MBC MEN'S LEADERSHIP TRAINING

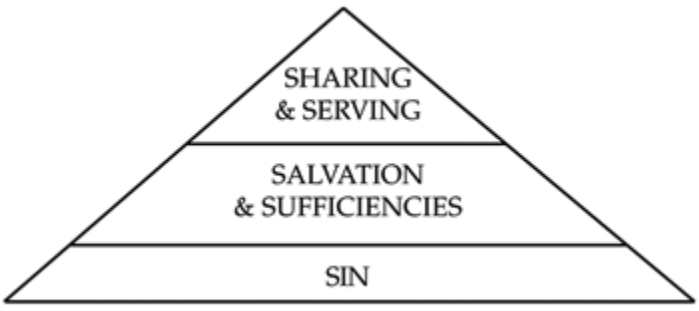
DOING GOD'S BUSINESS GOD'S WAY

CLASS 2: TOTAL DEPRAVITY & TOTAL INABILITY

- September 18: (***postponed***)
- October 30: Introduction
- ***November 13: Total Depravity & Total Inability (Ch 1-2)***
- December 6: Remnants and Restrictions & Satanic Complications (Ch 3-4)

INTRODUCTION TO THE SERIES

- For those who minister in any capacity (home, church, personal discipleship, evangelism, etc.), they must understand how it is that God intends ministry to happen.
- Specifically, as we think of ministry in the church, we want to develop a philosophy of ministry that is aligned with the truth of God's word and seeks to do *God's business God's way*.
- In our study this year, we will drill down into the theological and methodological principles that define a biblically faithful ministry.
- Primarily, we are going to unpack what the bible speaks of in relation to sin and salvation (in terms of systematics, we will delve into anthropology, hamartiology, and soteriology) to serve as a foundation which informs WHAT ministry focus should be and HOW we develop a methodology that builds up from that foundation.
- We don't want to define ministry by our terms (what we think is right or culturally palatable), but rather one that meets mankind's spiritual needs (salvation/sanctification) and brings glory to God.



SATANTIC DECEPTION AND THE ELEVATION OF MAN'S REASON

Satan's Attack on God's Word/Character

- From the beginning, there has been an attack on the word of God. It is Satan's primary, and ongoing, strategy when it comes to deception. He is the father of lies (John 8:44)
- **Genesis 3:1-5** - *And he said to the woman, "Indeed, has God said, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden'?" The woman said to the serpent, "From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will die.' " The serpent said to the woman, "You surely will not die! "For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."*
- What are the deceptions that Satan wove into his temptation to Eve? What were they focused on?
- Satan knows that if he can get someone to doubt in God's word and/or God's character, that he has laid the seedbed for deception which will lead someone away from the Lord.
    - What happened when Eve's thoughts of God were twisted?
    - Her focus went to what seemed good to ***her***
    - **Gen 3:6** - *When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.*
- As her thought of God changed, it affected how she lived. Eve no longer sought to live out God's will, but she was focused on fulfilling her own will.
- Satan's strategy has not changed. Thinking of other biblical accounts, such as Job and Jesus, Satan's efforts were focused on twisting the perception of God's character or the word of God itself.
- Satan's deception is aimed at doctrinal/theological truth. It is this distortion and denial of sound doctrine that has bred countless false teachings[1]
    - **Sensualism**: Attractiveness and desirability have replaced God's Word as my standard for determining God's best in my life (Gen. 3:1–6). [God's Mind: 2 Timothy 3:16–17]
    - **Sensationalism**: I believe that immediate success is more desirable than success in God's time (Matt. 4:1–11). [God's Mind: 1 Corinthians 1:18–25]

[1] John MacArthur and Richard Mayhue, eds., Biblical Doctrine: A Systematic Summary of Bible Truth (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017), 687–88.

- **Universalism**: Because we live together in the same world with the same kind of imperfections, we will live together in eternity (Matt. 13:24–30). [God's Mind: John 1:12–13; 3:36; 5:24]
- **Rationalism**: I will substitute human reason for simple childlike faith anchored in the Word of God (Matt. 16:21–23). [God's Mind: Isaiah 55:9]
- **Existentialism**: I am the master of my fate and the captain of my soul (2 Cor. 4:4). [God's Mind: John 3:16–21]
- **Illusionism**: I believe that everything that appears or claims to be of God is of God without further investigation (2 Cor. 11:13–15). [God's Mind: Deuteronomy 13:1–5; 1 John 4:1–4]
- **Ecumenism**: I believe that all sincere religions involve valid expressions of worshiping the true God (Rev. 2:9; 3:9). [God's Mind: Acts 4:12]
- **Humanism**: I alone can defeat Satan without God's help (Jude 9). [God's Mind: John 15:5]

