

5 HURTFUL PHRASES TO REMOVE FROM YOUR MARRIAGE VOCABULARY

<https://fiercemarriage.com/5-hurtful-phrases-remove-marriage-vocabulary>

[00:00:00] **Selena** So, we've been talking about habits and rhythms and all kinds of things around cultivating good soil in your marriage, and I feel like this is a real tangible episode that we're calling "5 Hurtful Phrases to Remove from Your Marriage."

So, these are basically weeds, I would say, that are in the soil of your marriage, and they're all rooted in the Bible. We have verses that have illuminated these truths, and we're excited to dive into each of these with you!"

Ryan And I kind of see these phrases as almost like red flags, right?

Selena Mm-hm.

[00:00:58] <Intro Sequence>

[00:01:28] **Selena** Alright. So, we are getting into the five phrases to get rid of in your marriage.

Ryan Nailed it! [*Both laugh*]

Selena To get rid of your marriage.

Ryan Nailed it. Five phrases to rid yourself of marriage. [*Selena laughing*] Here it is.

Selena This is the wrong podcast.

Ryan Like Harry Potter spells. Just "Poof!" It's gone. [*Both laughing*]

Selena Anyways. Yeah, we're going to get into those in a few minutes. But we've also got a question about a previous episode, A Couple's Conversation Challenge, and before we go there, I'm going to let you do the housekeeping, 'cause this is the housekeeping that you do well.

Ryan Yep. Really quickly. If you've gotten something out of this podcast, we would be honored and just so thankful if you would leave a rating and a review in whatever podcast app you use. It helps us and it helps others.

Secondly, if you want to lock arms with us, we would be honored if you would pray about maybe supporting us via our website: patreon.com/fiercemarriage. It's not our website, but it's our page on that website. It's patreon.com/fiercemarriage. There's links in the show notes. That's just a place where we can connect directly with listeners to keep this podcast sustainable. We're just so thankful for all our amazing patrons that are there right now, and we're trying to get to – we have about 210-215; we're trying to get 250 so we can start doing transcriptions, which cost money to have those done.

Selena Awesome.

Ryan That would be awesome for people that can't listen or just prefer to read. So, help us out if you feel led, but pray about it first.

Thirdly, if you have any questions, go to fiercemarriage.com/podcast. There are various ways to ask questions there. You can leave a note online or you can call or text this number: (971) 333-1120. Call or text that, just don't do it while you're driving folks.

Selena Be smart, folks.

Ryan Be smart about it.

Selena Be smart.

So, last week we kind of talked about habits and we're kind of piggybacking off of that a little bit and getting to the very tangible ways of how we can communicate better because communication is a habit, right?

Ryan Can I say that I've learned, though, before—

Selena How to be the best communicator ever?

Ryan No, about habits.

Selena Oh, that's me! That's me.

Ryan 'Cause last week I was a hot mess. I'm still a hot mess in a lot of ways. So, I'm just a big beautiful mess! [*Selena laughs*]

Selena That's Ryan's favorite.

Ryan Just a beautiful messy mess.

Selena Ryan's favorite. [*Ryan laughs*]

Ryan Oh, got to love that! Anyway, I've started counting calories.

Selena "Good for you!" says the pregnant lady. [*Both laugh*]

Ryan "Go you!" Anyway.

Selena Nah, I'm encouraging.

Ryan I've been eating [*Selena snickers*] way better. And you know what, this app noticing positive patterns in my life. [*Selena laughs*]

Selena Good! Is that encouraging to you?

Ryan It says, “When you eat eggs in the morning, you don’t eat as much terrible food the rest of the day.” [*Selena laughs*] Stuff like that!

Selena Imagine that protein.

Ryan Yeah! Yeah.

Selena Anyway.

Ryan So that’s been really fun!

Selena So, Ryan is winning on the caloric level. [*Selena laughs*]

Ryan Hashtag winning! [*Selena laughs more*] I’ve lost two pounds! Boom! Except for I probably gained it back last night because I had a big ‘ole cheeseburger. [*Both laugh*] Got to live your life! Got to live your life.

Selena Moderation. Moderation and habits, right? So—

Ryan It was so good!

Selena I’m glad it was good.

Ryan It was so good! Yeah. [*Selena laughs again*] But I didn’t have french fries. I had the salad instead. So, you know...”

Selena Good for you! [*Both laugh*] I had sweet potato fries, so, in yo’ face!

Ryan That, and I’ve been to the gym twice, so I’m just going to say—

Selena Okay, enough about your life! [*Selena laughs*]

Ryan “No one cares about you! Just, quiet!” Anyway.

Selena In the words of Mister Stein, “I don’t need your life story. M’kay?” [*Ryan chuckles*]

Ryan Hello! Hello.

Selena Don’t need your life story.

[00:05:01] **Ryan** Okay, so you obviously—

Selena I’m part of your life.

Ryan Want to talk about these phrases, [*Selena laughs*] so just— You know what? I'm going to go. I'm going to go. You just have fun. See ya!

Selena Ah! Finally. No. [*Both laugh*]

So, we're going to talk about how to basically communicate better. [*Both laugh*] 'Cause in our 15+ years of marriage, it's taught us that it's not a matter of if we disagree but when we disagree and how we handle it.

Ryan Yeah.

Selena Um, you know gotquestions.org is one of our favorite websites. Gosh. Type in any biblical question and it will just blow your mind. We're—

Ryan Yeah, it's all very grounded in God's word, which is what's so important. Yeah.

Selena Yes! And a quote; I just want to open up here because although we're talking about getting rid of phrases, we're really talking about the power of our words, right? And our marriage and the quote here he writes is just, "Words do more than convey information. The power of our words can actually destroy one's spirit, even stir up hatred and violence. They not only exacerbate wounds but inflict them directly. Of all the creatures on this planet, only man has the ability to communicate through the spoken word. The power to use his words is a unique and powerful gift from God." And I feel like that's just boom! [*Selena laughs*]

Ryan I feel like it's debatable though because I've talked to many a macaw— [*Ryan laughs*]

Selena I know. [*Both laugh*] You would have.

Ryan Who have wanted crackers. And I've given them crackers. [*Both laugh*]

Selena [*Inaudible*] with animal whisperers. [*Both laugh*]

Ryan You guys. I don't want to take for granted that the listeners here kind of understand the weight that God's word puts on words, but Proverbs 18:21 is a very representative verse. It says, "Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruits."

Selena Right, and we are going to dive into what the Bible says about our words.

Ryan Yes, okay. But I want to start with this, because right after that verse, Proverbs 18:22 says, "He who finds a wife finds a good thing and obtains favor from the Lord." [*Both laughing*]

Selena Lucky you!

