



# 23 Questions Challenge

## Leadership Analysis of Pastor Joel Brown

Report Prepared on: 9/21/2018

Interview Conducted on: 9/11/2018

Analysis Prepared by: Jeffrey W. Ganthner

23Questions.com is a service of LeadershipHunt.com and Design Pursuits LLC (Jeffrey W. Ganthner) and is intended for the educational benefit of leaders around the world. Are you ready for the challenge? Simply, visit [www.23questions.com](http://www.23questions.com) , answer the questions, and within 2 weeks a customized leadership analysis will be delivered to you. If you choose, then your analysis will be posted online for others to learn about you as a leader and for you to learn from them. Be a part of the leadership learning community, take the challenge today!

# Table of Contents

<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>WHO IS JOEL BROWN?</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>LEADERSHIP ANALYSIS</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>JOEL BROWN: THE TRANSFORMATIONAL SERVANT LEADER</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>LEADERSHIP TRAITS</b>	<b>6</b>
FAITH	6
VISIONARY	6
PERSEVERANCE	6
RELENTLESS	7
FEARLESS	7
LOVE OF PEOPLE	7
COMMITMENT	7
SERVICE	8
EXPERIENTIAL LEARNER	8
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>8</b>
WORK ETHIC   DISCIPLINE – TAKE SMALL STEPS	8
TRUST OTHERS WITH DECISION MAKING	9
FLEXIBILITY	10
PATIENCE	10
EDUCATION	10
FOCUS	10
<b>NEXT STEPS</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>APPENDIX A: TRANSCRIPT OF 23QUESTIONS.COM</b>	<b>12</b>

---

## Executive Summary

Pastor Joel Brown is a proven and successful leader in his family, church and community. The success he has had as a leader is a result of him effectively using his God given leadership talents of having faith, being able to cast vision, perseverance, being relentless, overcoming fear, loving people, commitment, service, and being able to learn through his experiences. These mold him into the transformational servant leader he is today. However, his weaknesses are also holding him back from his true leadership potential. They include a lack of discipline in small steps, trusting others to make decisions, flexibility, patience, educational diversity, and lack of focus. This leadership analysis is built primarily from the 23questions.com challenge questions as answered by Joel Brown. Each of these strengths and development areas are discussed in depth along with recommendations and next steps for Joel Brown to take to become a better leader.

---

## Introduction

The following is a leadership analysis of Joel Brown. This analysis is primarily based on Joel answering 23 questions on leadership in his own words. Additional material was obtained through research on Joel Brown by Jeffrey Ganthner. The purpose of this study is two-fold. First, it is to help Joel see who he is as a leader and not just any leader, but as a certain type of leader with specific strengths and identified areas for development. Second, it is to add to the overall leadership learning community by showcasing qualities of his leadership that others might seek to develop in their own practices. This leadership report will be added to the online library of other leaders who have taken the 23questions.com challenge. Collectively these accepted, completed and shared challenges found on 23questions.com provide a wealth of insights into individual leaders with the hope of developing both them and other leaders around the world.

This report is organized into five sections: "Who is Joel Brown?", leadership analysis, recommendations for development, next steps, and the full transcript of the answered 23 questions.

---

## Who is Joel Brown?

*"Born and raised in ministry and missions, my only goal is to live my life for the glory of my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ - to know Him and to be known by Him." Pastor Joel Brown*

Joel Brown is the lead pastor at Church at Hampton Roads located in Chesapeake, VA ([www.churchathamptonroads.com](http://www.churchathamptonroads.com)). He primarily grew up in New Orleans and as a child both in Peru and Haiti on the mission field. He graduated high school in Springdale, AR at Shiloh Christian and then upon graduation he took classes at both Oral Roberts University and Ecclesia College in Elm Springs, AR in Christian leadership. Serving in missions and the church has been with him his entire life. He has led both as a worship pastor and lead pastor in the church. He has been ordained since 1999. He married young at the age of 20 and he and his wife, Sarah, have three children who all lead in ministry areas in the church. They have solid roots and a strong family and serve as proof of both his love for God and a testament to his strong leadership skills.

