

JOE BRANNEN

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Background:

Where are you located? Originally born and raised in Oklahoma, moved to Dallas, Texas in 2013 and now I am currently located in the Charlotte, North Carolina area. / **How do you serve in GCI?** I have served in various ways in local congregations and I am now embarking on the journey and have the privilege to work with the media team at the Home Office. My focus will be doing videos but will also be helping with design and other various content! / **How many years have you been part of GCI?** I have been part of GCI since I was a little guy sitting on the floor during worship services. Probably close to 30 years! / **How did you connect with GCI?** The matriarch of our family, my grandmother, LaVeta Leinbach. If you ever visit the Yukon, OK congregation you will see her there. She is soft spoken with a heart that never stops beating for all people. I truly cannot recall a time that she talked negatively about a person. Full of grace, mercy, and love she has not only been my connection to GCI but my connection to Jesus. You can talk with any of my family members and they would agree that it has been because of her that our family has the kind of relationship with Jesus and his church. However, if you ask my grandmother she will very humbly say it wasn't her, she will point to heaven and say it was God. I love that woman! / **Struggle or life lesson you would like to share?** A struggle/life lesson I am still learning is that I am not designed or meant to do life alone. Whenever I try to do things on my own I end up screwing things up. I end up feeling isolated and fall into issues and struggles. When I let go of myself and allow others in to challenge and help life ends up more peaceful even in the midst of turmoil.



Get to Know Joe



1.

5 things I can't live without: espresso, ketchup, a garage, my wife and kids. Not necessarily in that order!

2.

Stand out memories from my time in GCI: Serving in camp ministry at Crosswalk Camp in OKC--from only getting 10 hours of sleep in 5 days, to skydiving into camp with my best friends, to the campers and staff being transformed by the end of camp.

3.

I am most grateful to God for their relentless pursuing love for me. He revealed himself to me through my wife, kids, Mike Rasmussen, my parents, my grandmother, Mike Urmie, Allen, and many other people. If it weren't for the mercy, grace, love, forgiveness, accountability, and bravery from these people I don't know where I would be.

FAVORITE SCRIPTURE?

1 John 4:19
"We love because he first loved us."

THEME SONG FOR YOUR LIFE?

One of my favorite soundtracks right now is from the movie "The Greatest Showman". Our family listens to the whole soundtrack at least once a day right now! Favorite song from the soundtrack is "The Other Side" with Hugh Jackman and Zac Efron! My favorite worship song would be either "Reckless Love" by Cory Asbury or "So Will I (100 Billion X)" by Hillsong United.

WHAT DOES HOPE LOOK LIKE FOR YOU IN YOUR LIFE RIGHT NOW?

Knowing that I am never forgotten by God. Enjoying where I am right here, right now and seeing what God is doing in the seemingly stagnant moments of life is where I can find rest.

You might be struggling with some things right now whether it's addiction, loneliness, doubt, insecurities, pain, or whatever it may be. I personally want you to know that you are not meant to go through this life alone and that you are not alone. I may not understand your circumstance but there are many other people out there that can say "me too" to your struggles. I believe one of God's greatest underlying things he says to us is "me too" because through Jesus, the Father, Son, and Spirit experienced the fullness of humanity in every way (Hebrews 2:17). **I WANT YOU TO KNOW THAT YOU ARE NOT ALONE. THAT YOU ARE DEEPLY LOVED. THAT YOU, MY FRIEND, ARE A BELOVED CHILD FIRST AND FOREMOST AND THAT YOUR STRUGGLE DOES NOT DEFINE WHO YOU REALLY ARE.**