- Ryan** Hm. I wonder if there's some sort of progression here to maybe—
- Selena** Words and a good wife.
- Ryan** I said some— [*Selena laughs*] Yeah, like how your words hold the power of life and death, and by the way finding a wife is a good thing. So, don't let your words ruin it. [*Selena laughs*]
- I want to share a little bit about communication just principally. Is that a word?
- Selena** Sure.
- Ryan** Just in principal, in this idea that communication is not just speaking words. Words are the avenue by which we communicate, so even if you think about the physiology of communication. You have vocal cords; you have your tongue and your lips and your way to articulate consonants and vowels. You're basically vibrate— This goes into a little bit more than probably you would have expected, but you're using energy and air flow to vibrate your—
- Selena** Vocal cords.
- Ryan** Your vocal cords and create a sound wave, which is another form of energy, that can then pass through the matter that God has given us. So, okay. God didn't have to give us the physical means to communicate words and to hear words. Those words travel through the air because air carries sound waves. They go into your ears and they vibrate your ear drums and that creates electrical impulses that go to your brain. Your brain—
- Selena** You're so smart.
- Ryan** Your brain then translates those into actual vocabulary and words that have meaning according to the language that your live in or the language of the culture that you live in.
- Think about all of this. Okay, so, when God created Heaven and Earth, He created matter with physical properties. He created physics. He created everything around it, how atoms work, how molecules work, how all that works, and we have the medium to express ourselves with our voices. Not only that, but there's all kinds of other ways to communicate. Through body language, through—
- Selena** Tone.
- Ryan** Tone, which has to do with the same principal but through context. Okay, so knowing the timing of when I say something and how it will be received. Because maybe something just happened or when a certain situation. . . There's all these different ways to communicate. So, think about communication in this way: communication is the conveyance of ideas

effectively with integrity and fidelity from one person to another, from one soul to another. The analogy that we use in our book *Fierce Marriage* is a traffic light. If you're stopped at a traffic light, the traffic light is the way to communicate with other cars in that intersection. So, if my light's green and yours is red, then I know that you know, and I know that I can go and you can't. If ever those signals are crossed— say we both have green lights. What's the result? A collision. Catastrophe. We both have red lights.

What's the result? Nothing. *[Laughs]* Everybody's waiting, picking their noses, for this light to turn. And so, the thing is with communication is we have to be aware of the signals that we're sending and the signals we're receiving. And we have to be very mindful of the fact that our communication, our signals convey a deeper meaning. Words are never just words is what we're trying to say. That's why Proverbs says, "life and death are in the power of the tongue—"

[00:10:14] **Selena** Right. *[Clears throat]*

Ryan "Those who love it will eat its fruit."

Selena Mm-hm.

Ryan So, we never are just communicating words. We're conveying a meaning, and that's why words can be so loaded and that's why in marriage, when you have tone and you have all these different things and timing, you have all these different aspects of your communication. Big red buttons are easy to press. Because in marriage everything's more loaded.

Selena Right.

Ryan There's ten times more meaning in everything because there's all the context that you have. And so, when we talk through these different phrases, just keep all that in mind.

Selena Right.

Ryan And again, I see these in two ways. They're kind of— We're saying prescriptively this is a good idea, to kind of remove these because our words in a sense do have a way of orienting our hearts in our own minds and our hearts towards each other.

Selena Yeah, a revealing of what's happening in our hearts.

Ryan Yeah, they orient but they also reveal.

Selena *[Inaudible]* Yeah.

Ryan So, prescriptively and descriptively. You can see, "Oh, I've used this word a lot, so maybe there's something going on in my heart," or, "Okay, I'm not going to

use anymore because I realize that that pushes me to let this thing, this attitude, take over in our marriage.”

Selena Or your spouse is saying, “You know you’ve been saying this a lot...” [Laughs] “What’s going on?”

Ryan Yeah, so hopefully that’s helpful, just to think about how you—

Selena And we are going to dive into scripture about even idle words and careless words. And the Bible instructs us in how we are to communicate, how we’re supposed to use our words. And we definitely have verses just outlined like crazy, but we just want to talk about the first phrase here, which is, “I’m busy.” [Both laugh]

Ryan Very practical, but very common.

Selena Very practical. “I’m busy.” Very common. If we’re too busy for our marriage or our spouse, then I think we’re too busy in general. [Laughs]

Ryan Yeah. So, it’s usually an indication of a deeper disfunction, right?

Selena Right. You’re digging into your habits again and your priorities. You’re digging into— you know, I think something happened with us and I think I was saying I was too busy, and you were like, “What are you doing?” [Selena chuckles] And it was like I was either on my phone or riding horses. [Ryan chuckles] It was before we had kids or something and I remember you saying we felt like we were too busy and it was like, “Okay, but what exactly are we doing?” And looking at our lives, we’re like “Well, we’re not choosing the most fulfilling things to be doing.” We’re not actually busy. We’re just busying ourselves.

Ryan Here’s the thing. A lot of times we’re busy because we’re in motion, not because we’re taking action.

Selena Exactly.

Ryan And what I mean by that is that I can sit up here in our office and I can continually kind of be in motion, either I’m checking things, I’m doing things, I’m planning for things, but I’m not actually executing or doing anything that moves us forward. And so, Selena will be like “Hey, it’s six o’clock. Why aren’t you down here?” “Well, I’m busy.” Or a “Why are you so tired?” “Because I’ve been busy.” And realizing, okay. Well, maybe I’m not so busy. Maybe that’s just an excuse. Maybe the being busy is just a way of avoiding the actual work of being with my family and its fruitful work.

Selena Right, or it could be an idol, right? Like something that gives us value and identity. And we’d rather be busy because being busy shows that we’re being productive and somewhere in our mind we’re connecting that, right?

- Ryan** Mm-hm.
- Selena** However, there's a caveat that Ryan and I talk about a ton on this podcast is that busyness can be a season. It should be a season. There's times, right?
- Ryan** There's times when you get busy for sure.
- Selena** Right. When work has a special project, or you're trying to write a book, [*Laughs*] or things like that. You know? But you've got to communicate the end from the beginning, you know? If you are diving into a new business and your spouse is kind of like, "Yes, awesome! I want to support you in this," but is feeling left out or just alone, there needs to be a communication—
- Ryan** Speaking of that [*Selena chuckles*], my heart goes out to all the people leading VBS. [*Ryan laughs*]
- Selena** Seriously! [*Laughs*] It's happening this week, these last couple of weeks.
- Ryan** We've talked to a lot of people who are parts of VBS and they're just like, "I'm so busy!" [*Both laugh*] And they're just a little overwhelmed because they got 20,000 kids coming into their lives.
- Selena** Which is good! Well, and it's not like normal church kids all the time, too. It's very much a community thing, which is great.
- Ryan** Yeah.
- Selena** So, I think—
- Ryan** The point you're trying to make is that there are seasons, and seasons have a beginning and an end.
- Selena** Mm-hm.
- Ryan** And if you—
- Selena** They need to be communicated.
- Ryan** The point, too, is to communicate through that and say, "Hey, this is for the next three months. We're doing X, Y, and Z. It's going to be like this. Let's have check-in points every week or every month because I know it's going to wear on us. So, let's just remember we're going to put this date on the calendar. Three months from now, busyness stops, meaning that I'm going to be home at a normal hour or we're going to spend more time together, not just what's necessary but more than necessary. And agreeing on that and communicating through it. So, I think, in general, we say remove this from your vocabulary because so often the words "I'm busy" is just an excuse, and it's just kind of a

lazy way of communicating that I haven't actually prioritized my life well. *[Both laugh]*

[00:15:00] **Selena** It's a heart indicator like you said too!

