

## COMMUNICATING WITH CLARITY WHEN THINGS AREN'T SO CLEAR

<https://fiercemarriage.com/communicating-with-clarity-when-things-arent-so-clear>

[00:00:00] **Ryan:** Alright. Communication continues to be just one of the hottest topics in our marriage [*Both chuckle*], but also in couples that we ask. So, the title we're working with on this episode is Clearly Communicating When Things Aren't So Clear. Alright. So, we presented a question. Remember that?

**Selena:** Mm-hm.

**Ryan:** We were to the Fierce Marriage community on Facebook, on Instagram and Fierce Husbands, Fierce Wives (those are groups on Facebook). And we said, "Hey, what causes the most arguments in your marriage?" And unironically communication starts the most arguments. [*Both chuckle*] So, communicating creates more communicating in a negative way. [*Both chuckle*] So, we're going to tackle that topic today from a biblical standpoint. There's a lot of, I think, underlying principles that go into how we communicate. But we're also going to get very *tangible* today in talking through maybe some scenarios or ways that we tend to oversimplify certain issues.

**Selena:** Mm-hm.

**Ryan:** And that creates bad communication, and therefore the arguments. So, thank you for joining us once again, and we'll see you on the other side.

[00:00:59] <Intro Sequence>

[00:01:30] **Selena:** Good job communicating that opening.

**Ryan:** Oh, thank you. Thank you.

**Selena:** That was good communication.

**Ryan:** I got one job to do!

**Selena:** That was one communication. Good communication! Bleh.

**Ryan:** [*Laughing*] Nailed it! Yep.

**Selena:** This is terrible. [*Ryan laughing*] This is terrible!

**Ryan:** Yeah! Yeah. So—

**Selena:** You want me to do housekeeping since you did the opening?

**Ryan:** Well, I'll do the Patreon one.

**Selena:** Okay, yeah.

- Ryan:** Because, hey! Everyone...
- Selena:** 'Cause you know it.
- Ryan:** We hit 251 Patreons on Patreon.
- Selena:** Woo-hooo!
- Ryan:** So, thank you so much for all of you, patreons, who are helping to keep this podcast ad free and helping us push forward our new initiatives, which, by the way, here they are! Alright? So, if you're a transcription person...
- Selena:** Mmm...
- Ryan:** We have just— I've been dragging my feet. I just figured out how to get them listed on our website in a way that's helpful. But we have a person, a new helper. Her name is Heather. So, Heather, you're probably going to listen to this 'cause you're transcribing. [*Selena laughs*] So, thank you. We have yet to actually speak in person [*Selena laughs*] because we're having a baby and all that kind of stuff. But, Heather, I'm hoping that we can have a phone call soon.
- Selena:** Mm-hm.
- Ryan:** But thank you so much. Those transcripts are live, starting with the latest episodes. Give us a few days, because Heather obviously has to produce those.
- Selena:** Mm-hm.
- Ryan:** But they are going to be more and more live as you go back into the archives, which is great for those who have asked. And we couldn't be more thrilled—
- Selena:** Yes!
- Ryan:** To make those resources available. Also having hit that, the goal of 250 patreons on Patreon, we're going to be starting on some really fun— It's going to be a lot of work, really exciting stuff. [*Laughs*]
- Selena:** Yes. It's good times.
- Ryan:** And when it's ready, we will share it with you, with the world. And hopefully, we can create kind of a movement of people that are fighting for fierce marriages across the country, across the world. So, that's the patreon thing. If you wanna be a part of all that, go to [patreon.com/fiercemarriage](https://patreon.com/fiercemarriage). We would love to partner with you, prayerfully partner with you, whether that's \$2 a month on up, whatever God is leading you to partner with! Yeah, we would just be honored.
- Selena:** Mm!