Rationalism, Humanism & The Elevation of Man's Reason

- When we think of ministering according to God's word, not only is there satanic opposition, but there is a misunderstanding of the capacity of man, in and of themselves, to make steps toward God.
- Namely, this is seen in the ideas of Rationalism and Humanism, which serve to elevate man's natural capacity for reason and moral uprightness apart from the work of God in them.
    - **Rationalism** – the philosophical view that reason and intellectual deduction—rather than sensory experience, tradition, or faith—are the primary sources and ultimate tests of human knowledge. (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy)
    - **Humanism** – A progressive philosophy of life that, without theism or other supernatural beliefs, affirms our ability and responsibility to lead ethical lives of personal fulfillment that aspire to the greater good. (American Humanist Association)
- As these philosophies of men have made their way into the church, it has led many to evaluate the makeup of man and the effects of sin on man in a way that fits this paradigm.
    - Some will claim that man is made of three parts (trichotomy), not two (dichotomy), and that two parts (body and soul) have been affected by sin while the third (spirit) is unaffected.
    - Therefore, it is possible for mankind, through his capacity in his reason, to come to an understanding of God. (Pelagian/Arminian Theology)

UNDERSTANDING ORIGINAL SIN

- It is crucial to understand what God says about sin because there are many false understandings of it:
  - "Sin is a queer thing. It isn't the breaking of divine commandments. It is the breaking of one's own integrity." (D.H. Lawrence)
  - "Sin cannot be conceived in a natural state, but only in a civil state, where it is decreed by common consent what is good or bad." (Benedict Spinoza)
  - "Sin is psychological self-abuse […] Sin is any act or thought that robs myself or another human being of his or her self-esteem […] By nature we are fearful, not bad […] Label it a 'negative self-image,' but do not say that the central core of the human soul is wickedness. If this were so, then truly, the human being is totally depraved" (Robert Schuller)

Nature of Sin[2]

- Our understanding of sin must be related to the character of God.
  - Since God is the standard for Himself, this is the point where a definition of sin must begin.
  - Anything that does not correspond to the nature of God is sin.
- Sin draws its essential character of sinfulness from the fact that it is unlike God.
  - So sin is ***anything that rebels against God in thought, word, or deed***.
    - **1 John 3:4** - *Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness.*
  - It is missing the mark of God's standard. It is deification of self and dethronement of God.
- The words for "sin" in the NT involve a number of different ways to describe the nature of sin:
  - ***Hamartia*** - a general word used to describe sinful acts. It emphasizes the concept of missing the mark or aim. It was used in classical Greek of "throwing a spear and missing the target." In the singular it denotes the state of sinfulness (cf. Rom 3:9, 20; 4:7; 5:20; 6:16, 23; 11:27)
  - ***Paraptoma*** - a false step in contrast to a true one (cf. Rom 4:25; Gal 6:1; Eph 2:1)
  - ***Parabasis*** - stepping aside, a deviation from a true faith (cf. Rom 2:23; 4:15; Gal 3:19)
  - ***Anomia*** - lawlessness or iniquity (cf. 2 Cor 6:14; 2 Thess 2:3)
- "Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of the law of God." (Westminster Confession)
- "Sin is not just a minor deviation, an error, a false step. It is gross aberration from God's original purpose for all created rational beings, angelic and human alike." (Lewis Sperry Chafer)

[2] https://www.mbcmi.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Class-1-The-Nature-and-Origin-of-Sin.pdf

Origin of Sin

- When speaking of the origin of sin, we must say clearly that God is not the source of sin:
    - **Habakkuk 1:13** - *Your eyes are too pure to approve evil, And You can not look on wickedness with favor.*
    - **James 1:13** - *Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone.*
- However, we must understand that God actually ordains (not simply permits) evil in such a way that He is not morally responsible for it:
    - **Genesis 50:20** - *As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive*
    - **Job 1:7-8** - *The Lord said to Satan, "From where do you come?" Then Satan answered the Lord and said, "From roaming about on the earth and walking around on it." The Lord said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, fearing God and turning away from evil."*
    - **Acts 2:23** - *this Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death*
- Scripture declares two propositions clearly:
    - First, though God is the *ultimate* cause of all things—even evil—He is never the *proximate*, or *efficient*, cause of evil.
    - Second, Scripture regards the efficient cause of evil as the chargeable or blameworthy party
- This is the doctrine of ***Divine Compatibilism***
    - God predetermines wicked events in such a way that he is not directly responsible for the wicked free acts of men. His determination of wicked events is compatible both with human freedom and responsibility.
    - Compatibilism states that when people perform free acts (i.e. not constrained or compelled in their actions), they do that which God wants them to do.
- When speaking of the origin of sin, then, Scripture is clear that sin originated with Satan:
    - **John 8:44** - *You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature; for he is a liar, and the father of lies*