Ryan And as a rule of thumb in this area, I want to say this and just to kind of put the stake in the ground here, if you're too busy for each other, you're too busy.

Selena Yeah. For sure.

Ryan If you're too busy for your family, you're too busy. Something needs to change. It's not sustainable. It's not even good stewardship. I'm just telling you it's not wise, and I'm pleading with you. Make a change so that you can be with your family in a healthy way. Doesn't mean you quit your job, all that. It just, boom!

Selena Yeah.

Ryan Boom! *[Laughs]* Alright.

Selena So, the next one is Ryan's favorite phrase, and the one after that is mine. So, I'll let you do that one.

Ryan The phrase that we have here is, "You always..." or "You never..."

Selena Ryan loves absolute statements. *[Ryan laughs]*

Ryan I absolutely love them!

Selena He just thrives on them. *[Chuckles]* Complete sarcasm there.

Ryan Yeah. The irony of absolute statements is that they're never true. *[Both laugh]* And they're always hurtful! *[Selena laughs louder]* How's that for two absolute statements? No, but it's like you can't truly say absolute things. That's just the world we live in, but it's so lazy.

Selena And I like to say that out of emotions. "You always act like this!" "You never hear me when I say this!" And bluh, bluh, blah.

Ryan Yeah. And the first thing I do when you say that is, I start thinking through all the times when I have done that, then I have the exceptions to what you're saying—

Selena He does.

Ryan Instead of me hearing your heart.

Selena He's a good arguer, but he's blind to my heart, so.

- Ryan** Well, yeah. You're a pretty good arguer too, friend.
- Selena** I've become a good arguer. *[Both laugh]*
- Ryan** You're a violent arguer.
- Selena** I am not. *[Ryan laughs]* From all those nights of crying myself to sleep. *[Selena chuckles]*
- Ryan** *[Ryan whispers]* "This is a cry for help!" *[Both laugh]*
- [Ryan resumes normal voice]* The thing with the absolute statements is they're lazy and usually they are unproductive.
- Selena** They're more hurtful than anything.
- Ryan** Yeah, and when you're on the receiving end of it, it doesn't produce an attitude of reconciliation. It produces an attitude of opposition. It's just not healthy or productive. "So, you always do this." That's not true. Just be like, instead, "Lately, I've felt that you've been missing it in this way."
- Selena** A little decorum goes a long ways! *[Chuckles]*
- Ryan** "I'm seeing a pattern here. I'm seeing a pattern arise and here's what the pattern is, and here's why it's troubling to me." So instead of "You always get home late—"
- Selena** It still kind of makes me defensive. I'm just going to be honest. *[Both laugh]* Because it's this calling me out and that's a pride thing for me. I think part of me is like "Can you just open the door for me to say, 'I feel like this has been happening lately. What do you think?'" *[Selena laughs]*
- Ryan** "Just lead me when I'm in the mood."
- Selena** When I'm in the mood! *[Both laughing]* That's my own—
- Ryan** I got to be honest. I'm seeing a pattern here. *[Selena laughs]* And it's you're just the worst. *[Ryan laughs]*
- Selena** *[Chuckling]* Your friend Pat took a turn.
- No, I do. I know. And I think that's where, of course, if I'm transparent, that's hard for me to hear. And all these emotions start boiling over, but I get way less defensive when I feel like and I know that you're not just pointing it out but you're trying to be loving about it. And that's the part, I think, that we struggle with, is that you're seeing this and you're trying to communicate it in a loving way and I'm like, "You're just trying to be right!" *[Laughs]* And "You're just trying to be in control," you know?

Ryan There's that context. That's why communication is all about signals.

Selena "You always do this." *[Laughs]*

Ryan Because you're reading signals that I don't even know are there.

Selena You do the same thing!

Ryan We both have a green light and we're going to crash.

Selena *[Chuckling]* You do the same thing.

Ryan I never do this! *[Selena laughs loudly]*

Selena You read signals. You're telling me things and I'm like, "I didn't even say that!"

Ryan Oh, you absolutely did. *[Both laugh]*

The key is here to think through what is actually going to be a productive way to present this frustration. Now, what happens typically is you're angry or tired or caught off guard, and say, "Oh, you're always home too late!" or "You always miss time with the kids," or "You always do that."

Selena Right. It's a boiling over.

Ryan Instead, like I said, I think it's more productive, more helpful, to say, "I've noticed a pattern over the last week and a half," and actually try to think about what it is. Don't just cherry pick, ok? And think about maybe the pattern—

Selena Context.

Ryan Maybe the pattern is just in your head. *[Ryan clears his throat, suggesting implication of his wife]* *[Both laugh]*

Selena Are you paying attention? I'm making sure you're listening. *[Laughs]*

Ryan Hm. Let's see. Who's this for? So, anyway.

Selena Okay, who's made his wife cry twice this week? *[Both laugh]*

Ryan No, you chose to cry in those moments. *[Both laugh]*

Selena Right. So, no I agree. I agree that saying, "Lately, this is kind of what I've been observing." Don't be attacking with it, I guess. Just kind of lovingly present what you're seeing and what you're observing, instead of the "You always..." or "You never..." *[Clears throat]* Because that never goes well. *[Chuckles]* It really doesn't, obviously.

- Ryan** Yeah, and if we think about the fact that there is actually power in our words, that makes us think twice before we say anything. Be slow to speak.
- Selena** We should be specific and purposeful with our language because you can actually move forward together instead of just accusing one another.
- Ryan** Wait, because words have meaning as it turns out!
- Selena** They have meaning. They have power. They have purpose. They're full of life or death.
- Ryan** Words matter, people!
- [00:19:58] **Selena** So, the first one is, "I'm busy." The second phrase you should remove is, "You always..." And the third is my favorite response, apparently. "Whatever."
- Ryan** [Ryan sighs.] "Whatever." [Selena laughs.] "Just [Ryan puffs out air] whatever." [Ryan laughs]
- Selena** Because sometimes, I mean, we've ended many argument— I've ended many arguments with a "whatever."
- Ryan** I believe this happened just yesterday! [Chuckles]
- Selena** And it is the archenemy of biblical reconciliation, and that's in the notes. But it is— Part of me, though, part of how I think we navigate our way through conflict is that we, when it gets too heated, we need to separate. We need to step away, have a time-out. And we need to, with the intention of "we're coming back to reconcile this." "Whatever" is different from a time-out, right? "Whatever" is just saying, "You know what? Whatever. I'm not going to deal with this anymore, and I don't want to deal with it and don't feel like dealing with it." So, it's just letting it go out into the ether. [Laughs] And [Clears throat] all the bitterness, everything's just going to start settling into your soul, right? And it's just going to start building these layers of frustration and anger.
- Ryan** I am the reason why "whatever" is so toxic, and it's the attitude behind it, okay? Not the word itself, but the attitude behind it. It's so toxic because it's rooted in apathy, and apathy is the opposite of love. People think anger or wrath is the opposite of love.
- Selena** Or hate.
- Ryan** Or hate is the opposite of love. I'd say that's not true.
- Selena** You'd argue this, yeah.
- Ryan** Apathy is the opposite of love because what is more dismissive of a person than just, "I don't care"? Like, "I don't care what you think," "I don't care who

you are,” “I don’t care what you say,” “I don’t care about you enough to actually stick this out.” Even if the person— I mean, there’s a time in an argument when it’s just not productive anymore. You don’t have to be dismissive and apathetic to step away from that. You could actually step away from that argument, that heated moment, in love and wisdom. And I think that this is the opposite of that and saying “I love you so much that I’m not willing to just—”

Selena “We should just stop talking.” Yeah.