- Ryan:** So, yeah. There's the first one.
- Selena:** Second one! [*Both laugh*] I'm sorry! I didn't know you were going to drop. I was just waiting for you to keep going.
- Ryan:** There you go.
- Selena:** Thank you to all of you who are listening and people who have rated and reviewed this podcast! Please, if you haven't done so, take one second or less to hit that five-star rating.
- Ryan:** Mm. Thank you! Yes.
- Selena:** And leave a kind review so other people can look, listen, read, and say, "Yes, I want to listen to this," or, "Nope, I don't." [*Selena laughs and Ryan chuckles*] But I'm sure if they're reading, they're already bought in.
- Ryan:** Mm.
- Selena:** So, thank you for that. Please do that if you haven't done so. Also, if you hear anything that prompts a question, please ask. You can do this by calling or texting us at 971-333-1120.
- Ryan:** Mm-hm.
- Selena:** You can also go on [fiercemarriage.com/podcast](http://fiercemarriage.com/podcast) and submit there. And we're also doing a new segment! We have not figured out a cool, catchy name for yet, but it's about eight minutes long, answering one question from you, our listeners and readers, and we're releasing that every...
- Ryan:** Yeah. It's actually a new bonus thing.
- Selena:** Yes.
- Ryan:** It's not actually a segment, per se.
- Selena:** Okay. Sorry.
- Ryan:** It's a kind of a new episode that comes out; it'll come up this week on Thursday. So, these come out on Tuesdays, and on Thursdays, when we're not doing an interview, which we've taken a little hiatus from interviews, we're dropping these new questions. Actually, we're going to answer a question that came in through text message.
- Selena:** Right.
- Ryan:** And we're going to answer that.

**Selena:** So, these are hot questions.

**Ryan:** Yeah.

**Selena:** It'll be good. They're really good.

**Ryan:** Yeah. We try to tackle extremely complex, nuanced subjects—

**Selena:** In eight minutes [*Both laugh*] or less.

**Ryan:** In eight minutes or less. [*Both laughing*] Anyway. Yeah! So, thank you again, all you amazing listeners and supporters of Fierce Marriage. So...

**Selena:** Yeah. I think we will get back to interviews... We did have—

**Ryan:** We have three already kind of waiting in the wings.

**Selena:** Right. I just don't want people to think we're not doing them any more at all.

[00:05:01] **Ryan:** No, we are!

**Selena:** We just kind of had, you know, finishing the book, having a baby.

**Ryan:** Yeah.

**Selena:** You are now on break from your school.

**Ryan:** From seminary.

**Selena:** Seminary! [*Both chuckle*] I'm like, "...college, theology, [*Ryan laughs*] what is the word right here?"

**Ryan:** From classes!

**Selena:** [*Chuckling*] From the schools.

**Ryan:** Yeah, but that's not going to last very long.

**Selena:** No. So...

**Ryan:** So, I got to be honest before we jump in! I am really tired. I was up at 3:00 A.M. to take my parents to the airport, and...

**Selena:** Like a good son. [*Chuckles*]

**Ryan:** It's like noon right now. So, I'm burning on fumes already.

**Selena:** It's alright.

- Ryan:** So, hopefully, Selena can carry this whole thing and I can just snooze in the corner. [*Selena laughs*] Speaking of snoozing, Louisa *is* snoozing in the corner.
- Selena:** She is. You may get to get the privilege of hearing her again.
- Ryan:** Yeah.
- Selena:** But yeah. So, we are going to talk about how to clearly communicate with each other when things aren't so clear.
- Ryan:** Mm.
- Selena:** And we're not saying that we've nailed this, because this actually came from an argument that we had. [*Laughs*] And, interestingly enough, some of our closest friends had a hard time in argument— Not argu— They were just going through some stuff, and it was really difficult. They actually brought us in, and we were able to sit with them, hear them, and help communicate, I think, some truths that they were missing, but both going the same direction. So, God is so good in that, but we just realized there are, even after us being married 16+ years...
- Ryan:** Mm.
- Selena:** We still don't communicate *well*. [*Laughs*] And I feel like it's in some areas—
- Ryan:** At times!
- Selena:** It's gotten worse at times. Yeah.
- Ryan:** Yeah.
- Selena:** Because I'm like, "How are you not hearing what I'm saying?" Or, "How are you hearing this?" And I am not saying that at all! And it's just like I don't under— [*Ryan laughs*] It's like we're speaking two different languages.
- Ryan:** [*Chuckling*] Yeah.
- Selena:** So, we are... [*Laughs*] When we looked at these conversations, like, talked to each other about it, we saw a few kind of basic themes emerging about—
- Ryan:** Yeah.
- Selena:** Bad [*Laughs*] communication, which is kind of where we're starting. So, there's kind of three bad ways of communicating to each other.
- Ryan:** Yeah. Well, I think one of the things that I think— an overarching theme that seems to surround communication is that... arguments and frustration and fights *rarely* erupt because of *what* is actually being said.

