

A romantic couple is shown from behind, embracing in a field of tall grass at sunset. The woman has long, wavy blonde hair and is wearing a white top. The man is wearing a white shirt. The background is a warm, golden glow from the setting sun. The overall mood is peaceful and intimate.

THE CHOICE *Wine*

7 STEPS TO A SUPERABUNDANT MARRIAGE

Live the love.

It's real.

A PROGRAM FOR COUPLES

CONTENT

Integrating the latest findings from modern science with the timeless teaching of the faith and the wisdom of the saints, *The Choice Wine: 7 Steps to a Superabundant Marriage* places authentic marital happiness within every couple's reach. By opening to couples the interior life of the Holy Family at Nazareth, *The Choice Wine* helps couples to experience a foretaste of Paradise.

"The future of the world and of the Church passes through the family."

— POPE ST. JOHN PAUL II,
FAMILIARIS CONSORTIO, #75

The 7 Steps to a Superabundant Marriage are:

- Honor your wedding vows.
- Use money for other people.
- Give God some of your time.
- Set your mind on the things above.
- Find God in yourself.
- Find God in other people.
- Make it easy to be good and hard to be bad.

STRUCTURE

The Choice Wine: 7 Steps to a Superabundant Marriage is a nine week, interactive, multimedia program specifically designed for couples. The timing can be flexible, though it is ideally suited to be offered during the Fall in the nine weeks preceding Thanksgiving and again during the Spring, coinciding with Lent. The couples meet once per week for approximately 1.5 to 2 hours and experience a schedule similar to the following:

6:30pm – Doors open for refreshments

6:50pm – Welcome and opening prayer by priest or facilitator

6:55pm – DVD presentation

7:55pm – Small group discussion

8:15pm – Closing prayer and dismissal by priest or facilitator

Concluding the program with a special meal or banquet and a ceremony for couples to renew their wedding vows is strongly recommended.

COST

Paradus Dei, a lay ministry in the Catholic Church and an IRS 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation, offers program materials for *The Choice Wine: 7 Steps to a Superabundant Marriage* to parishes free of charge. Parishes are responsible for the promotional costs of the program, meeting space and ensuring that adequate A/V equipment is available.

Participating couples attend the program free of charge and may access materials via the *The Choice Wine* website. An accompanying book is available for parishes to purchase in bulk at a discount rate. Parishes offset or cover the cost of meals or refreshments by seeking suggested donations from participating couples.

Paradus Dei receives the funding for *The Choice Wine* through donations offered by couples participating in the program as well as individuals and couples across the country who are dedicated to strengthening marriage and family life.

"[Christ] confers upon Christian married couples a special mission as apostles, sending them as workers into His vineyard, and, in a very special way, into this field of the family."

— POPE ST. JOHN PAUL II,
FAMILIARIS CONSORTIO, #71

"Today, there are those who say that marriage is out of fashion...I ask you... to be revolutionaries...to rebel against this culture that sees everything as temporary and that ultimately believes... you are incapable of true love."

— POPE FRANCIS, WORLD YOUTH DAY,
MEETING WITH VOLUNTEERS,
JULY 28, 2013.

"We are called to acknowledge how beautiful, true and good it is to start a family, to be a family today; and how indispensable the family is for the life of the world and for the future of humanity."

— POPE FRANCIS, ADDRESS TO THE
EXTRAORDINARY CONSISTORY
FEBRUARY 20, 2014

Tasting the Choice Wine: Life within the Holy Family

“Nazareth is a kind of school where we may begin to discover what Christ’s life was like and even to understand his Gospel... Here everything speaks to us, everything has meaning ... How I would like to return to my childhood and attend the simple yet profound school that is Nazareth!”

– BLESSED POPE PAUL VI, ADDRESS AT THE BASILICA OF THE ANNUNCIATION,
NAZARETH, ISRAEL, JANUARY 5, 1964

For centuries, holy men and women have sought to understand the life that the Holy Family lived within their modest home in Nazareth. Many have come to see it as a little slice of heaven on earth: The Holy Family “was a heaven, a paradise on earth, endless delights in this place of grief; it was a glory already begun in the...lowliness of their life” (*Monsignor Jean Jacques Olier, Founder of the Society of Saint Sulpice*).