Ryan “Scorch this Earth with you. I want to preserve the decorum because I love you and I respect you, and I value you and see you as a child of God and somebody I’m called to steward. Okay?” It’s hard to do that [*Laughing*] when you’re really angry and you’re in the middle of a heated conversation, but I think what we’re saying is guard your heart from this: being apathetic toward each other. And if you found yourself doing this, we’re here to warn you.

Selena Right.

Ryan To say that that is exactly what you started saying, in that you begin to kind of callous over. You begin to get those layers of bitterness in there. And then before you know it, you start, “The writing’s on the wall here...” You’re now apathetic toward each other. You’re going to bed without any communication or connection. He’s staying up late. She’s staying up late. You’re on your phones. You’re on computers. Whatever. You’re watching shows. You’re basically living as roommates. Now all the sudden you’re reaching out to an ex-boyfriend/ex-girlfriend...

Selena You’re looking somewhere else for it. Yep.

Ryan And now you’re starting to connect with so-and-so because you’re not connecting at home. And so now you’re going to connect with somebody. Essentially, your covenant has turned into a contract. It stopped being beneficial to you, so you’re going to go somewhere else. I think apathy is the start of that process, and “whatever” is an indication of an apathetic heart.

Selena Right. And obviously the Bible talks about how we can combat apathy and how we can combat the whole giving up and not caring by instructing us in how to love each other. In I Corinthians 13, it never quits! It’s patient, it’s kind, it’s not easily—

Ryan Refuses to quit! [*Both chuckle*]

Selena It’s not easily angered. I don’t know about that reference. [*Ryan laughs*] It always perseveres. So, these are reasons why God has instructed us on how to love, how to speak to each other. Saying “whatever” is not the path, it’s not the steppingstone to biblical reconciliation. [*Selena chuckles*] Which is something we talk about a lot. So, I think removing it from your marriage

vocabulary will either force you to explain why you're okay with this, missing the conversation, or explain why you're truly okay with whatever. It's going to force you into explaining yourself, basically.

Ryan Yeah! Yeah, so, I think being mature— okay. There's an episode a few weeks back about emotionally maturity, emotional intelligence. I think there's one with the Straubs. We interviewed them. Incredible! But to be able to stop yourself, it takes a certain amount of emotional intelligence to say, "I actually don't care about this argument as much as..." Now that's where you're saying, "I actually don't care about the outcome of this. I realize I'm just arguing because we're heated right now. So, I'm okay with 'whatever.' I'm honestly like 'I resign.' White flag! I'm giving up in the name of love." *[Ryan laughs]* The YouTube song comes to mind. *[Selena chuckles]*

Or, and like you said this, you have to explain why you're okay with actually dismissing the conversation at this point in that you don't feel like it's really worth the path you're going down. And so, we had that moment yesterday. Do you remember that? *[Ryan pauses and then laughs]* We we're talking about— You don't. This is why we're—

[00:25:16] **Selena** Well, was it last night?

Ryan No, it was yesterday. I was getting ready to go to the gym. You were getting ready to get the girls to the climbing thing, and we were talking about a family thing and anyway. And you were just like, "*[Ryan exasperatedly sighs]* Whatever." *[Ryan laughs and Selena chuckles]* I think I kind of knew where we were at at that point.

Selena Well it was a call for a time out because I was like, "We're not getting anywhere. We don't have the time to get anywhere right now. And we just need to basically call time out." So, my "whatever" was really supposed to be a time out, but I don't like saying that. But you know what I was inten— My heart was not happy about everything though. *[Laughs]*

Ryan Oh, for sure. And I just knew it wasn't going to be productive. And then you texted me I don't know how long later. Was it like 30 minutes later? Something.

Selena Maybe. And I was really trying to keep some decorum, because I really just wanted to be like... *[Laughs]* I didn't want to—

Ryan You were like, "Hey! You said these things that are hurtful. You're not being sensitive in this way, and here's why I'm feeling the way I'm feeling." And I was just like, "You know what? You're right! I'm sorry." *[Selena chuckles]* "Love you, and I'll be more sensitive." *[Both laugh together]* Was that surprising to you? We haven't really—

Selena It is a little bit. I mean, if you would have come back angry, I would have flared up like a dragon [*Ryan laughs*] because I intentionally texted you the way that I did because I was trying [*Ryan snickers*] to have—

Ryan You were trying to bait me? [*Laughing*]

Selena No. I was trying to have more decorum than how I felt. How I felt was like I just wanted to rage on you and be like “How dare you act like this [*Ryan snickers and then apologizes*] and say these things!” You know?

Ryan I have a question.

Selena [*Selena laughs*] How dare you. [*Both laugh*] But I knew that it wouldn’t get—and not to be manipulative. I just knew it would cause you to be defensive and that’s not where I’m trying to go with it. I really was trying to reconcile this.

Ryan Ladies and gentlemen! A gentle answer turns away wrath. [*Laughs*]

Selena It does.

Ryan And power— Life and death are in the power of the tongue.

At that moment, I got to be honest, I think I probably could have come back with a “Here’s why I’m right and you’re wrong.”

Selena For sure! For sure, you do.

Ryan But I told you this last night, when we finally got back home. I was just like— I didn’t care at that point. I just wanted you to feel loved, and I wanted to be connected back to you in that way, and it was not worth it to me. You were worth more to me than being right.

Selena So, I win! [*Snickers*] Just kidding!

Ryan Okay. You won! [*Selena laughs out loud*] Alright. I’m just going to take one for the team here.

Selena You’re sweet. It was good to just come back together and just hug it out, really! We felt a disconnect and that whole “whatever” kind of came back around, and we talked about those pressure points that we were feeling, and I think we both responded pretty well. I felt like you responded well, which was really assuring to my heart.

Ryan That’s good to know. It’s not always the case; we don’t always respond well.

Selena No.