- Selena:** Right.
- Ryan:** I won't say they never do, but usually the arguments happened around greater context.
- Selena:** Mm-hm.
- Ryan:** They happen—You've somehow pushed a button. There's a subtext, meaning that there's things that aren't said but are still being implied...
- Selena:** Communicated.
- Ryan:** And being communicated—
- Selena:** Yes.
- Ryan:** Through the words that you're not saying in the words that you are saying. So, much more important than just the content of what you're saying. That's important!
- Selena:** Mm-hm!
- Ryan:** Alright. We'll talk about that a little bit. But it's also the tone and the timing. So, and we're going to get into all that stuff in—
- Selena:** Yeah.
- Ryan:** Into greater detail. But I, actually, before we jump in, I'm going to share from a book. So, there's kind of a perennial resource here. It's called *We Can Work It Out*. [*Both chuckle*] And it—
- Selena:** Sounds like a song.
- Ryan:** It's about conflict resolution, specifically in marriage. I don't think it's from a perspective of believers. I could be wrong, but it's not an overtly Christian book. And they did, I mean, a massive— It's called a "longitudinal study." What that means is they basically start with a group of people in some sort of study group. And they have... What are they called when they're not part of the variable group? They're the control group! [*Selena chuckles*] That's what they are! So, there's a control group and then there's part of the study. And the longitudinal part is they start with this and they follow these people for thirty years.
- Selena:** Oh, wow!
- Ryan:** And see how the beginning affected the end.
- Selena:** Mmm...

**Ryan:** And watched them. Anyway! They found some very unconventional things. Alright? So, conventional wisdom. Alright. Selena, I'm going to put this in front and you tell me what you think. Alright? "Whom you marry has a lot to do with how happy your marriage will be." True or false?

**Selena:** True...? [*Ryan laughs*]

**Ryan:** [*Laughing*] Okay. I think there's probably truth to it. Their finding was marital happiness has little to do with whom you marry. This is based on data! Right?

**Selena:** Okay. So, *whom* you marry—

**Ryan:** It has very little to do with *whom* you marry and everything to do with how you cope with, guess what, conflict. [*Selena chuckles*] Okay. They did this, a study, over all these groups.

**Selena:** Well, that's just [*Makes a noise and laughs*]

**Ryan:** No, they can predict—

**Selena:** I needed a sample answer here. [*Chuckles*]

**Ryan:** But they can say, is they can predict "marital bliss" ...

**Selena:** Right. [*Chuckles*]

**Ryan:** Based on how well a couple handles conflict in their personal lives.

**Selena:** Right! Makes sense.

**Ryan:** Together and separately. Right?

**Selena:** Yeah.

**Ryan:** Okay. Here's another one. "Conventional wisdom: personality flaws, his insensitivity, her insecurity and so on and so forth are the underlying cause of marital distress." True or false?

**Selena:** Well... False, because it's how you deal with conflict, right? [*Ryan laughs*] So, it's not that. [*Selena laughs*]

**Ryan:** It says personality traits *do not* predict marital happiness or marital stability! So, what that would imply is that, hey, I could be completely insincere or completely insensitive...

**Selena:** Mm-hm.

**Ryan:** To you, and you can be completely insecure, or vice versa.

**Selena:** Mm-hm.

**Ryan:** And that, in itself, is not a deciding factor in whether or not our marriage is healthy and thriving. Kay? Consider that.

**Selena:** Sure.

**Ryan:** As we talk through conflict and things like that—

**Selena:** Well, yeah. ‘Cause we... Yeah, that makes sense.

**Ryan:** The conventional wisdom! Here, another one; these are fun.

**Selena:** We should do more true or false. *[Both laugh]*

**Ryan:** “How compatible and alike you are to your partner is an important ingredient to relational success.” True or false?

[00:10:03] **Selena:** How alike you are?

