



# Links Players

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## Gospel Meditation

*In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. Luke 1:26-31 ESV*

The opportunity to play with Tiger Woods is a coveted round of golf. How about a two-hour lunch with him? That is what a pro-am group experienced at the 2023 Hero's World Championship. The best of both options: nine holes of golf and a two-hour lunch. They not only grew in their knowledge of Tiger; they experienced Tiger.

The world knows a lot about Tiger – the good and the bad. We make judgements and adorations. But the hard truth is, unless you have spent time with Tiger, you only know about him, you don't know him.

For many years, I knew about the four themes of Advent, but Christmas morning was my sole focus. My preoccupation with what we were celebrating, Jesus' birth, sidelined me from experiencing Jesus.

My knowledge of Advent as a season of waiting and anticipation has grown, but I confess, I read from an Advent devotional and move on feeling good about myself because I checked it off the list.

Too often I settle for knowing about God and call it a personal relationship. But God...keeps showing me he desires so much more. He wants a deep, intimate relationship and invites us to move beyond "objective information to personal knowing," as David G. Brenner writes in *The Gift of Being Yourself*.

We need both knowledge of God and to experience God. If Jesus and the Father God are one (John 10:30), one option to move beyond knowing about God to experiencing intimacy with him, is to meet Jesus by "means of Spirit-guided meditation on the Gospels," says Brenner. Brenner's recommendation is not more Bible study (we need this too), but rather "allowing the Spirit of God to help you imaginatively enter an event in the life of Christ as presented in the Gospels."

Here's the invitation for a lunch date with Jesus this Advent season. Quiet yourself in God's presence. Ask God to make his Scriptures his Word to you. Pray for an imaginative encounter with Jesus. Read a passage in the Christmas narrative in the Gospels out loud several times. Then allow yourself to daydream about the story. Watch, listen, and stay attentive. Don't analyze or learn lessons

from it. Just be present to Jesus and to your own reactions. (Paraphrased from The Gift of Being Yourself).

Spend time with Jesus through Gospel meditation this Advent season. Open your imagination and experience Immanuel – God with us!

**Prayer: Lord, thank you for your written Word. Draw me into an experience with the Christmas story in the Gospels today.**

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Tracy Hanson

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