- Ryan** I think, I don't know, the Holy Spirit is good and humbled me in that moment and made me care more about you than, like I said, being right. So, yeah! Just be careful with language that's dismissive, with a heart of apathy towards each other, because, to be honest, marriage is hard. Okay.
- Selena** It's easy to be harsh with each other.
- Ryan** Yeah, it's super easy to be harsh, and what happens is as our level of respect for each other falls then the level of vitriol rises and we continue to have these toxic conversations, and as humans we kind of have a way to respond. We either have to figure out a way through it together, or it's the fight or flight thing. And flight looks like saying, "Whatever. You're not going to see it, so whatever." I'm just saying—
- Selena** There's the fierce tenacity, people! [*Chuckles*]
- Ryan** And if you're constantly in this place, it might be time to get help from a counselor, a pastor, a biblical counselor—
- Selena** Someone who can speak into the situation and see what you guys might not be seeing or what we are not seeing. You know?
- Ryan** Yes. And of course, on both sides you have to have humble hearts and be willing to hear and understand what's on the other side of this. And that's a deeper intimacy, a more God-honoring, God-glorifying marriage and a deeper union.
- Selena** Absolutely! So, spent a lot of time on "whatever," which is good!
- Ryan** Mm. Whatever.
- Selena** Whatever. [*Both laugh*]
- Ryan** Okay, number four!
- Selena** Number four.
- Ryan** This one is a big one, and it's probably something you don't say a lot, but it's just plainly the word "divorce." Remove the word "divorce" from your marriage, from your vocabulary.
- Selena** I would say this is probably an absolute in our marriage. We never have and we never will use that word as a threat of any sort for any reason.
- Ryan** Yeah, obviously. We were just saying yeah, don't use it as threat or just, "You know what? Might as well just get a divorce" or "You're being so—" [*Inaudible from Serena*] Yeah! Or, "I'd be way happier outside of this marriage," or "I should have married so-and-so," or anything that really chips at the

foundational commitment covenant of your marriage I think is going to be always, always, always counterproductive. There's no healthy way forward that's out of your marriage. I'm telling you that people will find ways to justify it and you can make biblical cases to justify the act of divorce. Okay. They are biblical cases. Now, remarriage is a big thing that's under a lot of question. We're not going to get into that. But people will find a way— But I'm going to tell you it's never going to be the best way. It's always best to find a way to reconcile, and obviously that means that takes two people. That takes two people that are seeking God and willing.

[00:30:27] **Selena** Willing partners, yeah.

Ryan And so, yeah. So, anyway. Anything that chips away at that—

Selena Kind of opens that back door, you know? Because it's easy to, I think, once— I mean, if you're already getting to that point of using the word “divorce,” flippantly for comic relief [*Selena chuckles trying to say the previous words*]. That's terrible. [*Ryan laughs*] But no matter how you're using it, it's cracking that door a little bit. It's saying, “Well, I'm bringing this word into our vocabulary,” and the power of that word and the weight of the word. I don't think we always see that, but it feels like saying that word liberates the other partner to be able to start bringing that word up, right? And there's just going to be this building until [*Selena clears her throat*] everybody's checked out mentally, emotionally, spiritually. They stop tilling the soil. They stop watering. They don't plant seeds. They just say, “Hey! This is the path we're headed to. We're going to give up on our marriage.” It's just harmful, no matter how you slice it out. And again, if you're using it just flippantly, then Matthew 12:36 talks about idol words. Jesus says, “I tell you on the day of judgement, people will give an account for every careless word they speak.” So convicting!

Ryan Oh, especially about this very important— God didn't just arbitrarily design marriage as a covenant. He didn't just arbitrarily say that sex is only within the marital bond because there is a lot more to your marriage than your present happiness.

Selena Right. It is purpose and mission.

Ryan And I know we probably haven't said that enough recently, but your marriage is not about your happiness. It's about God's glory. It's about your sanctification. As Gary Thomas would say, it's about your holiness. We're going to have him on in a few weeks, by the way! [*Selena gasps excitedly*] That will be awesome!

Selena Wowwie!

Ryan We have him scheduled. He's an amazing, amazing man, and both of them are awesome.

Selena Pillars.

Ryan But anyway. So, God didn't design marriage in those ways, just so we can just be so quick to throw it away and say, "I might as well just get a divorce." So, we just implore you. Remove divorce from your vocabulary. It's never productive. It's the equivalent of checking out. It's throwing in the towel. And I've even told Selena— especially, I want to say, if you're in the newer years of your marriage, the first year or the first five years of your marriage— Guys, your marriage is solid because it's a covenant, but it's also fragile because you don't know what the heck you're doing. And so, I'm here to put a line in the sand and say this is off limits! That is off limits. That is not a route you can go. The ships have been burned. You are on this shore together. Figure it out! *[Chuckles]* And you know what, when you have no back-up plan— we talk about this in our book, *Fierce Marriage*, to the nth degree— but when you burn those ships, you have no back-up plan. There's nowhere else to go and a lot of times, your hardened heart is because you've just— your heart is not hardened, circum—

Selena It just hasn't been softened. *[Laughs]* Because you've already just ran away from everything.

Ryan But I'm saying that it's not hardened all the way apart, all the way around it, I mean. It's hardened toward your spouse because you found another way to be soft to something or someone else, and if you have nowhere else to go, the only opportunity you have to be softened is to look to each other and to say, "You're it for me! So, we've got to figure this out because this is not sustainable. I want to live a happy life. I want to live a life that's filled with joy. I know I'm not guaranteed that, but I want that. And so, I'm going to look to you and say, 'divorce is not an option.' Let's work through this."

Selena "We're going to work this out within the boundaries of these things. And one of those is never saying 'we're going to get divorced.'"

Moving on to number five, this is the final—

Ryan Let's do a quick recap!

Selena Okay! Go ahead.

Ryan Sorry. Real quick recap just because we spent a lot of time on the last two. The first one is, and these are all kind of language to be aware of and remove from your marriage, the first one is, "I'm busy!" The second one is, "You always..." or any sort of absolute statement, because basically that's lazy. *[Both chuckle]* The language of "whatever" or apathetic language that kind of goes against the heart of biblical reconciliation. The fourth one we've talked about is the word "divorce," because it's just completely unproductive and unhelpful and it goes against the spirit of marriage in general.