Through the intercession of Our Lady, Christ opened the superabundant joy of the Holy Family to all couples. “When the wine failed, the mother of Jesus said to him, ‘They have no wine’... Jesus said to the servants, ‘Fill the jars with water.’ And they filled them up to the brim... When the steward of the feast tasted the water now become wine... [he] called the bridegroom and said to him... ‘you have kept the good wine until now’” (*John 2:1-11*). Jesus transformed approximately 150 gallons of water into choice wine. God does not want our marriages to simply survive. He wants them to be filled with superabundant joy, the joy he experienced inside the home at Nazareth.

The goal of *The Choice Wine: 7 Steps to a Superabundant Marriage* is to enter into the interior life of the Holy Family at Nazareth and experience their superabundant joy. The seven steps provide a pathway to help couples do just that.

The Holy Family, the first Christian family, stands at the intersection of the Old and New Testaments and lived in a devoutly Jewish home at Nazareth. A devoutly Jewish home is defined by three essential traits:

- Sexual purity according to the Niddah Laws (*Cf. Leviticus 15:19ff*).
- Separation of the Challah (dough) as an offering for the Temple (*Cf. Numbers 15:20*).
- The Nerot Laws regarding the lighting of the candles for the Sabbath (*Cf. Exodus 20:8*).

Into this devoutly Jewish home, God sent his angel with a message. Ultimately, it was a message about God’s presence in their home.

- To Mary it was revealed that God would dwell within her: “the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God” (*Luke 1:35*).
- To St. Joseph it was revealed that he would find God inside of Mary: “That which is conceived in Mary is of the Holy Spirit” (*Matthew 1:20*).

Finally, the Holy Family is born when St. Joseph chooses the pathway of mercy and receives Mary into his home.



The Choice Wine: 7 Steps to a Superabundant Marriage

SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

SESSION 1:

The Choice Wine

In the Gospel of St. John, Jesus begins his public ministry with the miracle at the Wedding Feast of Cana where he transforms approximately 150 gallons of water into superabundant, choice wine. God wishes our lives to be superabundant, which is related to marriage in a special way. Married individuals are significantly happier, healthier and wealthier than other individuals. Unfortunately, 40 percent of marriages in the United States will end in divorce with very real consequences for the couple, their children and greater society. The first session introduces *7 Steps to a Superabundant Marriage*. The first three steps help to “divorce proof” a marriage by radically lowering the probability of divorce, while the remaining steps help couples to experience true superabundance in their marriages.

SESSION 2:

Step 1: Honor your Wedding Vows

Studies indicate that infidelity is the surest route to a divorce, increasing the probability of divorce by more than 300 percent. Furthermore, neurological studies indicate that the brain processes pornography as if it were a real sexual encounter. As such, viewing pornography is a type of virtual sexual infidelity. It plunges the person into isolation and triples the probability of divorce. The first step calls spouses to honor their wedding vows. However, this fidelity goes well beyond sexual exclusivity. It goes all the way to a willingness to offer your life for the beloved. The session ends with two very moving stories of heroic love.

SESSION 3:

Step 2: Use Money for Others

Historically, money has been the most common source of tension between spouses. Studies indicate that approximately one fourth of all individuals experience financial stress in a given year. Financial stress is the most significant stress for newlywed couples. Frequently hidden behind these statistics is mindset that views money as “all about me.” Nonetheless, neurological studies indicate that the brain actually receives joy from using money for the benefit of others. The second step challenges couples to see their financial resources as a tool entrusted to them for the good of others. It includes beautiful stories of those who have lived this generosity incredibly well.

SESSION 4:

Step 3: Give God Some of Your Time

Numerous studies indicate that weekly church attendance lowers the probability of divorce. Individuals who never attend church are almost two and a half times more likely to be divorced than those who attend church every week. Hidden behind these statistics is a profound reality. Attending church weekly changes the behaviors that lead to divorce. Unfortunately, only approximately 25 percent of Catholics attend Mass weekly and spend less than 10 minutes a day in prayer. The third step challenges individuals to give ample time to God and provides a roadmap to building a rigorous, authentic prayer life. It includes two amazing stories about the transformation God can work in a soul.

SESSION 5:

Step 4: Set Your Mind on the Things Above

We live in a culture where scientific discoveries are accepted as truth and religious thought is met with skepticism. Nonetheless, the Church has always proclaimed, “Faith and reason are like two wings on which the human spirit rises to the contemplation of truth” (*Pope John Paul II, Fides et Ratio, Prologue*). Integrating the latest findings of modern science with the timeless teaching of the Church on three significant moments—the creation of the universe, the creation of the human person and the formation of the spousal bond—the fourth step opens the mind to the supernatural hidden just beyond the natural. It opens the mind to an encounter with God.