**Ryan:** How compatible, or, like...

**Selena:** Well, false, ‘cause the first question. *[Snickers]*

**Ryan:** Why? What do you mean?

**Selena:** Because it doesn't— You're just saying, basically, it doesn't matter who you marry or how compatible you are, it's how you deal with conflict and how you communicate through that. So—

**Ryan:** Well, in a way. This is their finding, okay? It's not how similar or different you are. It's how you *handle* differences when they arise that counts.

**Selena:** So, false! Yes, I was right.

**Ryan:** Yeah. So—

**Selena:** *[Laughs]* For the wrong reasons. *[Laughs harder]*

**Ryan:** Everyone who's conventional wisdom's going to be debunk in some way. So, spoiler alert.

**Selena:** *[Chuckling]* I was right, for the wrong reasons.

**Ryan:** Yeah. Conventional wisdom: problems early in marriage tend to get better with time, so, it is best to ignore them at the beginning.” *[Snickers]*

**Selena:** True! Just kidding! *[Ryan chuckles and Selena laughs]*



- Ryan:** Well, I mean... Okay, obviously, you know where we're going with this...
- Selena:** Yeah.
- Ryan:** But a lot of folks get married thinking, "Oh, you know, that little issue's not that big of an issue." But they *fully* see— They have they're— What is it? Like, their wedding glasses on.
- Selena:** Yeah.
- Ryan:** They have their honeymoon glasses on.
- Selena:** Rose colored lenses.
- Ryan:** Yeah! And so, they think, "Oh, he plays videogames now, but once we get married, like, he's going to spend time with me."
- Selena:** Mmm...
- Ryan:** Now, I got news for ya, honey. [*Laughs*] The videogame thing... unless there's intervention, or any other addiction or any other...
- Selena:** Yeah.
- Ryan:** Anything!
- Selena:** Yeah, it's funny. Wherever we go, there we are.
- Ryan:** Yes! It's going to continue and it's probably going to increase.
- Selena:** Yeah.
- Ryan:** And so, that's the conventional wisdom, and our finding of the authors of this book, they said problems tend to worsen over time. So, it's best to deal with them *early* in the relationship when they are easier to handle. This one, I think, is— I'll go quickly. "The conventional wisdom is men and women have different needs in a relationship and have different approaches to intimacy." That's the conventional wisdom!
- Selena:** Mm-hm.
- Ryan:** Okay. Their finding was the major difference between men and women in marriage lies in the way they handle conflict and not in their ability to be intimate.
- Selena:** Yeah!

**Ryan:** So again, I think I've made the case for, and these people have made the case, obviously with lots of data, lots of study, lots of winsome language.

**Selena:** Mm-hm.

**Ryan:** They've said the content of what you're saying and the content, it really, to an extent of who you are, *isn't* the determining factor.

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** It's *how* do you handle that conflict? Now, everything that these people found, it's already echoed in scripture, throughout scripture. That's what I love about studies, is they inevitably [*Chuckling*] unearth some truth that was already there.

**Selena:** Right. Right.

**Ryan:** It's like G.K. Chesterton said, you know, "I went out on the ocean of basically exploration and came back upon the familiar shores of orthodoxy," as if somebody who basically left London, circled around to Ireland and said, "I found new land!" And it's just people who are already there, *living* there. Right?

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** So, biblical truth is already here. And we're just unearthing it—

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** In new ways. So, given that reality, that it's not necessarily what you say, but it's how you handle the conflict that it creates.

**Selena:** Mm-hm.

**Ryan:** And how that conflict is created, that's what we're coming at today.

**Selena:** Yes!

**Ryan:** That's what we're talking through today, is how to make communication *clearer*, and how to *hear* things more clearly, so that you can actually work through them in a more productive way.

**Selena:** Well, and also, your heart orientation of *when* things are miscommunicated, or even maybe there's some clear, hard, not so nice things that are communicated, how are you going to respond to that?