In 2011, God began to stir in his heart to move his family from the safe environment he knew to plant a church in Virginia. In September of 2012, Church at Hampton Roads was launched and today is a thriving and growing congregation of people who are actively serving the community. As a church plant of ARC (the Association of Related Churches) and under accountability of overseers, Joel has a strong foundation to continue serving God through pastoral leadership.

In 2018, Joel wrote a book titled Go Bold: You are next in line to do great things. In it, he challenges all of us to grow in our faith and boldness to conquer our fears. To free our minds and spirit to step out in faith and to do bold things for God.

---

## Leadership Analysis

*"People do not follow weak leaders. A weak leader is a leader who lacks faith and hope."  
Pastor Joel Brown*

The following is a leadership analysis of who Joel Brown is as a leader and the leadership traits that provide him success as a leader.

### **Joel Brown: The Transformational Servant Leader**

Joel Brown is not a weak or unwavering individual who is cursed with a small vision and low motivation. He is the opposite: determined, resolute, charismatic, challenging, loving, and blessed with big dreams. He is a gifted transformational leader who loves serving people.

A transformational leader is in the business of changing people, organizations, and the world. They do not maintain the status quo. They challenge it. They break it down and rebuild it. They make change happen. This is Joel Brown.

A servant leader puts other individuals first. They realize that they lead not directly for their own benefit, but for the followers that are in their family, team, or organization. They operate with humility and a sincere love for serving others. Spend a week with Joel Brown and you will see the love that he has for others.

Being both a transformational leader and a servant leader is not easy. The world is set up against people who want to both significantly change and serve others at the same time.

Change that does not happen fast enough serves to frustrate a transformational leader. Weariness and rest are often fleeting for a servant leader. If he is not careful, he could end up a frustrated, weary, and bitter individual. However, with greater understanding and tenaciousness to keep developing as a transformational servant leader, Joel Brown can accomplish amazing and forever changed lives in those that he leads and individuals that he serves.

## **Leadership Traits**

As a transformational servant leader, Joel has several strong and well-developed leadership traits that make him successful. The following details nine clear leadership traits gleaned from his completion of the 23questions.com challenge.

### ***Faith***

Faith defines Joel Brown as a leader. Most transformational leaders are defined by and lead by what they believe in. They wear it on their sleeves. This is Joel. He chooses to live his faith daily not just through his chosen profession, but also by how he leads his family. For Joel, he has faith in God and that is really all he needs. Game on. What are you waiting for? Let's go!

### ***Visionary***

Strong transformational leaders possess excellent vision casting abilities. With a clear vision, they can act quickly and with decisiveness. Joel spends time developing the vision and then does not waste time in advancing towards it. As a transformational leader, he is also blessed with strong communication skills in articulating the vision to his family, church, and the overall community. He knows where he is going, and he makes sure that you know as well.

### ***Perseverance***

*"I decided to show up every day, love people and trust God" Pastor Joel Brown*

Perseverance to serve others when you are weary is tough. Joel loves to serve people no matter what he is facing every day. As a leader, this type of consistency to persevere serves to attract others around him and creates a willingness for them to follow his leadership. They know that he will be there for them.

## ***Relentless***

Whoever gets up at 4:30 a.m. in the morning to go run is driven to make themselves better. The word excuse is not in Joel's vocabulary. He is driven to be better and to challenge those around him to get better every day. If he says he is going to do something, go ahead and count it as done. It might not happen today, but it will happen.

## ***Fearless***

*"What could you accomplish if you had the boldness to step through fear?" Pastor Joel Brown from his book, Go Bold: You are Next in Line to Do Great Things*

Joel is a great leader to have your back in a tough situation. He is truly fearless. He is willing to put himself on the line in service to God and for those that he has been called to both serve and lead. He may not do anything, but he will come closer than most to put aside his fear to transform and serve others. Being a Marine would have been a great alternative profession if his pastoral role would change. As a leader, being fearless tends to create freedom to keep your mind focused on the bigger vision and mission at hand – a great quality of a transformational leader.

