



WEEKLY
Summary

Week Twelve (Mid-course) Summary:

Welcome back! So glad you are with us!!!! As we start afresh this new year, let's spend a little time reviewing what we discovered about ourselves as women. Basically, we've asked and answered two questions: "What shaped us?" and "What shape are we in?"

We started with the idea that the core issue for us as women is *Identity*. Though the issue of *Equality* seems to be the central issue for women and those concerns are valid and important, *who we are created to BE* rather than *what we can DO* is even more foundational, the answer giving us purpose and meaning in life. We suggested a fundamental premise: God had a plan in mind when he created men and women—a purpose and design for masculinity and femininity. God intends women and men to work together to "love and lead Creation" on His behalf. And, He has shaped us to complement each other in that task. Men have strengths where women are weak, and *women* have strengths where *men* are weak. Together, we have all the strengths needed to accomplish God's purpose for us. It is a beautiful design.

However, we suggested that this original design has been distorted, reshaped. Therefore, we spent several weeks answering the first question "What shaped us?" by examining the various forces that have molded our understanding of our purpose and identity as women. We saw that there is an Enemy whose goal is to ruin God's design and whose strategy to accomplish this goal (for women) is to get us to believe the wrong things. A number of influences have served as tools in this process of confusing our thinking, including our families of origin, the media, and popular philosophies such as radical feminism. But, of all the factors that negatively marred God's design, the most potent is the depravity of our own hearts. Humanity is bent away from God's pattern for us, and we have sinful tendencies that we repeat in our lives again and again.

Finally, we spent a few weeks answering our second question "What shape are we in?" In other words, what is our current situation as a result of all the factors that have shaped and influenced us? We suggested that the bible surfaces particular "battlefields" (struggles) that are uniquely difficult for men and battlefields that are uniquely challenging for women. For men, those battlefields are:

1. The tendency to avoid domestic responsibility.
2. The tendency to rule wrongly over women and children.
3. The tendency to get lost in careers and lose sight of their transcendent cause.

We women struggle in different ways:

1. We tend to place a higher emphasis on external beauty and ignore the need for internal beauty.
2. We tend to trade nurture for control.
3. We tend to set our direction based on our emotions and downplay the priority of truth.

That's the shape we are in. It may not be a pretty picture, but it's a valuable insight. We spent an entire semester looking at the "Before" picture of the "inner makeover" God wants to do in our lives. Now we will shift and try to answer these two questions: "What's God's Design for our Shape?" and "How do we Reshape our Lives?" Get ready for the Master Artist to sink his hands deeply into the clay of our lives, if we let Him.