**Ryan:** Mm-hm.

- Selena:** What does the Bible... say in those instances, and how should we react to that response, right?
- Ryan:** Mm.
- Selena:** So, the first sort of theme that we saw within ourselves mainly, and some, you know, you've probably seen this in your own marriage, is that we tend to oversimplify the situation or feelings of our spouse or each other. This is my big thing.
- Ryan:** Yeah.
- Selena:** Which is kind of ironic, I guess, 'cause I feel... I so badly want to get to the resolution and *fix it*, which is, you know, they say men want to do that. But interestingly enough, I feel like that, too, because I'm like, "Well, I thought about this and I've seen all these indicators, so this must be it!" Right? [*Ryan sigh exhales*] And that did not go over well with my husband [*Both chuckle*] those few weeks.
- Ryan:** Well...
- Selena:** It's just the, "Why can't you just do this?" It's a bit of projection, which we'll get into as well. But it's just, "Why can't you... just... do the laundry?" Right? Or "Why can't you just be with our family and be excited about it?" And, "I love being with our family. Why don't *you* love being with our family?" Or...
- Ryan:** Right.
- Selena:** Those kinds of questions. If the husband is gone all the time, or it feels, maybe the wife is feeling like, "Oh, he doesn't want to be around us or something." And so, it can come from a place of pride and arrogance. It can't also come from a place of insecurity, I believe.
- Ryan:** Oh.
- Selena:** Which, again, it's not meaning to oversimplify, I think, the situation. It's just coming to this point of, "I need to ask these questions," which that's where I felt like I was in our situation. But asking the questions kind of blew up in my face. [*Snickers*] So, we'll sort through that [*Chuckling*] a little bit too.
- Ryan:** So, an example. I mean, I picture a husband, right? Or a wife who is worried about finances, and they express that, or it comes through somehow in their communication, and the spouse, maybe a well-meaning spouse, could say, "Oh, you're just not trusting God enough."
- Selena:** Mm...
- Ryan:** Okay? Well, okay. That's probably true in a very...

**Selena:** At some level. Yeah.

[00:15:00] **Ryan:** On a deep level, it's probably very true. But you're oversimplifying in that, yes, I need to trust God, but there's also this... God has called us to *steward* well.

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** He's told us to be wise with our finances, He's called us not to... be foolish. And so, oversimplifying could maybe even, and if there's a hot button there for you, meaning that this is something that, you know, like, "I'm really trying not to work hard. I work too much. I'm trying to have a better balance."

**Selena:** [Snickering] Trying to be a workaholic?

**Ryan:** Trying to be a workaholic. It takes time! [Both chuckle] But I'm trying to have a better balance, so...

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** Any time you oversimplify, maybe, and that's what we would getting at earlier.

**Selena:** For sure. Something that's close to your heart, something that you're very active in, and trying to combat. So, any small question about that is just like...

**Ryan:** Mm-hm.

**Selena:** Guns come out! [Chuckles] It fires, but you're just blazing, right?

**Ryan:** Yeah.

**Selena:** Whenever you say, "How long does it take you to put the laundry away?" [Ryan laughs] Or, not you! But how long does it take?

**Ryan:** Well, that was getting into subtext.

**Selena:** It's just like scorched earth. Scorched earth. Yes!

**Ryan:** That's getting into subtext.

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** And that's where I said one of our biggest argument points was that questions... What did I say?

**Selena:** He says, "Questions have consequences."

**Ryan:** Questions have consequences.

- Selena:** And I was like, “Well, I don’t think consequences is the right word.” [Ryan laughs]
- Ryan:** [Laughing] But they do!
- Selena:** But, that's fine.
- Ryan:** Because you can see, my pet peeve is [Selena laughs] being like, “Hey, don't you think that maybe this is that, or that you should do this better or whatever?” And I'm thinking, “Well—”
- Selena:** “I'm already working on it. Thanks!” [Laughs]
- Ryan:** Yeah, I'm working on it, all is kind of stuff. And then if I get upset or whatever, and you've probably had this happen in your marriage, where you ask a question... One hot button for us is the laundry thing. Selena's really good at folding laundry! But then it'll just sit there sometimes, and [Chuckles] I'm like, “Job's not done until it's done!” and you're like, “I did *that* job. The next job is putting the laundry away.” [Laughing]
- Selena:** For some reason, it’s so hard for me [Ryan laughs] to put it away. [Selena chuckles]
- Ryan:** The worst thi—
- Selena:** No, but I do laundry. I don't know! I fold laundry and it makes me so tired! [Both chuckle] I don't know what it is. If it's like this Pavlov's thing that happened when I was a kid, like every time I—
- Ryan:** Probably.
- Selena:** Fold laundry, go take a nap. [Laughs]
- Ryan:** That's probably what it was. But the worst thing I can do as your husband—
- Selena:** You could help and put it away.
- Ryan:** I could. But *that's not the principal*. [Both chuckle] The worst thing I could do, though, is I can come down to be like, “So, how hard is it to put laundry away? [Selena chuckles] How hard is that?” And you'd be like, “What?! You don’t even know what I've been dealing with down here and all!” ‘Cause I work up above the garage [Selena deeply sighs] in the office. “You don't know this, that, and the other.” And I'm like, “If I just—
- Selena:** You think you know me...
- Ryan:** If I just said...