## ***Love of People***

*"I believe the more we genuinely love people the more we naturally lead them" Pastor Joel Brown*

Transformational leaders are risk takers and can often press those around them too hard in accomplishing a goal. Joel's love for people serves as a regulator in his life to take the time, slow down, and just love them. His love for people starts in the home and shows itself throughout the community. He knows that he will transform people more by showing his love for them than any other thing that he can do.

## ***Commitment***

He is committed to God first and then his family. That commitment has served him and his family well as they have had to overcome numerous obstacles in launching their church. Without this commitment, the church would not exist, and Joel knows it. For Joel, commitment

means challenging, spending time with, and loving those in his life. He is there for them and they know it. As a leader, his followers know he is committed to them.

## ***Service***

*"I heard it said if serving is below you, leadership is beyond you" Pastor Joel Brown*

Being a servant leader, is what being a leader means to Joel. The fruits of his leadership are the service records of his life. When he is serving, he is in his element. Sometimes it may be work for him, but he does not lead on that it is. He just serves. His humility in deeds performed is evident and comes so naturally to him that it would be hard to document even for one week all of his acts of service to those that he encounters. He has a servant's heart.

## ***Experiential Learner***

*"...I learn as I go..." Pastor Joel Brown*

Joel is a true lifelong learner. He educates himself by actively interacting with people and by watching YouTube videos, reading, and choosing mentors to pour into his life. People help Joel learn. At an early age, he learned about faith from his father as he paced late at night praying and talking with God in their home.

---

## **Recommendations for Development**

The following are recommendations for development that will seek to make Joel Brown a better leader. It focuses on discerned areas of weakness and details ways to improve as a leader. Opposite of the leadership traits that make him successful as a leader these are the ones that are holding him back.

### ***Work Ethic / Discipline – Take Small Steps***

Joel has the discipline that most do not. He runs marathons. He plants a church half way across the country in a city where he is not established. He takes on the sin of pornography head on. He meets all the time with people who are struggling in their faith and lack a relationship with God. He works hard at the hard things. He succeeds where most would fail.

It is the little challenges where he struggles. The daily grind of things not moving fast enough. As a transformational leader, his mind is already to the next thing before what he is doing is actually accomplished. He failed to become a pilot, not because he was scared, lacked the insight or even the eyesight. No, he just lacked the discipline to study for the written test. It is the little things that trip him up.

Learning to have the discipline and work ethic to push through with something that he does not want to do will allow Joel to succeed in the little things that will allow him to catch up to where his transformational mind is already operating. Accomplish small things, take that test, and get that certification. Small steps lead to big accomplishments.

## ***Trust Others with Decision Making***

*"Decisions left unmade slow everything down. You see that's what a leader does is make decisions. People are dependent on us being quick, clear, and concise. Every decision matters." Pastor Joel Brown*

On one level, there is a lot of insight into this statement; however, the problem is that it is not biblical. A leader's primary role is not necessarily to make a decision (although it can be in a particular situation), but rather to gather, guide and point a team towards a certain goal to be accomplished. Be the guardian of the vision.

God had the vision and made the decision to build His church. That is already decided. How to build it in a particular area and by what means is also His decision to make and he chooses to involve us in the process. By so choosing, He models how we should lead others in doing it. The entire book of Acts is filled with people going out and building His church in new and creative ways. He led them by empowering them. Similarly, He gets us involved today, gives us skills to lead at varying levels, and trusts us with certain decisions because of our commitment to Him to do it. As a leader, He is patient and understands through the decision-making process that we actually grow and develop as an individual and become more capable to serve him even more.

