheumatoid arthritis and a progressive muscle disease that mimics muscular dystrophy.

"I knew we needed respite," says Annie. And at *Family Retreat*, God began a beautiful work of transformation in Annie's family. From the moment they arrived, Annie and Jim marveled at the welcoming, accessible environment. Joshua, who used a walker at the time, could enjoy every activity—even sports!

"We were amazed," says Jim. "And we realized we could leave Joshua with his volunteer and not worry about anything!"

But even as he watched his son thrive at *Family Retreat*, Jim initially felt out of his element. "I was overwhelmed by it all that first year," he said. "I wasn't attending church. This was an entirely different environment. I remember asking Annie, 'Are these people for real? What's the catch?'" But after connecting with the retreat pastor, whose family also lives with disability, Jim relaxed and joined in the fellowship.

Looking back, Jim sees clearly: "God is always at work." Annie agrees. "Just knowing the warmth and love you feel at *Family Retreat* is sincere is life-changing," she says.

And Joshua's love for *Family Retreat* is exuberant. "I got to try

things I've never done, like riding a bike and throwing paint in a color war," says Joshua.

At *Family Retreat*, Jim and Annie met a local pastor who was serving as a volunteer. He warmly invited them to visit his church, which was an answer to prayer. "I've wanted to find a local church for a long, long time!" says Annie.

At their new church home, Joshua has found true belonging within the body of Christ—and now serves as part of the worship band! "People say hi to me and there are great snacks after the service," he says.

Thank you for giving families like Joshua's the joy of *Family Retreat*. You are showing struggling families that Jesus loves them—and you do, too!



Joshua loved riding this accessible bicycle at *Family Retreat*!

From Florida ▼

Bruce was born with profound disabilities. He never walked, never spoke, and required full-time care. Yet, anyone who met Bruce quickly realized that he was not defined by what he couldn't do—but by the joy, peace, and presence of the Lord that surrounded him.

From a young age, Bruce had a powerful ministry. His smile could light up any room. His eyes sparkled with a deep, unspoken understanding, and his spirit carried contagious joy. Though he was non-verbal, Bruce communicated in ways that transcended language.

Bruce and his mother, Rosa, loved *Family Retreat*. They spanned the country to be in community with others in similar life circumstances. Rosa loved the respite care. From Florida to California, New England to Tennessee... Rosa and Bruce traveled nationwide to various *Family Retreats*, celebrating the unique gift of complete belonging they found at each one.

Bruce thrived at *Family Retreat*. He was best known for laughing his way down the waterslide, splashing with delight in the pool, singing in the talent show, and worshiping Jesus—his face radiant with praise. Everywhere Bruce went, he touched hearts with his smile, laughter, and gentle spirit.

Bruce was a true beacon of light. Volunteers and families would gather around him, drawn by the peace he carried. His joy was pure, his worship sincere, and his presence holy. He showed us all that pure worship comes from within.

Without ever saying a word, Bruce's life preached the Gospel. His weakness served as a canvas for God's strength. And in July of 2025, after a life of profound purpose and ministry, Bruce went home to heaven to worship Jesus face to face. Today, Rosa wants others to know that her son loved life, loved the Lord, and loved Joni and Friends.



Thank you for being a crucial part of Bruce's beautiful life. Your love, prayers, and support gave Bruce opportunities to shine his light with others—like here at *Family Retreat* alongside his volunteer buddy.

“...My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.”

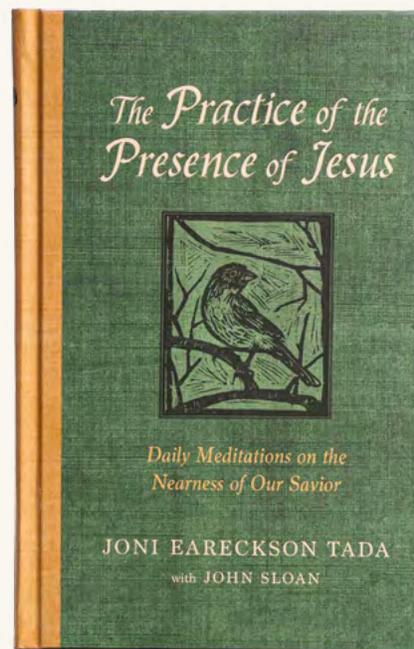
2 CORINTHIANS 12:9

Refresh your spiritual practices for 2026 with a devotional from Joni Eareckson Tada—and her new Planner!

The Practice of the Presence of Jesus

Through rich inspirational content from Brother Lawrence’s Practice of the Presence of God, and through original art and new devotions from Joni, this timeless treasure offers a unique weaving of past and present spiritual reflections about our God who never changes.

\$20



JONI'S 2026 PLANNER

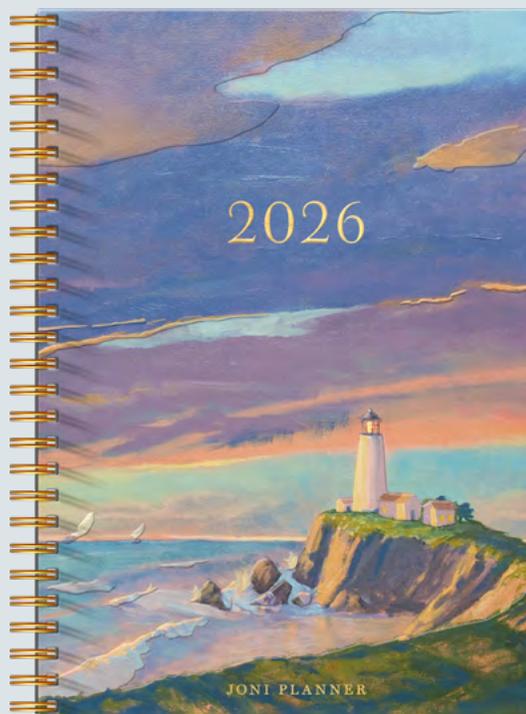
Our 2026 Planner features Joni's radiant “Lighthouse” artwork on the cover, hand-picked Bible verses, and inspirational quotes that highlight God as our Lighthouse and the Light of the World, illuminating the path of every believer with His love.

Filled with Joni's stunning artwork, curated Scriptures, and inspiring devotionals Joni's Planner will help you walk closely with Jesus throughout the year—and shine the light of Christ to those around you!

Product Details:

- Size: 6.5" x 9.25"
- 12-month agenda planner
- Chronological Bible Reading Plan
- Interior 2 pocket pages

\$19



100% of proceeds directly advances ministry to children and families living with disability.

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