- **1 John 3:8** - *The one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning…*

- So, then, at some point after the end of the 6th day of creation (Gen 1:31 – *it was very good*) and the events of Genesis 3, Satan fell because of his pride and desire to usurp the authority of God and wen to Eve in the garden.
- Due to the events of Genesis 3, as we described above, the curse of sin came upon mankind and all of creation. (Gen 3:14-19)

Transmission of Sin/Inherited Sin

- The question being considered: How did Adam's sin affect the human race?
  - The Bible says that we are affected by Adam's sin in two ways:
    - Inherited Guilt/Imputed Sin – What Adam did
    - Inherited Corruption/Inherited Sin – What we are
- **Inherited Guilt: What Adam Did**
  - We are counted guilty because of Adam's sin. All mankind sinned in Adam and, therefore, inherit his guilt
  - **Romans 5:12** - *Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned*
    - "just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin"
      - "sin" here does not refer to particular sins, but the principle and nature of sin
      - Sin and death came through one man, Adam, but his sin became the cause of sin and death
    - "and so death spread to all men"
      - Adam was not originally subject to death
      - Through his sin, however, death (spiritual, physical, and eternal) spread to the whole race
    - "because all sinned"
      - This is past tense, not present tense
      - This is not saying that all presently sinned…Paul is not referring to the actual sins people commit daily…it is saying that all DID (past tense) sin when Adam sinned

- The active voice indicates that all sinned when Adam sinned
- Death came to all men not because they were sinners but because they sinned with Adam

- **Romans 5:15-19**
  - Context: The main purpose is to show: 2 men, 2 acts, 2 results
  - The effects of Adam's sin on mankind: we died…we are under judgment…we are subject to death…we are condemned…we were made sinners
  - 5 times these 5 verses refer to the universal condemnation and death for all people as a result of the one trespass of Adam
  - One sin IS the cause of death of all
- Perhaps the best solution is a combination of the federal and seminal views
  - Bottom line: Adam's posterity can never claim to be innocent…they come into existence as sinners by nature and are thus guilty before God
  - Paul's point is that all die because all sinned AND All die because one sinned
  - There is a solidarity/union with Adam

View on the Imputation of Sin				
Views	**Roman 5:12**	**Adam**	**Humanity**	**Adherents**
Pelagian View	People incur death when they sin after Adam's example	Sin affected Adam alone	No one affected by Adam's sin	Unitarians
Arminian View	All people consent to Adam's sin – then sin is imputed	Adam sinned and partially affected humanity	Depravity is not total; people received corrupt nature from Adam, but not guilt or culpability	Methodist, Wesleyan, Pentecostals
Federal View	Sin is imputed to humanity because of Adam's sin	Adam alone sinned but human race affected	Depravity is total; sin and guilt are imputed.	Presbyterians, others holding to Cov. Theology
Seminal View	Sin is imputed to humanity because of Adam's sin	Humanity sinned in Adam	Depravity is total; sin and guilt are imputed	Reformers and later Calvinists

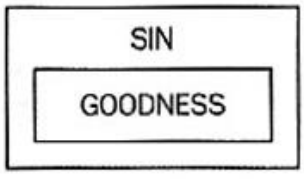
- **Inherited Corruption: What We Are**
    - Refers to the sin nature inherited from the parents…that sinful state into which all people are born…that inward inclination/bent toward sin
        - **Psalm 51:5** - *I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me.*
        - **Ephesians 2:1-3** - *And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.*
            - We were dead (vs. 1)
                - Paul's point: every person without Christ is spiritually dead even though they are physically alive (spiritual zombies)
                - Nothing we did pleased God. Sin had tainted every aspect of our being
                - His point is to show that we were not just sick…we were Dead!
            - We were disobedient (vs. 2)
                - Paul tells us our life is characterized by disobedience
                - What characterized the world characterized us as well…we felt right at home in this wicked world
                - We also lived according to the prince of the power of the air. We were subject to Satan's influence…We responded naturally to his leading… We shared his sinful nature and lived in the same sphere of rebellion against God as he did…Satan was our master
                - Before Christ, we lived in conscious and active rebellion and opposition against God
            - We were depraved (vs. 3)
                - "Depraved" means that every part of man's being and nature has been affected by sin: mouth, mind, eyes, body, heart
                - We indulged our fleshly desires and lusts
                - We were controlled by strong lusts, desires of our flesh and our mind
                - Our mind conceived of the sin…Our flesh passionately desired to carry it out