Joel is a gifted leader and has the ability to make decisions quickly – he should do it when necessary; however, that is not always the best course. In allowing others to make decisions, even slow ones, the organization that he is building in his church will develop faster and

stronger than he thought possible. It is the process and struggle that builds the organization. It will then not be constrained by Joel's limitations as a leader.

## ***Flexibility***

*"We are planned a year ahead as an organization when it comes to all aspects." Pastor Joel Brown*

This has a lot of merits, but it also points to a lack of organizational flexibility. Autocratic leaders often use schedules to control their organizations. This is successful to a point, but it will usually only allow the organization to rise to the abilities of its primary leader. Allow for flexibility and change to occur. This gets other leaders especially new ones to an organization involved and for their ideas to be added to the mix.

## ***Patience***

Joel Brown is a "Bulldozer". Joel loves people and that is the only thing holding him back from running over those God is challenging him to patient with. As a transformational leader, he operates five steps ahead of most of those around him. Learning to not be frustrated with their sluggishness will free him to be at peace more and find joy even in the grind.

## ***Education***

Joel never finished college. And that is O.K. That does not mean that Joel should not participate in formal education opportunities. One of the unique benefits of a university in society today is that the good ones educate on material that is subject matter, peer reviewed and taught by teachers who focus on that subject. Many YouTube videos and most books are for food for infants – they do nourish to a point, but the material can be created and distributed by experts and idiots alike. Joel should take a class, attend a lecture, dialogue a little in an academic setting of interest. Eat meat and potatoes every now and then.

## ***Focus***

Joel has laid out a big vision – launch seven churches in the seven cities of the Hampton Roads area of Virginia. Awesome vision and a great mission. As a transformational leader, he has proven successful – he laid out a clear and big vision for others to follow and rally around.

But, what should the people of his church be focused on? – seven churches or one church or how about just the one area of ministry that God wants them to participate in? It is hard for transformational leaders to narrow a big vision enough and to focus individuals in a way that achieves the greater vision one building block at the time. Joel needs to learn to focus his team on individual steps while advancing to the greater vision God has given him.

---

## Next Steps

The following are five action items to build on your leadership strengths and improve as a leader:

1. Obtain a mentor outside of your pastoral accountability team.
2. Mentor a leader in your church that is skilled differently than you to take over responsibility for areas that you are weaker in. Trust them and hold them accountable in this area.
3. Produce and outline a detailed business plan for your church with measurable steps for success. This will help you narrow your focus and provide detail for those that you lead. Realize that this plan is mostly for them and not you.
4. Be flexible to change, not necessarily in vision, but in tactics and strategy.
5. Take a class in something that you are interested in – commit to the discipline of learning that it will demand.

---

## Appendix A: Transcript of 23Questions.com

Pastor Joel Brown  
Church at Hampton Roads  
Author

Interview Conducted on 9/11/2018

### **Question 1: Why are you taking the 23Questions.com challenge?**

I simply feel like if God opens a door for me and nudges me to walk through it that the opportunity is simply God positioning me for greater things, greater platforms and that it will ultimately benefit those I lead because as God does things for us it will flow through us. I believe he simply asks us to be obedient to follow through with that which he presents to us. And I know for a fact that God will use this interview to push the message that he burst in me and through me for the Go Bold book ...

### **Question 2: Where are you from and tell us about your family?**

I have been married for 22 years. My wife and I married young. I was 20, she was 17. We married January 20th, 1996 in Rogers, AR. I have three children, two daughters and a son. Hannah who is currently 21. Bethany who is 18, and Josiah who is 16. All three of them are in love with Jesus, in love with each other, us as parents, and in love with people. Hannah coordinates our worship team at the church we started in 2012, Church at Hampton Roads. Bethany coordinates our high school ministry, and Josiah is our main drummer at the church but has a heavy passion for ministry already that is stirring.

