

Research Interview Assessment

With another meeting under my belt with Mr. Mike Rodriguez I have once again learned so much about myself, the Lord, and marketing. Having a mentor is something that everyone needs in their lives, and I am blessed to have Mike, as I know it was through God that our paths were able to cross. It amazes me how last year, I had the feeling that I wanted to do ISM, and now here I am, learning about myself, my future career, and the Lord with Mike. This was the Lord's plan for me.

The meeting began mostly talking about marketing and branding. How do companies market their products. Well, what I thought, and what I assume is a very common idea, is that you market through advertising. Billboards, signs along roads, ads on social media... but that is not the case at all. In fact, the most successful businesses allow the consumers to market their products for them. For instance, we can look at the company Starbucks. Everyone knows what they are, and everyone buys their coffee. Why? Starbucks has established themselves as a luxurious coffee brand, and have created an illusion to the consumer that if they are carrying one of their coffees around then they are a top tier human. Of course, Starbucks coffee is not even the greatest coffee of all time. But it is the experience that the company creates for the consumer when they carry the cup. This is why when walking around an airport, the Starbucks line is thirty people long, while the Dunkin line is only two or three. Starbucks has created a brand so powerful that when just seeing a single logo on the cup then all people know where that coffee came from. And every single person flashing that cup, is just a marketing robot for the Starbucks empire. This idea of branding and marketing through experience is very interesting to me and I look forward to discussing it with my Advanced Boys crew, to see if they have any ideas on how we could change our marketing strategy to fit that agenda.

Eventually we began, how we usually do, to discuss my relationship with God. He described a scene from the bible where a rich young man spoke with Jesus. He had asked how to get to heaven. Jesus began to explain that he must follow the commandments, to which the man responded that he already did that. So, Jesus then instructed that he give away his possessions to the poor and he would have room in heaven. The man heard this and walked away sorrowfully as he could not do that. This scene is a lesson that Mike wanted to teach me about success and wealth, as most people misunderstand the bible and Jesus' teachings about the wealthy. He said that the Bible does not say that the rich cannot get to heaven, or that you must give away everything, but that it is more difficult. This is because the wealthy struggle with having idols other than God, which is their money, property, and possessions. That is why it is so difficult for rich people to put all their heart to God. Mike said that there is a difference between having tools and idols. He explained that I can have a nice car and house, as those things are tools, but as soon as the car or house begins to own me, it becomes an idol.