

Appendix C

Joni Eareckson Tada

There is a woman named Joni (pronounced Johnny) Eareckson Tada who loves God very much. She knows that God has a plan for her life and she tries everyday to know, love and serve Him. But it is not easy for Joni.

Joni can't walk. Well actually she can't move very much at all. She is in a wheel chair and needs help doing almost everything--eating, drinking, and getting around. She can't move from the neck down. When she was a young woman, Joni had a serious accident. While she was swimming, she dove into water that wasn't deep enough, hit the bottom of the lake and broke her neck--she couldn't move. Her sister had to pull her out of the water.

Joni was shocked that this horrible thing had happened to her, and she hoped and prayed that God would let her walk again, but that didn't happen. She was very sad that she couldn't walk and do the things that she had been able to do before she became paralyzed. She felt like she couldn't do much of anything to serve God, but Joni's family and friends kept praying for her.

She was not a good patient, and did not want to do what the nurses told her to do. Then one day she saw a young man who could move less than she could, and even used a machine to help him breathe. He was happy and loved God in everything he did. He would write and draw pictures by letting the nurses place a brush between his lips.

After this, Joni realized that although she couldn't move very much, she could still love and serve God. She found out that God still had a very special plan for her that she could do from her wheel chair. Joni has learned how to be happy in God's love even when it is hard.

She has learned to paint beautiful pictures by holding the paintbrush in her mouth. She has a ministry that buys wheelchairs for people who need them. She also helps many handicapped people all over the world by speaking out about their special needs. Her example of serving God inspires all people not just those who are handicapped. She says that her accident has shown her how to love God in all circumstances and to live for Him each and every day.