- We were doomed (vs. 3)
    - Paul says that our very nature made us children of wrath
    - Interestingly, the word for children "*tekna*" suggests a close, intimate relationship to one's parents
    - What Paul is saying is that before we came to Christ we had a close relationship, not with God, but with His wrath!
    - Death, and disobedience and depravity led us to being under the wrath of God
- In short, the nature of every human being has been damaged by what Eve and Adam did in Eden.
- This is why we don't say, "I sin therefore I am a sinner". Rather, we say, "I am a sinner therefore I sin."

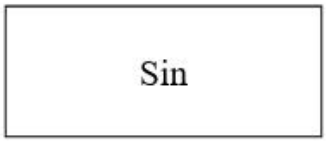
UNDERSTANDING TOTAL DEPRAVITY

- Is Man basically good or evil?
- Without Christ, all men are totally evil & wicked
    - Definition of total depravity: the fall has rendered all people corrupt such that they are unable to trust God unless He changes their hearts so they believe.
    - This does not mean that every person is as wicked as they could be (certainly man could do more evil acts than they do), nor does this mean that an unsaved man cannot do good deeds
        - **Matthew 7:11** - *If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children…*
    - Nor does this mean that the image of God in unsaved man is destroyed

Humanistic View of Man



Biblical View of Man



Depravity is Universal

- Depravity is true of all men past, present, future…none are exempt
    - **1 Kings 8:46** - *When they sin against Thee (for there is no man who does not sin)*
    - **Romans 3:9-10** - *What then? Are we better than they? Not at all; for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin; as it is written, 'There is none righteous, not even one'"*
    - **Romans 3:23** - *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*
    - **Romans 11:32** - *For God has shut up all in disobedience*

Depravity is Total

- It extends to every part of the person…No part has escaped the impact of sin
- **Heart**
    - **Genesis 6:5** ~ *Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually*
    - **Jeremiah 17:9** ~ *The heart is more deceitful than all else And is desperately sick; Who can understand it?*
        - "The truth that humanity's "heart" is spiritually sick reinforces again the major teaching about man's finiteness and fallenness. As a matter of fact, we're so sick and weak by nature that we cannot come up with an anywhere-near-accurate self-diagnosis."[3]
- **Mind**
    - **Titus 1:15** ~ *To the pure, all things are pure; but to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but both their mind and their conscience are defiled.*
    - **Ephesians 4:17** ~*This I say therefore, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind,*
    - **2 Corinthians 4:4** ~ *in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ…*
    - **Colossians 1:21** ~ *And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds*

[3] George J. Zemek, *Doing God's Business God's Way: A Biblical Theology of Ministry*, 19.

- **Will**
    - **Romans 1:32** - *and, although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them*
    - **Romans 3:11** - *There is none who seeks for God*
    - **Ephesians 4:18** - *being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart;*

Depravity is Comprehensive

- Everything unregenerate man does is sin!
    - **1 Cor 10:31** ~ *Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God*
        - That means that doing things that are not for God's glory is sin
    - **Romans 14:23** - *But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and whatever is not from faith is sin*
        - Everything not done from faith in Christ for the glory of God is sin!
        - That means that everything we did before coming to Christ was sin
        - Every good thing we did…every kind thing we did for someone else was ultimately sin
    - **Hebrews 11:6** - *And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him*
        - Anything not done from faith is impossible to please God…Everything that we did without a Savior was sin
        - And until we were made alive by Christ, nothing we did had any spiritual benefit…Everything we did came from the flesh
    - **Romans 8:6-8** - *For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so; and those who are in the flesh cannot please God"*
        - Those who in the flesh (i.e. apart from Christ) CANNOT please God
        - Without a Savior, everything we did was insubordination against God and displeasing to God…Unsaved man cannot even do one thing that pleases God. It was all sin!