- Selena:** You think you know me.
- Ryan:** If I'd of said, "Whoa, whoa, whoa! I was just asking a question. I mean, is it hard or is it easy? I'm just asking." No! Obviously [*Selena chuckles*], I'm not looking for data about how hard it is to put laundry away.
- Selena:** You can go to Google for that!
- Ryan:** I'm asking the question to imply an *irritation*. [*Selena chuckles*] And I'm projecting this on you, and there's subtext.
- Selena:** [*Chuckling*] Right.
- Ryan:** And so, questions have consequences. And if I were just like, "Woah! I just asked a simple question. Ease up! I mean, crazy."
- Selena:** I feel like consequences is still such a harsh word. They have... I feel like it's a prompting, not like a [*Ryan chuckles*] *consequence*. It feels so *negative* in the connotation of it.
- Ryan:** Well, the questions are negative. [*Selena laughs*]
- Selena:** Don't ask—
- Ryan:** Follow me blindly! [*Both chuckling*]
- Selena:** [*Laughing*] Don't ask questions.
- Ryan:** So, that's why we're getting at when you say questions of consequence.
- Selena:** Right. Right.
- Ryan:** And oversimplifying by saying, "Oh, I just asked this question," and, I think, that's one way if we can oversimplify. But...
- Selena:** Right.
- Ryan:** Anyway.
- Selena:** And I think we can approach this from a place of pride also. You know? Saying, "Why can't you do this?" Like, if something comes really easy for you as a spouse—
- Ryan:** Mm-hm.
- Selena:** But not as easy for your husband or wife, like parenting young children, maybe.
- Ryan:** Mm-hm.

**Selena:** You know, that's... I feel like different personalities are... It's more challenging.

**Ryan:** Mm-hm.

**Selena:** Maybe it's... Yeah. I don't know. Cleaning the house, going to work. I don't know. Whatever... I feel like those are pretty broad examples. But I guess, you know, one thing for us is like... I... What am I really bad at that you're really good at?

**Ryan:** [*Laughing*] No comment!

**Selena:** Okay. No! This is it. [*Chuckles*] This is it. I'm good at picking up the house, but you're good at *cleaning* the house.

**Ryan:** This is true...

**Selena:** You're good at *scrubbing*; it was your janitorial years.

**Ryan:** Mm.

**Selena:** You're just this beacon of light.

**Ryan:** Master of custodial arts!

**Selena:** Yes!

**Ryan:** Thank you very much.

**Selena:** So, you are really good at getting a deep clean. I'm really good at being a tornado and picking up the house really quick and wiping things down.

**Ryan:** You can tidy up fairly quickly.

**Selena:** Yes!

**Ryan:** And fairly well. But—

**Selena:** Right. And I'm like—

**Ryan:** If you look too closely, you might be upset. [*Laughs*]

**Selena:** Shut your mouth. Not all the time! But that's—

**Ryan:** If I tell you I'm going to clean the kitchen, you know that the kitchen going to be sparkling!

**Selena:** [*Laughing*] It's going to be clean!

**Ryan:** And you're going to be thrilled.

**Selena:** But you could come from a place of pride and be like, "Why can't you just wash the wash the bathroom?" Clean the bathroom! [*Both laughing*] "Why can't you do that? Why can't you deep clean this?" And I'm like...