### **Question 3: Tell us about your education.**

I graduated High School in 1993. I took Bible College courses through ORU in Tulsa and also earned credits from Ecclesia College in Elm Springs, AR. However, because I entered ministry so young as a worship pastor and had my children extremely early in

life I am actually 12 hours shy of completing my bachelor's degree in Christian Leadership. I have been pastoring now and have been ordained for over 19 years.

**Question 4: What role does Faith play in you as a leader?**

Faith is crucial. People do not follow weak leaders. A weak leader is a leader who lacks faith and hope. Imagine following someone who is always doubting. Not a good picture is it? I believe you have to have faith to do anything in life, especially with leading others. I believe in order to have faith you must have a clear vision. A clear vision of who God is. A vision of what God wants from you, a vision of what He wants to do through you, and a vision of what it will look like when you are finished with your part of the story. And in order to have vision you must get close to the One who is writing the story, God. And the Bible tells us that those who come to God must believe that He is, and that He is a Rewarder of those who diligently seek Him - in short, faith. Those who want to receive from God must have faith. Faith is a must to get close to and to learn from the greatest Leader ever, God. Then by experiencing how God leads we know how to lead others. Faith is crucial.

**Question 5: Do you have a Purpose/Vision/Mission Statement? If so, what is it?**

The Church I started in 2012, Church at Hampton Roads in Chesapeake VA, has a vision that is big, and a mission that is clear. Vision: One church in 7 cities boldly representing the heart and the Kingdom of God with global impact, breaking down racial & generational walls, modeling trust by living in close and authentic community, and reaching the forgotten with justice. Mission statement: Leading people into connection & full devotion to God.

**Question 6: Tell us about some of your successes.**

Here are my top four successes. I believe a successful marriage is no small thing. I count my 22 years of marriage to be a success. I believe raising Godly children is no small thing. I count my three children to be at the top of my successes list. All three are in ministry and are not bitter at God or people. They love Jesus and the Church! I have successfully moved from Arkansas to Virginia knowing one couple, and with no job or promised income and started a church from scratch that after 6 years is going strong and that is growing and that has a vision to launch 6 more campuses. Lastly, I have finished authoring a book that will actually be launched through Amazon December

15th of 2018. The book is called "Go Bold: You Are Next In Line To Do Great Things". The book is all about freeing people from the paralyzing grip of fear. I wrote it in order to see people have the courage to step out into whatever God has placed in their hearts, that they can, even if they haven't yet!

**Question 7: Tell us about some of your failures.**

I tried to get my private pilot's license twice out of high school and failed the written test twice due to my inability to comprehend well the math and my work ethic to discipline myself to study.

I had rage issues as a man. I would get out of my car on highways after slamming on my brakes to confront people behind me for following to close. Anger was something God had to work out of me.

**Question 8: What was a Defining Moment for you as a leader?**

When you have to gut check and stay in leadership beyond your feelings due to the obedience you desire to have towards God...When Sarah and I came out to VA to start CHR we had a mortgage on our house in Arkansas...it never sold...we carried two house payments for 4 years as we started a fragile startup....it seemingly drained our resources little by little and my anger and bitterness towards God had to be kept at bay. It was a defining moment, either I would cave and quit or completely trust God and keep walking. I think it's the inward battles that have the ability to sabotage us as leaders. After 4 years it finally sold after God had allowed that house payment to drain our family down to spending our last \$500. But, I had made a decision as a leader that would carry me through one of the toughest times as a pastor, father and husband when my personal expectations were not being met by God and I had to keep myself motivated. I decided to show up every day, love people and trust God. Leading your family and yourself through difficult times is sometimes the hardest.

**Question 9: As a leader, what are the most important decisions that you make?**

Every single one. Decisions left unmade slow everything down. You see that's what a leader does is make decision. People are dependent on us being quick, clear and concise. Every decision matters. However, if I had to nail one aspect of decision making it would be decisions that tie to my integrity.

**Question 10: How do you demonstrate leadership skills in your family, organization, and community?**

You are the culture driver. I drive the culture in my home. I fashion it instead of letting it run rampant in every direction. The same in our organization. In the community, it is love based...great leaders serve... "I heard it said if serving is below you, leadership is beyond you."

