

February 24, 2021

Dear Andy,

I want to speak directly with you in this moment—I know you appreciate that. And I also want to speak gently: I come to you as a man and fellow-elder who is deeply aware of my desperate need for the mercy and grace of our great God. My heart for you is to be like Paul with the Thessalonian church (1 Thess 2:7–8). My heart is also to walk according to Paul’s command in Ephesians 5:11 to “take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them.”

I am aware of a number of BCS alumni (some of whom were members at the Downtown Campus) who are still reeling from the impact of their interactions with you. Some are even persuaded that both BCS and BBC leadership are a mockery of the gospel because of the ways we have failed to hold you accountable. I am also aware of a growing number of members at BBC who are still reeling from your actions during and after the QSM. They have been offended by a pastor. They feel frightened, belittled, shamed, and threatened. This should not be so concerning an elder.

In the ways you have treated several BCS students, and in the ways you have treated some of the membership of the church during the January 31 QSM (and weeks following), I believe you are displaying a *pattern* of controlling and egregious sin against God and people. These are some of my concerns:

- Failing to be *self-controlled* in the classroom and public meetings (Gal 5:23; 1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:8)
- Failing to be *respectable* in the office of elder (1 Tim 3:2)
- Failing to be *gentle* with the flock of God (Prov 15:4; Gal 5:23; 1 Tim 3:3; 1 Tim 6:11)
- Being *quarrelsome* with members and fellow elders (1 Tim 3:3)
- Being *quick-tempered* with students and congregants (Titus 1:7)
- *Domineering* over those in your charge (Eze 34:4; 1 Pet 5:3)
- Lacking *humility* when confronted by members and elders (Mic 6:8; Col 3:12)
- *Fits of anger* in the classroom and public meetings (Gal 5:20)
- Failing to be *kind* to some of those in your charge (Gal 5:22)
- In sum, violating our basic command to *love one another* (John 13:34–35; 1 Cor 13:1–7)

To be as clear as I can be: based on the above, this looks to me like an abuse of spiritual authority. Some may disagree with my term. Nevertheless, no matter the term used, **I do not think you are presently qualified for the office of elder**. I, therefore, appeal to you to please spare the church, and the elder council, grief upon grief and **step down from eldership**. Please, *for the glory of God*, consider this soberly and follow his leading. I believe stepping down could be an evidence that you are seeking to bear fruit in keeping with repentance. And this is my great hope for you—repentance is possible. I believe God in his kindness is holding it out to you in Christ. Will you receive it?

I want you to know that though this may seem severe, I say these things to you in love (Eph 4:15) and hope and for the glory of God. I am praying the Holy Spirit will make these words hearable, granting you ears to hear, a heart to receive, and a commitment to walk a new path with God’s help.

May the Lord Jesus grant you grace to rest in him according to Matthew 11:29: **Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.** I desperately need the same thing from our Savior.

Grace to you,

Bryan Pickering