**Ryan:** [*Laughing*] Sorry!

**Selena:** "Because I have three children and I don't want them to drink bleach while I'm trying to clean this." [*Both laughing*]

**Ryan:** See? There's an oversimplification. [*Both laugh*]

**Selena:** [*Chuckling*] Very much so. But, you know—

**Ryan:** "Wash the bathroom, Selena!"

**Selena:** [*Laughing*] Proverbs—

**Ryan:** Make the party! [*Selena giggles*] Just make the party [*Inaudible*]

[00:19:48] **Selena:** Proverbs and Psalms talk a *lot* about pride and how it *definitely* goes before destruction. Right? And there's a haughty spirit before fall. In Psalm 59, I was reading, this is David when Saul sent men to kill him. He said, "For the sin of their mouths, the words of their lips, let them be trapped in their pride. For the cursing and lies that they utter." And this psalm is interesting because David ends this psalm by reminding himself about the goodness of God. He said, "But I will sing of your strength; I will sing aloud of your steadfast love in the morning. For you have been to me a fortress and a refuge in the day of my distress. O my Strength, I will sing praises to you, for you, O God, are my fortress, the God who shows me steadfast love." Which I think is just a good illustration of when [*Chuckling*] someone is prideful and coming after you, you don't necessarily have to rise up to that occasion, right?

**Ryan:** Mm-hm.

**Selena:** We need to sit there and remind ourselves of who God is and not necessarily just get all flared up and huffy-puffy because someone else is.

**Ryan:** Mm-hm.

**Selena:** Our spouse, especially. We can, not that you just are like sitting there all holy, right, as your spouse is like, "Why can't you do this?! Why can't you do that?!" But crises freed us to not—We don't have to respond out of emotion.

**Ryan:** Hm.



**Selena:** We've been freed from that! We can say, "God wants me to respond *this way*." So, "God, you are my strength. You are my fortress. Help me in this situation!" And I'm not saying it's *in the moment* all the time, but I think that God is so good in that He can get us to a place to be able to be in the moment.

**Ryan:** Right.

**Selena:** And not be responsive that way.

**Ryan:** Well, self-control *is* a fruit of the Holy Spirit, right? If the Holy Spirit indwells us...

**Selena:** Oh, shoot!

**Ryan:** Self-control is going to come out of us.

**Selena:** Absolutely!

**Ryan:** Just like love, patience, kindness, just like everything else, self-control.

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** It's controlling our emotions in those hard times and *not* letting our pride flare up when we're being corrected.

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** Now, this is easier if you don't feel like your spouse is oversimplifying.

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** And glossing over a lot and making too many assumptions.

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** The problem is, is that we're human, right?

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** And so, it's inevitable that you're going to have these things happen, so, it's just *knowing* that, okay, if we're having a hard time communicating... Pride is usually a factor.

**Selena:** Yeah.

**Ryan:** Meaning that someone is not conceding that they might not know everything [*Selena snickers*], that they might need to hear some constructive criticism.

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** Their spouse might be coming at it from a heart that is loving.

**Selena:** Right. Except projecting things!

**Ryan:** And that's the next point, is that there's pride that gets in the way, but also, we tend to project on one another, that—

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** I do this to you just as much as you do to me. I think you do it in ways that are different, like there's different. But you assume that you know what I'm thinking before I've even thought it.

**Selena:** I always know what you're thinking. [*Both laugh*]

**Ryan:** And so, I will—

**Selena:** Let's just be clear! [*Snickers*]

**Ryan:** I will effectively get in trouble for thoughts that you think I've had, because—

**Selena:** For example... [*Both laugh*]

**Ryan:** It's going to be really hard to have an example. I'm on, like, three hours of sleep last night. But you'll know, like, the laundry thing. Right? I'll come down, again, working. I try not to work as much, but inevitably I'm working. And I'll come down and obviously there's stuff happening in the house. I can hear it happening [*Selena laughs*]; I come down to help and the laundry's sitting there, and you just see me look at the laundry. And then *you* think in your head [*Selena chuckles*], "Oh, he's going to say something about that. He's going to criticize me for that. Oh! He is such a bad husband." [*Ryan chuckles*] "Oh, I'm already *mad* at him!" [*Selena laughs*] And I'm just like, "Hey, can I help with something?" [*Ryan chuckles*]