So, the fifth one, the final one we're going to talk about today is kind of a—

- Selena** It's two-fold, but it's—
- Ryan** Category of phrases. It's "I wish you were more like..." or "You're just like your parent," or insert parent name. Your mom or your dad.
- [00:35:04] **Selena** All falling under comparison. [*Chuckles*]
- Ryan** Yeah!
- Selena** The comparison game is what we're talking about here.
- Ryan** Yeah, so, we actually had a podcast a couple of weeks ago called, "Crushing Comparison," and it's generally talking about how our tendency as human is to compare to each other and to use each other as our standard of whatever thing we value. And, essentially, we're doing that in these phrases, and we're saying, "I wish you were more like so-and-so," or a lot of guys will say this about their wives when it comes to sex, especially young guys in a young marriage; they won't necessarily say it outright, but they'll think in their hearts, they'll say, "Man, I wish you would just do that thing that I saw in pornography." And that's a dark example, but it's so true. There's a lot of married guys that are frustrated because they've had these expectations built up by basically sinful desire and sinful habits and a whole sinful industry. So, there's that. "I wish you were more like," or wives will say, "Man, I wish you were more like so-and-so's husband. Look how he's around," or "He's a good father," or "He earns," or "He has this high paying job or this high-profile job," or "They do more fun things together." "They have a better house," "They have a better car," "They go camping more often." [*Both chuckle*] Like, "I wish you were more like so-and-so."
- Selena** Right, right. And nobody likes to be compared to anybody, whether it's a friend, a stranger. Ryan loves to be compared to a celebrity though.
- Ryan** Oh, really? [*Selena snickers*] Who are you comparing me to?
- Selena** You know who you are!
- Ryan** Who am I?
- Selena** Liam Neeson.
- Ryan** [*Ryan chuckles*] Oh, yes. [*Selena chuckles*] At least people might write in on this one. [*Selena laughs*] At least once a month someone— I'll be checking out at the grocery store or somewhere, and they'll be like, "Has anyone ever told you look like Liam Neeson?" [*Selena laughs, followed by Ryan laughing*] And I think I've gotten more cheeky with them.
- Selena** Yeah, you're funny about it.

- Ryan** Like last time I was like, “Yeah. Actually, he’s my dad.” [*Both chuckle*] Like just completely deadpan, like, “Yeah, he’s actually my dad. My name’s Ryan Neeson.” [*Ryan laughs*]
- Selena** [*Chuckling*] So, the problem with comparison—
- Ryan** And the guy was like, “Wait, what? Really?” [*Laughs*]
- Selena** You’re terrible.
- Ryan** That was the guy in— where were we? That was in Arkansas. That’s when that happened, at the theater.
- Selena** Oh yes! You’re so terrible.
So, the problem with comparing our spouses. It just becomes dehumanizing to them and us. Like we start dehumanizing who they are as a person versus— What?
- Ryan** No, that’s good. Keep going.
- Selena** Oh. [*Both laughing*] I’m sorry. People are not things! They’re like cars, you know? They’re not like cars. [*Both laugh*] I’m sorry. This is going wrong. People are not things. They’re not like cars. You can’t compare them, you know, their features, like one has GPS, one goes— You know? [*Ryan laughs*] 60 miles an hour in two seconds flat. That’s probably not fast anymore.
- Ryan** So, dehumanizing is stepping outside of the actual human state that I have. So, stepping back, we used this example a few weeks back, where if someone’s all of the sudden, like Selena’s talking on the podcast and I’m not talking to her any longer and I step back and say, “Alright, now Selena’s recording the podcast. Selena is pressing record. Selena’s talking into the microphone.”
- Selena** Your Uber voice. [*Chuckles*]
- Ryan** I am [*Laughs*]— I’ve dehumanized her. She is now an object of my observation. And now I can be a critique, or I can just add features to her, or I can observe things about her and say, “Hey, I like that,” “I don’t like that,” “If she’d fix this, it’d be better.” That’s insane! In marriage, that’s insanity. Never going to be helpful.
- Selena** I will say, I think we all have desires for our spouse, though, that we would like them to listen more, or we would like them to have a softer heart, or could we be open to talking about these things, right? There’s that side of the coin.
- Ryan** Fair enough. Yeah.
- Selena** Of saying not, “Man, you’re always like this,” but, I don’t know. I don’t know! Because I feel like it falls on the spectrum of heart transformation and some

behavioral stuff, right? So, can I even make that happen, right? But again, questioning the desire of why am I comparing my husband to so-and-so. Why am I comparing or desiring or calling them out on these things? I think it's more of a "Okay, God. Examine my heart and know my ways. Help me to understand why I'm choosing to respond like this and say 'I wish you were more,'" or again the flip side is "Okay, are these things that I'm desiring of my husband— are they Godly things that I want to pray into his heart if I can, or pray for him and ask God to surround him with men of God that will help him maybe in his walk with the Lord." Or praying for his heart to be protected and his mind, and I just want to make that clear, that I think it's okay to pray for things and to ask God and to want things for your spouse, but just flippantly comparing them and saying, "I wish you were more..." or "You're just like..." Again, it's another heart orientation.

- [00:40:03] **Ryan** I think at the core of just the cold comparison versus the warm calling someone to a higher standard, I think has to do with your stake in them as a person. Right? If I actually love you and care for you, I'm going to want you to take more showers. [*Both laugh*] No, but I could say as a husband, "Hey, you know what? I feel like we could go deeper in our conversations together. I feel like we talk about a lot of just how to get the kids from A to B all the time, but I really want to go deeper, and I want to talk about maybe a book together or talk about scripture together. I want to talk about our relationship with God together." It's not, "Man. I wish you were like Karen." [*Ryan laughs and Selena chuckles*]
- Selena** Karen's your favorite.
- Ryan** "It's for snacks, Karen!" [*Selena laughs*] You know? Or "I wish that about you." Instead of— That's not productive. That just makes you feel like you've been—
- Selena** Yes! It's being purposeful with our words. It's being intentional. It's being loving and kind and not being just idle and saying whatever we feel and what we think. And jumping off from there, what does the Bible say about our words? Obviously, it says a lot!
- Ryan** Kind of buried the lead on this one. [*Selena chuckles*] All the verses are at the end! [*Ryan laughs*] It says a lot.
- Selena** [*Laughing*] Well, I'm sorry!
- Ryan** It's okay.
- Selena** I know. Sometimes I do these outlines in my head, but scriptures always there! And I think we just want to paint the picture of these are heart orientations, these are indicators of things that are happening in our heart that we need to see them as indicators and see how they function.

And so, what does the Bible say about our words? Again, we talked about Matthew 12:36 and 37, and the whole theme of that section of scripture is a tree is known by its fruit. "I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give an account for every careless word they speak, for by your words you will be justified and by your words you will be condemned." So, a few verses before that, it talks about how out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. And so, again we're seeing the words that we're speaking are producing the fruit in our life.

Ryan That happens again in Matthew 15, when He's talking to the pharisees and He's basically saying, "How can the tree, a rotten tree, bring forth good fruit?" Your words are important, people! We talked about the physics of words and communication, and God did not give us those things by default or by accident or haphazardly. He gave us these words to do something, to accomplish something, to build each other up. Did you mention Proverbs 12:6 already? "The words of the wicked lie in wait for blood, but the mouth of the upright delivers them." Okay? Was it Proverbs 18:21, I said this earlier, "The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat of its fruit." So, taming the tongue is a very—

Selena It's a very hard thing.

Ryan Very hard thing.

Selena James talks about that a lot.

Ryan He does! He does. And he talks about it and he compares it to the rudder of a ship and being a way that kind of directs the entire ship by this tiny rudder or it can set a whole forest ablaze with the power of the tongue. It says, "...no human being can tame the tongue." And, "It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison."

Selena Mm-hm. That's James 3:8.

