



# Links Players

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## Thinking God's Thoughts After Him

*My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. (Isaiah 55:8, 9)*

In 1986, as Jack was charging to his sixth triumph at Augusta, having just eagled the 15th hole and standing on the 16th tee, Jim Nantz asked Tom Weiskopf the following question: "Tom, you've known Jack Nicklaus most of your life. What do you think he's thinking right now?"

Without stammering, Tom responded with one of the all-time best comebacks in the history of golf commentary, "Jim, if I knew what he was thinking, I would have won this tournament three or four times myself."

It is easy to assume that the only thing that separates the greats of the game from the rest of us mortals is their superior ball striking. And, no doubt, that is the vast majority of it. But if we ask the best of the best what separated Jack from his peers, the answer will most likely be—"His mental approach."

We are right to admire Tiger's shot-making prowess. After all, when Roger Maltbie, who had a front-row seat for most of Tiger's career, was asked to compare Tiger's abilities with his fellow competitors, he replied, "It's just not a fair fight."

But ask others in the know what set Tiger apart from the rest of the field, most, if not all, will say, "His mental game." When others are "folding like paper napkins," Tiger had and has another mental gear or two.

Analogously, when the Spirit of God, through Isaiah, waxes prophetic about the lofty thoughts of God and the erroneous thoughts of Israel, he is not suggesting that this is the way it ought to be. He is imploring the people of God to change how they think by adopting God's ways and thoughts—especially since God had already revealed how he thinks in Torah (Genesis through Deuteronomy).

Granted, this is not to argue that God's thoughts and ways aren't higher than ours; they are, indeed, and infinitely so! However, Isaiah's point here is that Israel was, sadly, adopting and imitating the thoughts and lifestyles of the surrounding pagan nations. This Old Testament prophet chides the people of God for not following God's thoughts already revealed to them in Scripture.

At this point in history, Israel is absorbing and adopting views contrary to what they had been taught about God and his ways. Isaiah spends a great deal of time calling Israel to repentance and revealing to them

that God is merciful and ready to forgive sins. He is eager to restore the fractured relationship caused by Israel's covenant unfaithfulness.

Sadly, there is an enormous gap between how God thinks about himself, his world, his people, and the future and how his people think about these issues. Isaiah implores backslidden people, then and now, to return to God with all their hearts and minds by understanding God as he has made himself known, not as we imagine him to be.

This is why the apostle Paul exhorts us to be transformed by renewing our minds in his epistle to the church in Rome. (Romans 12:1-2). Like Isaiah, Paul encourages the people of God to learn to "think God's thoughts after him."

Both Isaiah and Paul are imploring us to saturate our thought life in the thoughts of God, found exclusively in Scripture. Learning to change our thinking takes time, effort, and patience. The payoff is unimaginably great, especially when we discover the lavish love of Christ revealed toward us.

**Prayer: Jesus, show us those places where we have adopted thoughts contrary to yours. Reorient our thought life to reflect yours in every area of our lives.**

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