**Question 11: Who has had a tremendous impact on you as a leader? Why?**

My father...he was relentless for the lost and for prayer...I would wake up at 1 am in the morning to the sounds of him pacing the hallways outside my door as a kid....it forever etched me...I told myself anyone who gives up this much sleep to pray is either crazy or has found something worthwhile. He also would turn every conversation that he had with anyone towards Jesus...what an influence...

**Question 12: How do you stay inspired?**

I tell myself what to do and think...I do not check with my feelings...I wake up and tell myself to give everything at every moment...to be fully engaged at all times. Paul said he beats his body into subjection in the Bible...basically he doesn't put up with his own excuses...I don't either...you can either make excuses or make moves...

**Question 13: How do you learn?**

I read, watch YouTube videos, and find mentors.

**Question 14: How do you plan your day, week, month, and year?**

We have a yearly planning meeting in our organization in August and all of our department leaders bring their events for their areas to the meeting and we complete one master calendar for CHR. We are planned a year ahead as an organization when it comes to all aspects.

**Question 15: Do you set aside time to think? If so, how do you do it?**

Yes...I run a lot as I like to compete in half marathons and marathons...so when I get up at 4:30 am some mornings and run I am running for 2 to 3 hours at a time...this serves as a great time to think.

**Question 16: How do you measure potential in others?**

Their willingness to learn, be teachable which I believe is the level of their humility...their willingness to believe that all things are possible...and finally their relentlessness...can they be a problem solver instead of allowing the random roadblock to derail their drive.

**Question 17: How do you identify other leaders?**

Are they serving others and making the lives of others more important than their own? This is one of the ways I identify leaders...secondly, are people following them? This is a great question as well...I heard it said if you think you are a leader then turn around...is anyone following you? If not, you are just out for a walk.

**Question 18: What is the biggest challenge that you have had to overcome?**

My personal commitment to my inward obedience to God...(my character)....I struggled with pornography starting as age 11 into my early marriage...a friend introduced me to it early and the addiction was immediate. It almost demolished my marriage 10 years in and I believe our greatest fight is the fight between our ears...the one for our mind. Happy to say in January, I will be celebrating 23 years of marriage and God has been faithful to give me the strength to walk away from a weak character.

**Question 19: What challenges are you facing today as a leader?**

I constantly have to reign myself in to keep myself from defaulting to trusting myself and bullying ahead without God. I have a bulldozer mentality and I'm aggressive...that has to be tempered with patience and with the ability to wait on God.

**Question 20: What are you doing to continue to develop as a leader?**

I spend time with better leaders...pursue God...He is the Great Developer...He molds us and equips us beyond our natural talent.

**Question 21: How do you guard your heart as a leader?**

Forgive quickly...stay in recognition I do not own anything...God has given me all things and He is still the owner...so, He is supposed to carry the weight. I deflect my cares on Him at all times. I choose to never take a break from this one (guarding my heart).

After all, God's word tells us...ABOVE ALL ELSE! Guard your heart....so I obey God's word as best I can, and it is the active agent in my life to bring life, focus and healing.

**Question 22: From a leadership perspective, what are you thinking about today?**

How do I love more? I believe the more we genuinely love people the more we will naturally lead them. Some others are: how do I equip those around me to not need me...to propel them to places further than where I could go...finally, how do I push people to see that most of their own limitations are just a facade, they can overcome if they can engage their faith!

**Question 23: What do you like to ask other leaders?**

Mainly, I ask specific advice on current issues. It could be anything from advice on hiring to firing at the moment I go find them...I learn as I go...for me I find areas I am weak and then find a leader who is strong in that area and spend time with them. I've talked to greater leaders than myself on financial matters, character matters and organizational problems. I think at the end of the day I do life with mentors and as issues arise I get their input. I learn as I go through the ebbs and flows of life.