

Session 4: Mixed Messages

7 Mixed Messages that Confuse:

- 1) A storybook romance exists only in fairy tales, but if you don't have one, your love life is second-rate.

- 2) A real woman doesn't need a man; but without a man, you're not a real woman.

- 3) Hot-looking women are dumb, but smart women are hot-looking.

- 4) Gender differences are unhelpful social constructs that limit our personal development, but "Girl Power" frees us to reach our full potential.

- 5) Money can't buy me happiness, but it can buy me all the things that will make me happy.

- 6) Above all, be yourself, but conform to all the latest fashions and cultural images.

- 7) A woman's greatest contribution is as a wife and mother, but her greatest achievement is a successful career.

BIBLICAL WOMANHOOD

Discussion Questions:

1. From our Reflection Assignment last week: How are you different from the men with whom you live and work? How can these differences contribute to your God-intended purpose? How can you complement or “fill their gaps?”
2. Consider the seven examples of mixed messages described today. Which of them do you find yourself caught up in? Explain.
3. What truth could you adopt in place of that confusing mixed message? Where does that truth come from?
4. What difference would it make in your life if you could change your thinking in this area?
5. What specifically can you do to begin making real changes in your thinking?

Reflection Assignment:

Which of those Mixed Messages have affected *you*? What is the evidence of that in your life? Identify one step you can take this week to begin reshaping your thinking.

Passage to Ponder this week... Romans 12:2

Week Four Summary:

The Bible teaches that what we think and believe is vitally important because our decisions and actions are governed by what is “in the heart.” Interestingly, regardless of where they stand on the validity of the Bible, philosophers seem to agree. Rene Descartes said, “I Think, therefore I am.” Ralph Waldo Emerson said, “Sow a thought and you reap an action . . .” And, according to Thomas Carlyle, “Thought is the parent of the deed.”

It seems obvious that confused thinking will result in behavior that’s inconsistent and self-defeating. What’s not so obvious is that often that’s exactly our condition. We receive “messages” from our friends, family, or culture and adopt them into our thinking, never realizing they contradict each other. As a result, we make decisions that actually work against each other, and our relationships, emotions, or decisions reflect the inner turmoil that comes from believing mixed messages. Consider these Mixed Messages that our culture sends about being a woman:

- A story-book Romance exists only in fairy tales, but if you don’t have one, your love-life is second rate.
- A real woman doesn’t need a man, but without a man you’re not a real woman.
- Hot-looking women are dumb, but smart women are hot-looking.
- Gender differences are unhelpful social constructs that limit our personal development, but “Girl Power” frees us to reach our full potential.
- Money can’t buy happiness, but it can buy all the things that will make me happy.
- Above all, be yourself, but conform to all the latest fashions and trends.
- A woman’s greatest contribution is as a wife and mother, but her greatest achievement is to reach her full career potential.

Most of us will recognize that we’ve been the recipients of these messages and that our thinking, our choices, and our lives have been affected.