Ryan And, of course, he's talking about outside of identity in Christ and knowledge of the Gospel and the Holy Spirit. Like, we can't tame this! So that's, I think, the call here is if you're listening to this and just— Here's what I don't want to happen, is you walk away without a Holy Spirit empowered kind of personal conviction. We don't want you to walk away with the resolution that says, "I want to have a healthier, whatever, marriage, so I'm just going to bring these five things to my wife or to my husband, and we're just not going to say these things anymore, and if he does, I'm going to smack him across the face." [Selena chuckles] Or some equivalent of that. [Selena chuckles again] The thing is—

Selena Verbal smacking.

Ryan We cannot tame the tongue. We can't. Here's the thing, and this is the Gospel call here, is that we cannot tame the tongue, but we know the one who can. We know the one who was sinless. We have the Holy Spirit, the Helper. God himself in us. We have been called sons and daughters of God. We have been called coheirs with Christ. We've be commissioned into His mission, so we are not alone in this battle and yes, it is a restless evil full of deadly poison as James 3:8 says. But we have the Holy Spirit now who has made us new from the inside out, who has taken our heart of stone and replaced it with a heart of flesh so that we could now see each other, not with apathetic eyes, angry eyes [*Both laugh*], or any sort of flippancy or dehumanizing speech, dehumanizing thoughts. Instead we see each other as a brother and sister in Christ. You are God's daughter, and I'm entrusted with caring for your heart, and man am I scared of that Father-in-law.

[00:44:51] **Selena** Right. Well, and as such, what does the Bible tell us about how we can use our words, saying in Ephesians 4, "Don't let any corrupt talk come out of your mouth, but only such that's good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear."

James 4:11-12, "¹¹Do not speak evil against one another, brothers. The one who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks evil against the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge," of the law, judging laws. [*Ryan laughs*] "¹²There is only one lawgiver and judge, he who is able to save and to destroy. But who are you to judge your neighbor?" Colossians 4:6, "Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each other." I like Colossians 3:16, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God." And this, again like you're saying, should be an overflow and should also be something we do fight for in our marriage, right?

Ryan Yeah.

Selena And we are maybe striving a little bit because the Holy Spirit is saying, "I'm doing a work in you, therefore don't let this type of talk come out of your mouth. Therefore, let Christ dwell in you richly. Let His teaching and everything admonish and dwell within you. Let wisdom flow out, sing [*Chuckles*], and the spiritual songs be thankful.

Ryan That's good. And like we talked about in the last episode with habits, God has graciously given us the ability to apply wisdom [*Ryan chuckles*] to this world around us. And He's given us the ability to form our actions in a way that is informed by wisdom. And so, speech is the same way. We're not just passive observers in the things we say and how our brains work. We can actually be a part of that process and we can choose the words we say. We don't have to always say things when we're angry. We can have emotional intelligence, emotional maturity, to see how our words are going to affect somebody. And

to let someone's words affect us in a way that is maybe not just what they say, when they say it, how they say it. It's knowing the heart behind it! Like, Selena, some of the things you said that we got in a fight over yesterday, you were saying things that I did not like, but I was failing to see your heart behind it. And had I seen your heart, I would have been driven to compassion and I would have been more likely to do what Colossians 3 says is teaching, admonishing in all wisdom and singing songs. Just break out in song! [*Both chuckle*] But I love how that verse ends in Colossians 3:16, "with thankfulness in your hearts to God." That revelation of the Gospel is what births that thankfulness. "God, I am a sinner. I need you terribly! And I have you." I was destined for death.

This happened to me when I had to have open heart surgery. I thought there was a good chance I would die. So, waking up in the morning, or not the morning but four hours later, having had successful surgery, opening my eyes. It was like a new life! I can't describe that moment. I thought I was once dead, now I am made alive! I was once headed to death. "Selena, I'm sorry I'm not going to be able to have babies with you. I'm sorry our marriage didn't even make it to the second anniversary. I love you! If I don't make it through this, I want you to get married to someone else." That's what I told you. Waking up, all of that was gone!

Selena Jokes on you.

Ryan Yeah, jokes on me! [*Both laugh*] But all of that was gone and suddenly I had life! I had life again. And what did that birth in me? Thankfulness. For you! A thankfulness for God. A sense of, "I'm never going to take this life for granted again. Never going to take these babies for granted again." All that stuff. So, that's kind of a tangent, but—

Selena But understanding that our days are numbered. We are not given— You don't have to face heart surgery to not take your days for granted. You can be thankful for every single day you're given by the grace of God and use them.

And our couple's conversation challenge is kind of a— I'm going to go off script here, as Ryan says.

Ryan Okay.

Selena I guess, questioning, looking at your words and your vocabulary, how do you talk to your spouse on a general, day-to-day basis? Are you using them to build your spouse up or are we using them to destroy them? Like, what's the tone and the theme there? And maybe it's not removing these phrases, the exact phrases, but how are you comparing your spouse in an ungodly way or dehumanizing them? How are you dismissing them and not responding to them? How are you sort of giving up and resigning?

Ryan How are you using absolutes lazily?

Selena Right! And how are you just kind of using absolutes lazily? So, I think these are places that we can look at our marriage—

Ryan Yeah, and maybe just take a quick inventory.

Selena And question. Yes!

Ryan They kind of turned into categories. So, how are we being lazy? How are we comparing each other? How are we being apathetic toward each other? Those sorts of things, in our language specifically. And what's the antithesis of that? So, how can you choose to be, instead of apathetic, how can you choose to be extra empathetic? Instead of being lazy, how can you be really diligent with your words? And instead of being dismissive, how can you implant value into one another? Say, "Listen. I hear what you're saying, but you're an idiot." [*Both laugh*] I'm kidding!

[00:50:15] **Selena** There it is. And it's nonsense.

Ryan There it is! We've never actually said that to each other. I've never called you an idiot, I don't think.

Selena No.

Ryan If I did, I'm sorry! I don't think I have.

Selena I don't think you have.

Ryan I can't imagine doing that. I feel like my face hurts just saying that because I feel like I'd be slapped. [*Laughs*]

Selena Good. I'm glad you feel that.

Ryan A little Pavlov's dog. [*Both chuckle*] You say it, you feel the slap.

Selena But if you've never said it... [*Both laughing*]

Ryan Okay, so we're going to answer a question real fast! We got about five minutes to do this, but I want to make sure we're going to make a habit out of answering these questions. I'm just going to read the whole thing. It's long! Okay, so she says, "Back in episode 23, you touch briefly on how to respect your spouse when you don't see eye-to-eye on something that you feel is a moral issue. My husband and I run a business and have very different views when it comes to finances and what is biblical right and wrong. Everyone we talk to seems to think it's a grey area and that everyone "does it," which just seems to validate his views. It has been years that we seem to come to a compromise on the issue only to find out that he has been doing things behind my back and lying to me about them. So, I guess my question is this: how can I respect my husband within this realm? Do I submit and allow him to run the

business this way even though I feel that it's wrong because it does cause a lack of transparency within or marriage, or do I continue to try and stand up for what I believe is right when all that seems to do is cause him to do things behind my back?"

