

## Goals or Dreams; Fan or Follower

By Rev. Mike Palermo, February 1, 2017

Hank Haney, famous golf instructor and coach to such golf greats as Mark O'Meara and Tiger Woods directs his students wanting to improve their game must first set goals. He is also quick to remind them that "goals without a plan are only dreams." I suppose it is important to have dreams but at some point, dreams if not acted upon, become a distraction—even to the point of robbing us of seeing the things that we've been blessed with. We can become so enamored with the dream that we pay little attention to what it might take to make the dream become a reality. Let's not kid ourselves here, it is fun to dream. It's the making a dream become a reality that separates the average person from being an exceptional person.

Goals and dreams and the principle at play here is universal. Regardless of your religious beliefs, the language you speak, your educational level, or the neighborhood where you live, both goals and dreams are important but when our goals are void of a specific plan and we're left with only dreams, we can become disenchanted even isolated because we aren't taken seriously. That is especially true for the followers of Jesus Christ. We cannot afford to just talk about the ravages of a storm, or the social unrest associated with racism, or the sickness and hunger prevalent in our poorest neighborhoods. What the world must see is a community of faith engaged in acts of mercy for a hurting world that changes the circumstance, behavior, and condition of a hurting world that makes a difference. Only then can a hurting world hear the invitation to come and see—come and encounter the risen Christ!

Kyle Idleman, in his book *Not A Fan: Becoming A Completely Committed Follower of Jesus* distinguishes between being a committed follower of Jesus or being a fan of Jesus reminding his readers that a fan is simply an "enthusiastic admirer." Fans don't have to spend time in the weight room conditioning themselves. Fans don't have to study films on opposing teams to prepare for the big game. Fans don't risk career ending injuries. Fans show up because they want to enjoy the thrill of victory but are sorely disappointed when their team doesn't win.

As followers of Jesus, we are constantly bombarded by the distractions of life. Distractions delay or even prevent us from studying our Bibles; distractions take us away from worship. Distractions certainly keep us busy but while they may seem important at the moment, in the end when we see them for what they are, they're only a distraction taking us away from what is important—our relationship with God. Like the fan, we want the thrill, comfort, and confidence of being able to count on God and we'll get around to paying more attention to our relationship as soon as we can get "some of life" off our plate! Goals or dreams; fan or follower! What say you?