

Session 6 Take-Home: Grown in Grace

What We Found

God's goal is not acquitted defendants but adopted children who share his life: "partakers of the divine nature" (2 Pet 1:4). By the Spirit we cry "Abba! Father!" as real sons and daughters, "heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ" (Rom 8:14-17). John will not let us deflate it: "See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; **and so we are**" (1 Jn 3:1). Hosea paints the family photo: a Father who called his son out of Egypt and taught him to walk (Hos 11:1-4). "Grace is a participation in the life of God" (CCC 1997).

We found the vine's backstory: Israel was the vine God brought **out of Egypt** (Ps 80:8), tended completely, and it yielded wild grapes (Isa 5:1-7). So "I am the **true** vine" (Jn 15:1) is an enormous claim: Jesus is in himself the Israel that finally bears fruit, and we are branches with one job: "Abide in me... apart from me you can do nothing" (Jn 15:4-5). The Father **prunes** every fruitful branch, "that it may bear more fruit" (15:2): pruning is tending, not punishment. And abiding is concrete: "If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love... that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full" (15:10-11).

Sanctification is not extra credit: "This is the will of God, your sanctification" (1 Thess 4:3); "strive... for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord" (Heb 12:14). We are being "changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another" (2 Cor 3:18). Holiness is not the price of the Father's love; it is what the Father's love does to you if you stay in the sun.

Voices of the Church

VOICE OF THE CHURCH · St. Athanasius of Alexandria

On the Incarnation, ch. 54 (4th century)

"For the Son of God became man so that we might become God." The Catechism quotes the sentence at CCC 460. Not a blurring of the Creator-creature line the champion of Nicaea spent his life defending: it means what 2 Peter 1:4 means, a real share, by grace, in the divine life.

VOICE OF THE CHURCH · St. Francis de Sales

Introduction to the Devout Life (1609)

Devotion is genuine holiness fitted to every state of life: the soldier, the tradesman, the married woman are each called to a devotion proper to their calling, and a devotion that impedes the duties of one's vocation is not true devotion (Introduction to the Devout Life, Part I). The vine grows where it is planted.

VOICE OF THE CHURCH · St. Carlo Acutis

Attributed sayings (d. 2006; canonized 2025)

The Church's first millennial saint is widely remembered for the saying attributed to him: "All of us are born originals, but many of us die as photocopies." God is not mass-producing acquittals; he is growing originals, each conformed to Christ in a way no other soul will repeat.

Live It This Week

Abide on schedule. Ten minutes daily in Jesus's company, John 15 open, no agenda. Branches do their growing attached.

Name the pruning. Write down the one you identified in the session, and pray for the grace to stop fighting the shears.

Watch for actual graces. Each evening, name one help God supplied that day: the nudge, the strength, the clarity. Gratitude sharpens the eye.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSE

"See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are."

1 John 3:1a (RSV2CE)

Before next session: read Psalm 95, slowly.

Catechism of the Catholic Church: 460, 1997, 1999, 2000