

4BetterOr4Worse Ministry

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Ministry Update Letter

May 11, 2009

So, the web site is up and men are being mentored. What now?

It seems like all I've been talking about for the last two months is the new web site. Now that it's done, we can take a breath. Still, we've seen the need for more work to be done. This letter takes a look at the needs still to be met in the Christian marriage community.

Two of the three parts of the core ministry are in place. One-on-one mentoring of men in stressed out relationships is well underway. Seven men are being mentored as of May 1, 2009. In addition, the 4BetterOr4Worse Community is up and running on the Internet and will support mentoring by providing community and resources for the mentoring process. The third part of the core ministry, public speaking, is still under development.

Public Speaking and Teaching

In the coming months, I'll be working on the third piece of the ministry puzzle – public speaking. Speaking to churches and men's groups makes use of the opportunity to teach married men about God's hope for their relationship with Him and His intentions for their relationships with their wives. It also provides an opportunity to promote mentoring. I look forward to doing God's work in these two areas. The speaking material is equally applicable to wives *and* husbands. Yet, the heart of this ministry is to yield a husband who is a strong leader with a heart for God and his wife and family.

At the root of the speaking material is The Basics of Grace. This is condensed from a larger program used by the Life Center in Grand Rapids, MI. It serves to re-affirm salvation through grace by the work of the cross and focuses the view of his marriage through the lens of grace, forgiveness and the power of the Holy Spirit. Without this core teaching, the messages we bring on a variety of marriage issues would be far less effective.

The extensions of this core teaching are practical, biblical answers to a variety of issues that face Christian married men. At the time of this writing, presentations are complete on the following subjects:

1. Sketch – A Model for Christian Marriage (Based on Ecclesiastes 4:12)
2. Setting Your Mind (Based on Colossians 3:2)
3. Temptations (Based on Matthew 4)
4. Pornography (Supported by/for *Roots*, a local pornography accountability group)

While these presentations are being offered as speaking material, they will also be offered as podcasts at the 4BetterOr4Worse Community on the web. There are more presentations under development and God is continually providing inspiration and opportunity for more teachings.

Mentoring Network

Hand-in-hand with the promotion of mentoring is the creation and development of a viable mentoring network. Right now, the demand on this ministry for mentoring has nearly reached its maximum capacity. The greatest need is to strengthen a man's relationship with God – and then his relationship with his wife. As Jesus said in John chapter 4, *"I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest."* The reality is that popular culture has infiltrated Christian marriages and the damage is heavy. There is a huge amount of work to be done and not many men to do the work.

However, it is more difficult to build a network of men than you might think and this is not something 4BetterOr4Worse takes lightly. There are three areas of concern that we're wrestling with - screening, training and a supply of mentors. It is very important that we find men who are solid in the faith and, to that end, we cannot ignore the experiences of a man that has brought him into his strong relationship with God. We want our mentors to be of the strongest character and faith, while realizing that we are all flawed human beings. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to be a mentor. However, there are certain things that we want our mentors to know and certain things we will expect from them. Lastly, there is the question of where these men will come from. God knows the need for this work and my prayer is that He will provide these men in His time.

Leadership Training

In the months that I've been developing the core ministry, I've seen need to educate pastors and church leaders in how to manage marriages in crisis. I would like to see this ministry develop a set of tools for training pastors and lay leaders to deliver the most effective management of marital and family crisis. This training would focus on, but not be limited to, adultery, substance abuse, other addictions (pornography, gambling, etc), personal/family finance, post abortive syndrome, arrest/incarceration and crises involving other family members.

4BetterOr4Worse would be a ministry partner to area pastors and lay leaders as we teach them crisis management. Our role would be to broker recovery resources between church leaders and ministry resources while providing mentoring via our mentor network. This way, church leaders can be confident that they are providing the most effective crisis management to their parishioners while maintaining their strong foundation in faith, with high expectations for successful recovery.

Our intent would *not* be to replace existing church programs in an attempt to outsource their ministries, but instead, provide a complement of skills and resources that will strengthen each individual church's ministry to its congregation and community.

Fall 2009 Event on Mental Illness

4BetterOr4Worse is engaged in discussions with a church on the southwest side of Grand Rapids, Michigan regarding an event that addresses marriages and families that struggle with mental illness. This comes from a May 2009 article in The Banner Magazine (the publication of the Christian Reformed Church) entitled Light for a Dark Path by Pastor Tony Meyer.

Details of this event have yet to take shape. However, our desire is to 1) give families information and resources to help them understand and successfully manage mental illness in their families and marriages and 2) educate church leadership in how to recognize families struggling with mental illness and how to appropriately support them without shame or stigma. 4BetterOr4Worse Ministry will co-sponsor this event, which will be held on two dates – one for the north side of Grand Rapids and one for the South side.

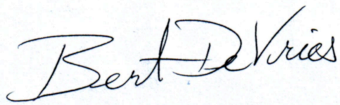
Fundraising

Tawney and Company was kind enough to front the money for the incorporation of 4BetterOr4Worse Ministry to set up the launch of the web community. Now that this is complete, we need to turn an eye toward making good on the \$650 cost of the LLC Filing. Please prayerfully consider a donation in any amount. You can donate using the **Donate** button on the web community.

Thank You

Your support and prayers mean more to the 4BetterOr4Worse Ministry and me than I can express. Please continue to pray for this ministry as we continue to reach our objective of supporting men who stood in front of God and everyone and said “I Do”.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bert DeVries". The signature is written in black ink on a light-colored background.

Bert DeVries – Ministry Founder