Selena Mm. That's a hard spot! And I think the real question's here, because we aren't given exactly where their—

Ryan We don't know exactly what's going on.

Selena Right, sorry.

Ryan So, we can't speak to this—

Selena The issue. But we can speak to the red flags and what it's indicating, right? She's feeling like she's asking the question, "How do I respect my husband when he's doing things that I feel don't deserve respect?"

Ryan That are against her conscious, right? And that's a huge thing. What comes to mind for me is in 1 Corinthians when Paul talks about things being permissible but not beneficial. So, this is what I think of when I think in terms of "grey areas." We have a sense of conscious in us. And we are taught not to do things that would put a stumbling block in front of other people or to go against— you know, for love of each other, we don't do things that are going to cause each other to stumble. Right?

Selena Mm. Love of each other.

Ryan So, Paul says, "All things are lawful to me, but not all things helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be enslaved by anything. Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food, and God will destroy both one and the other." So, anyway. He's talking about basically using discretion in certain areas. Another one is chapter 10. It says, "'All things are lawful,' but not all things are helpful. 'All things are lawful,' but not all things build up. Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbor." And this is the example I was really thinking of, it says, "Eat whatever is sold in the meat market without raising any question on the ground of conscious. For 'the earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof.' If one of the unbelievers invites you to dinner and you are disposed to go, eat whatever is set before you without raising any question on the ground of conscious. But if someone says to you, 'this has been offered in sacrifice,' then do not eat it, for the sake of the one who informed you, and for the sake of conscious— I do not mean your conscious, but his. For why should my liberty be determined by someone else's conscious? And if I partake with thankfulness, why am I denounced because of that for which I give thanks?" (1 Corinthians 10:23-30, paraphrase, *ESV*) So, basically, he is saying for the sake, not for your sake, but for the good of his neighbor. Right? Let no one seek his own good, but for the good of his neighbor. So, all that to say as a husband, if you had a yellow or a red flag in an

area like that, I think it is an opportunity to be generous. Okay? There's a lot of these grey areas in life and in marriage. And if one of you feels strongly about it, and I'm of the school of thought, and I think this is what Paul is saying, is that the one who doesn't feel strongly about it, maybe isn't convicted by it but can out of love for the other submit in this way. And now, I'm guessing it's probably something to do with taxes or write-offs or expenses or how you're quoting jobs or how you are actually performing the work. And, so, there are some ethics depending on the actual situation. But in general, if there is a grey area, I think it is an opportunity to be generous toward each other. Now in terms of do you submit and allow him to run the business in this way, even though you feel it's wrong—

Selena I don't really think it's a question of submission, to be honest.

Ryan Yeah, I think submission's maybe the wrong word to use there. I think do you acquiesce, and do you choose not to make it a big issue? The bottom line is if you feel a check in your conscious and he doesn't feel that same check, then you probably need to talk about it more until you get on the same page.

Selena Right, because lying and letting things do that is not going to build any sort of real unity or reconciliation between you two.

[00:55:04] **Ryan** Yeah, I honestly, just reading this not knowing the situation fully, the fact that it's causing a lack of transparency in your marriage to me is a huge red flag and means whatever it is has to go. It's nonnegotiable now, because that's how things start. That's how division begins. And if ever you're not in unity over something, the things that's causing disunity has to go. And there's no level of tax write-off or whatever that, to me, is worth sacrificing that. Or maybe you just need to get on the same page. Maybe your husband has a good point. Maybe there is more reason to believe that it's not unethical or unlawful.

Selena Right, but it's worth the continued conversation. Absolutely!

Ryan But if it's actually against the law, then that's that.

Selena Right! *[Both laugh]* That's that.

Ryan And man, do I hate paying taxes, but I also love driving on paved roads. So...

Selena There's that! *[Laughs]*

Ryan Anyway! Hope that's helpful. It's hard to speak to a situation that's so kind of specific, but hopeful the heart of it was conveyed there. So, Selena, will you pray for us as we close out?

Selena Okay.

Ryan Is that too abrupt?

Selena No!

Ryan [*Inaudible*] Okay! Go for it.

Selena God, thank You so much for this time that we get to be transparent and open about the struggles we face, and how You've led us through some of these hard times and You're still continually faithful in showing us how to love each other through our words. We pray for every couple out there that might be dealing with struggling to communicate well to each other. God, I pray that Your word would shine light on the way to go. I pray that, Holy Spirit, you would do a work in their heart and that you would motivate them to want to love each other through their words, to ask You for help, to ask You to examine their ways, God, so that they can know Your way more and walk in Your path.

We love you God!

In Jesus' Name,
Amen.

Ryan Alright! Amen.

This has been a fun episode. I've learned something. I hope it's helped you. I hope it's blessed you. And I hope it's given you something to think about and hopefully make your marriage more God-honoring and healthier! With that said, this episode is--!

Selena In the can!

Ryan Alright ladies and gentlemen! Thank you for listening to the Fierce Marriage Podcast. We will see you again in seven days! And until then—

Selena Stay fierce!

[00:57:17] <Ending Sequence>

[00:57:57] <Podcast ends>

PODCAST NOTES

- **[00:05:01]**
 - Quote taken from the article Power of Words, contributed by Alex De Guzman, published on January 14, 2016.
 - <https://www.sermoncentral.com/sermons/power-of-words-alex-de-guzman-sermon-on-tongue-199169>
 - Scripture references:
 - Proverbs 18:21, *ESV*
 - Proverbs 18:22, *ESV*
- **[00:19:58]**
 - Podcast reference:
 - Straubs: <https://fiercemarriage.com/building-an-emotionally-safe-marriage-dr-josh-and-christi-straub>
- **[00:35:04]**
 - Podcast reference:
 - Crushing Comparison: <https://fiercemarriage.com/crushing-unhealthy-comparison>
- **[00:40:03]**
 - Scripture references:
 - Matthew 12:36-37, *ESV*
 - Matthew 12:33-37 (misquoted as being from Matthew 15), paraphrase, *Version Unknown*
 - Proverbs 12:6, *ESV*
 - Proverbs 18:21, paraphrase, *NIV*
 - James 3:8, *ESV*
- **[00:44:51]**
 - Scripture references:
 - Ephesians 4:29, paraphrase, *ESV*
 - James 4:11-12, *ESV*
 - Colossians 4:6, paraphrase, *ESV*
 - Colossians 3:16, *ESV*
- **[00:50:15]**
 - Podcast reference:
 - Redeeming Respect: How Can Wives Respect Their Husbands in Every Circumstance?: <https://fiercemarriage.com/redeeming-respect-podcast>

(Continued on next page.)

- Scriptures references:
 - 1 Corinthians 10:23-33, *ESV*
 - 1 Corinthians 6:12-13a, *RSV*
 - 1 Corinthians 10:23-33, *ESV*

FIERCE MARRIAGE RESOURCES

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