

A Woman Called Joni

Joni Eareckson Tada is a woman of remarkable faith and courage. A diving accident in 1967 left her a quadriplegic in a wheelchair, unable to use her hands. During two years of rehabilitation, she spent long months learning how to paint with a brush between her teeth. Her high detail, fine art paintings and prints are highly sought and collected.

Because of the accident and the long road of rehab, she questioned the meaning of life, but found immense hope and peace in God through Jesus Christ. As she explored the promises of God, she discovered that suffering has profound meaning in our lives, and that pain, as difficult as it may be, has purpose. Since that time, her life has become a living example that God is sovereign, faithful and good.

Due to her best-selling books, beginning with her autobiography, *Joni*, as well as having visited 35 countries, Joni's first name is recognized around the world. A full-length feature film, *Joni*, produced by World Wide Pictures, in which Mrs. Tada recreated her own life, has been translated into 15 languages and shown in scores of countries.

Her organization, Joni and Friends, was founded by Mrs. Tada in 1979 and has grown into four flagship programs that affect the lives of thousands of disabled people and their families. Through *Wheels for the World*, more than 14,000 wheelchairs have been collected nationwide, refurbished by inmates in correctional facilities and shipped to developing nations where physical therapists fit each chair to a needy disabled child or adult.

And so, a life that had a very tragic twist early has developed into one of significant service to mankind, due to Mrs. Tada seeking and following God's will for her. In an interview on *Larry King Live* recently, she was asked what it was like to be so dependent on others.

She replied that she considers herself to be "interdependent, because that gives people an opportunity to serve."

And that's the way all of us -- particularly in the centers of Life Care, American Lifestyles and in the work of Life Care at Home -- should view life.

--Beecher Hunter