SESSION 6:

Step 5: Find God in Yourself

At the Last Supper, Christ made an astounding promise, “We will come to him and make our home with him” (*John 14:23*). God promised to dwell in man. Catholics find a profound fulfillment of this promise in the Eucharist. The fifth step challenges people to become ever more Eucharistically centered. It centers the Church’s teaching on the Eucharist in the words of Christ and the earliest Church Fathers while providing a beautiful testament to this reality in the Eucharistic Miracle of Lanciano. It provides a pathway for the individual to extend this Eucharistic moment to a life of ongoing intimacy with Christ and provides a beautiful story about Christ’s ability to act in and through the human person.

SESSION 7:

Step 6: Find God in Other People

Christ dwells in the people we encounter. “As you did it to one of the least of my brethren, you did it to me” (*Matthew 25:40*). Mother Teresa manifested to the world the beauty of embracing those words. Christ also promised to dwell in the midst of the spousal union, “Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them” (*Matthew 18:20*). Since Catholic spouses seal their marriages in the name of the Blessed Trinity, God so profoundly dwells in the spousal union that it is a sacrament. The sixth step challenges spouses to find God in and through each other in a unique way and includes a very touching story of a couple who did so.

SESSION 8:

Step 7: Make it Easy to be Good and Hard to be Bad

Christ called his disciples to a very demanding standard, “Be merciful just as your Father in heaven is merciful” (*Luke 6:36*). This call is extended to spouses in a very special way: “Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the Church and gave himself up for her” (*Ephesians 5:25*). The need to practice and receive mercy is profoundly experienced within the spousal union. God wired the human brain so that it is driven to be merciful and compassionate. The seventh step challenges spouses to practice a mercy so superabundant that it actually envelops the soul to help to prevent it from falling. Pope John Paul II stated that it was precisely this superabundant mercy that would lead us through the Third Millennium.

SESSION 9:

A Foretaste of Paradise

The impact of living the *7 Steps to a Superabundant Marriage* is profound. Data from the General Social Survey indicate that they reduce the probability of divorce to essentially zero and increase the probability of a very happy marriage to almost 4 out of 5. Hidden behind these statistics is the mystery of the Holy Family. The seven steps simply enunciate in modern terms the life that the Holy Family lived inside the home at Nazareth. These steps not only help to bring us peace and happiness on earth, but also help to prepare us for eternal life in heaven. The session concludes with a call to live the beautiful vision of marriage and a heart-moving story of a couple who “loved to the end.”

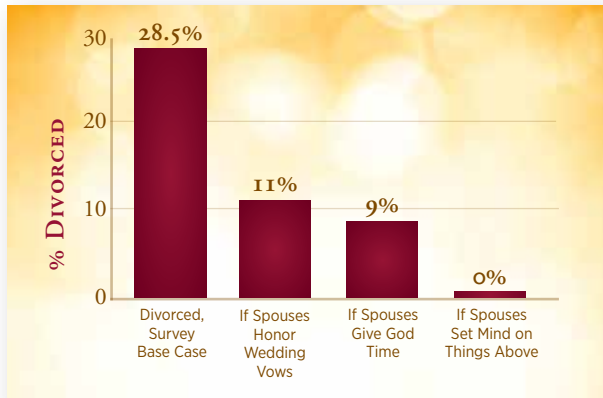
“Matrimony is a Gospel in itself”

— POPE BENEDICT XVI, OCTOBER 7, 2012

RESULTS

THE PATHWAY TO SUPERABUNDANCE

Independent research indicates that the steps outlined in *7 Steps to a Superabundant Marriage* have the potential to not only “divorce proof” marriages, but also set them on the pathway to true superabundance. By directly addressing the major issues causing tension in marriage—from sexual infidelity to finances to substance abuse to problematic behaviors—the seven steps help couples avoid the major issues leading down the pathway to divorce. Indeed, research indicates that living these seven steps reduces the probability of divorce to essentially zero.



DIVORCE-PROOFING MARRIAGE

THE SEVEN STEPS HELP COUPLES REDUCE THEIR PROBABILITY OF DIVORCE FROM 28.5% TO ESSENTIALLY ZERO.