UNDERSTANDING TOTAL INABILITY

- "[I]t is impossible for those who are innately evil, as outwardly corroborated by their bad behavior, to practice good works."[4]
- Some key passages that Zemek uses to defend total inability give great clarity to how Scripture speaks of man's capacity to reason:
    - **Jer 13:23** – *"Can the Ethiopian change his skin Or the leopard his spots? Then you also can do good Who are accustomed to doing evil."*
    - **1 Cor 2:14** – *But a natural man **does not accept** the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and **he cannot understand** them, because they are spiritually appraised.*
        - "So the first clause of this verse reviews what the Bible says about humankind's perpetual resistance. However, it adds a statement about the 'reasoning' of the natural man in application to spiritual issues with eternal consequences. To his own self-destruction, he regards all spiritual things as nothing but silliness."
        - "Furthermore, concerning the life-giving things of the Spirit, he has absolutely zero capacity to begin to understand or comprehend them [cf. the thrust of the negated verb for ability along with its complementary infinitive]. He is, both innately and deliberately, deaf and blind to spiritual things."[5]

HOW OUR VIEW OF SIN AFFECTS OUR VIEW OF MINISTRY

- If a physician hastily prescribes medicine without a thorough examination of the patient, without a diagnosis based upon the facts of his physical condition, he is setting himself up for a malpractice suit. How much more culpable is the Christian 'medic' who does not pay due regard to what the Bible says about man and sin! A superficial diagnosis in this most crucial realm bears eternal, not just temporal and physical, consequences.[6]
    - Our commission is to go out into the world and share Christ with others, which necessitates an understanding of mankind's greatest issue (sin) and the only remedy for that issue (Christ)
    - A right view of man/sin is the foundation upon which biblical ministry and soul care is built.

[4] George J. Zemek, *Doing God's Business God's Way: A Biblical Theology of Ministry*, 31.
[5] Ibid, 32.
[6] Ibid, 3.

- If any of us should look upon unregenerate people as sick to some degree but not as being terminally ill and if we should come to them with a box of spiritual Band-Aids, this accomplishes nothing except possibly to place them at a higher level of accountability in the presence of our holy God. Furthermore, such possibly well-meaning, but theologically errant, medics will also stand before the judgment seat of Christ guilty of spiritual malpractice.[7]
    - The church does not simply exist to relieve human suffering or to meet felt needs.
    - Neither can the church fail to acknowledge the inability of man's wisdom or reason to take steps toward God in any measure. (1 Cor 2:14)
    - Zemek also rightfully reminds those who strive to minister of the weight of accountability that comes with it (James 3:1)
- The total depravity and inability of man should bring to mind key ministerial implications:
    - First, mankind is unable to save themselves
        - **1 Cor 2:14** - *But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.*
        - We must understand that since all people are depraved by nature and are spiritually dead, they do not and cannot rescue themselves from eternal disaster, nor can anyone save them by employing the mere methods of men.[8]
    - Second, believers are unable, in their own capacity, to sanctify themselves
        - **Phil 2:12-13** - *So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.*
    - Third, we are unable to save others
        - Furthermore, although all Christian servants, be they 'professional' or not, are genuinely responsible to minister on all fronts in various ways, we must understand that we are but impotent medics on a great battlefield of spiritual carnage.[9]

[7] George J. Zemek, *Doing God's Business God's Way: A Biblical Theology of Ministry, 3*.
[8] Ibid, 11.
[9] George J. Zemek, *Doing God's Business God's Way: A Biblical Theology of Ministry, 11*.

        - **2 Cor 2:15-16** - *For we are a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing; to the one an aroma from death to death, to the other an aroma from life to life. And who is adequate for these things?*
    - So then, this should develop an overwhelming dependence on the Lord in the task of ministry.
        - "In the light of man's original sin and total depravity which culminates in a hopeless state of inability, it should be becoming more obvious that his only hope is divine intervention. Natural man does not inherently possess the power to overcome his inability nor can merely finite rescue efforts give him sufficient impetus."[10]
        - **1 Cor 2:3-5** - *I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling, and my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God.*
        - **1 Cor 3:5-7** - *What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave opportunity to each one. I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth. So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth.*
- "More specifically, since his atheistic world-and-life view leaves him only in possession of an 'AM receiver' and since the Good News is broadcast on an 'FM (i.e. spiritual) band,' he needs to be divinely rewired and given a new antenna in order to receive and understand spiritual things. No mere methodologies of men can 'pull this off.' Trying to do God's business man's way 'won't cut it.'"[11]

[10] Ibid, 33.
[11] Ibid.