

## **Victory Though Suffering**

One hot July afternoon in 1967, I dove into a shallow lake and my life changed forever. I suffered a spinal cord fracture that left me paralyzed from the neck down, without use of my hands and legs. Lying in my hospital bed, I tried desperately to make sense of the horrible turn of events. I begged friends to assist me in suicide. Slit my wrists, dump pills down my throat, anything to end my misery!

### **Paralysis was God's plan?**

I had so many questions. **I believed in God, but I was angry with Him.** How could my circumstance be a demonstration of His love and power? Surely He could have stopped it from happening. How can permanent, lifelong paralysis be a part of His loving plan for me? Unless I found answers, I didn't see how this God could be worthy of my trust.

Steve, a friend of mine, took on my questions. He pointed me to Christ.

Now I believe that God's purpose in my accident was to turn a stubborn kid into a woman who would reflect patience, endurance and a lively, optimistic hope of the heavenly glories above.

### **A new perspective**

My wheelchair used to symbolize alienation and confinement. But God has changed its meaning because I have trusted in Him. Now my wheelchair symbolizes independence. It is a choice I made and one that anyone can make.

**I have discovered many good things that have come from my disability.** I used to think happiness was a Friday night date, a size 12 dress, and a future with Ethan Allen furniture and 2.5 children. Now I know better. What matters is love.

### **Good things for the future**

I live with the heightened awareness that better things are coming. The good things in this life are only a foreshadowing of more glorious, grand things in heaven.

The words of this song capture the thrilling perspective that I have come to know in the years since my accident:

I rejoice with him whose pain my Saviour heals.  
And I weep with him who still his anguish feels.  
But earthly joys and earthly tears are confined to earthly years,  
And greater good, the Word of God reveals.  
In this life we have a cross that we must bear;  
It's just a tiny part of Jesus' death that we can share.  
And one day we'll lay it down, 'cause He's promised us a crown  
To which our suffering can never be compared.

That's why Heaven is nearer to me, and at times it is all I can see.  
Sweet music I hear, coming down to my ear,  
And I know that it's playing for me.

For I am Christ the Saviour's own bride,  
And redeemed I shall stand by His side.  
He will say, "Shall we dance?" and our endless romance  
Will be worth all the tears I have cried.

Credit – Jodi Eareckson