The steps outlined in *7 Steps to a Superabundant Marriage* opens a vision to the couple that stretches from this world to the next. God is profoundly present in marriage and family life. An encounter with him leads to a life of true superabundance. Of couples living the seven steps, 78% are very happily married, 22% are happily married and 0% are unhappily married.

AN ENGAGING EXPERIENCE

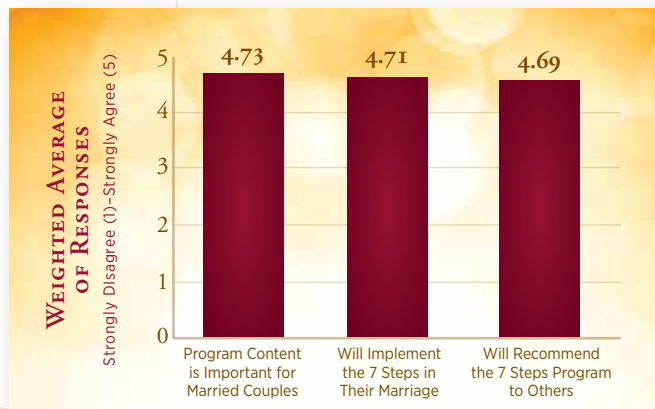
The Choice Wine: 7 Steps to a Superabundant Marriage engages the modern audience with highly effective content presented through unsurpassed production quality.

- Interviews and stories ranging from a man who spent “90 Minutes in Heaven” to an ex-Mafia enforcer move the heart and help transform lives.
- Miracles of Faith, from a 900 year-old Eucharistic miracle to a Nobel Laureate who witnessed two instantaneous miracles, challenge our faith.
- Network caliber animations and professionally produced infographics make the findings of modern science accessible to popular audiences.

By experiencing *The Choice Wine: 7 Steps to a Superabundant Marriage*, couples are moved to implement the 7 Steps in their own marriage and bring it to other couples, especially newlywed and engaged couples.

SURVEY OF THE CHOICE WINE PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

MOST COUPLES FIND THE CHOICE WINE RELEVANT TO THEIR OWN MARRIAGE, WILL IMPLEMENT THE SEVEN STEPS AND RECOMMEND THE PROGRAM TO OTHERS.



STEVE BOLLMAN

FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT, PARADISUS DEI

DEVELOPER AND PRESENTER, THE CHOICE WINE

During the Great Jubilee, Steve Bollman experienced a personal call to found a ministry dedicated to the renewal of marriage and family life. In 2002, Steve set aside his professional interests to answer that call, founding Paradisus Dei.

Through Paradisus Dei, Steve launched the That Man is You! men’s program in 2004, began development of *Hope Undimmed* as part of the Life as Epic ministry to youth/young adults in 2012, and in 2014 began development of *The Choice Wine: 7 Steps to a Superabundant Marriage*. These programs integrate the teachings of faith, the findings of modern science and the wisdom of the ages while meeting individuals where they are—all hallmarks of Paradisus Dei programming.

Steve’s writings have appeared in *The National Catholic Register*, *Inside the Vatican* and *The Catholic Answers*. He lives with his wife and daughters in Houston, Texas.

Seven Steps to Bringing The Choice Wine to Your Parish:

1 CONTACT us!

Call us at 281-974-3541 or email us at
thechoicewine@paradisusdei.org

2 OBTAIN Pastor approval

3 FORM a Core Team/Host Couple

4 COMPLETE Core Team Training/Host Couple

5 ORDER The Choice Wine program materials

6 RUN The Choice Wine promotional program

7 LAUNCH The Choice Wine



www.thechoicewine.org

thechoicewine@paradisusdei.org | 281-974-3541

A PROGRAM OF [PARADISUS DEI](http://www.paradisusdei.org)

ABOUT PARADISUS DEI

Founded in 2001, Paradisus Dei helps families discover the superabundance of God within marriage and family life. Current programming serves couples, men and youth in 41 states and five countries.

Integrating the teachings of the faith with findings of modern science and the wisdom of the saints, these programs have been independently verified to be profoundly life transforming. Our goal is to encounter people wherever they are on their spiritual journey and help take them further. Paradisus Dei is an independent, lay Catholic ministry dedicated to marriage and family life. For more information, please visit www.paradisusdei.org.