

Heed Jesus' Caution When Distraction Tempts You

We shouldn't underestimate the importance of proximity.

Relationships are observable. It's easy to see what matters most. We remain close to it. Absentee relationships tend to lose their luster. (Click [here](#) to read more about kingdom relationships.)

The key question is: How can we get close and stay close?

I asked that question on a college tennis court when I first saw the woman I would marry. I've been asking the same question as a marketplace minister for over 40 years.

We must care enough to observe and understand the problems people experience. We must long to be closer to people who need our services.

Walgreens' marketing strategy is observable—location matters. Build stores near neighborhoods. The pharmacy chain has 9,560 locations (as of the end of 2018) with stores in every state.

There's an old phrase that Denzel Washington popularized—"If you hang around a barbershop long enough, you'll eventually get a haircut." While this phrase has an two-fold meaning, I prefer to focus on the embedded marketing lesson.

What can we do to encourage people who need us to hang around a little longer?

Can we influence others to read our content and come back for more? Can we repeatedly deliver value in a podcast and build an audience? Can we build and maintain a website that delivers information and value to every targeted visitor?

- Clearly define who you are called to serve.

- Do what you can repeatedly do well.
- Strive for continuous improvement in your lane.
- Over-communicate with people who need you.
- Think transformation over transactions.

Jesus spoke clearly and often to His disciples about their need to remain. As recorded in John 15, Jesus cautioned His disciples to “remain” eight times in this single passage. Jesus knew the disciples would be tempted to leave the Way. He knew they would be distracted. He knew they would need the Holy Spirit to help them remain. So He sent them the Comforter.

As we remain near the cross, we remain close to those we are called to serve.