**Selena:** Yeah, right.

**Ryan:** That could happen, alright? Maybe I don't always help—

**Selena:** Uhh, no.

**Ryan:** Not always that helpful.

**Selena:** A friend—

**Ryan:** I said that today!

- Selena:** No, no, no. Yeah, a friend told me that Tim Keller on one of his podcast, he's talking about marriage. He says oftentimes we think we're shooting B.B. guns at each other, when really, we're shooting *rockets* at each other.
- Ryan:** Mm. Mm-hm.
- Selena:** And *really* hurting each other with our words and the power behind them.  
[Laughs]
- Ryan:** In this case, my thoughts.
- Selena:** And your thoughts and looks! That's everything!
- Ryan:** The thoughts that *you* think I'm having.
- Selena:** Yep.
- Ryan:** Are like rockets to your own— [Selena laughing] And so, but we tend to project.
- Selena:** Right. Right.
- Ryan:** Okay, so, intimacy is a big example of this for I think *many* husbands, and projecting on their wives. Right? So, if we've gone a longer stint where we haven't been intimate, where we've talked about this in the past, but our kind of healthy frequency is every three to four days, two, three, four days is about when we [Selena snickers] need to be... [Both chuckle] *Every day* is about when—
- Selena:** Two to seven days. [Both chuckle] Six. Five. Just all the numbers.
- Ryan:** And so, like if it's been... If it's been, let's say it's been five days. Right? And we haven't been intimate. Or it's been four days. And I could easily project on, and I have done this, and I have to fight this, but I'm like, "Well, she's obviously avoiding me. [Selena chuckles] "But if she obviously doesn't, you know, she's thought about it just like I have, but she doesn't *want* me."
- Selena:** That's so interesting to hear.
- Ryan:** "As her husband. And she doesn't *want* to be intimate with me. She's rejecting me! She hates me!!" [Both laugh] And so, we project—
- Selena:** Just spiral.
- Ryan:** Because I value it in a different capacity. You value it too!
- Selena:** Well, and your thought process *towards* it is so different.

**Ryan:** Right.

**Selena:** Than mine.

**Ryan:** Right!

**Selena:** If we're honest.

**Ryan:** And so, if I'm on my game, I can say, "I'm projecting right now."

**Selena:** Yeah.

**Ryan:** "She probably hasn't thought about it. She probably would be very willing if I just bring it up in a way that's not..."

[00:24:59] **Selena:** And sad to think that, oh, man, it's been five days, and I don't even understand. I don't even know what day it is, to be honest! [Laughs] Like, there's some days...

**Ryan:** And this season in life is...

**Selena:** It's a little bit more survival, you know?

**Ryan:** This season is unique in that way.

**Selena:** You get used to—Yeah!

**Ryan:** Yeah.

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** So, we can easily project onto each other. And you put that into any sort of, like... So, another one. [Laughs briefly] It's provision, right? If you're saying something about, "Oh, I wish I could get that jacket or those shoes or whatever," or you're saying, "Man, we need that," and you're just maybe verbalizing something that is on your mind.

**Selena:** Mm-hm.

**Ryan:** I'm hearing that, and I'm saying, "She hates everything I've fought to provide for our family!"

**Selena:** Ungrateful woman! [Snickers]

**Ryan:** She's ungrateful! She doesn't believe in Jesus. [Both laugh]

**Selena:** That's some *serious* oversimplification. [Laughing]

**Ryan:** Very much so. But she's not thinking through *all* the nuances of my provision and my ability to provide as a man, as a husband in this season of our lives. She's just thinking, "Oh, those boots might be nice [*Laughing*] to get," or whatever.

**Selena:** Right. Which, I mean, we can't gloss over the power of our words and all of, you know, the Bible talks about how God will judge our words and all of the— I can't think of the word that is used for the words, the unnecessary words.

**Ryan:** Okay.

**Selena:** That we're saying, and so, I think [*Chuckle*] as a verbal processor myself in a lot of ways, although I think I'm going to the other end of the spectrum, being aware of what we say and how it could be received and the weight of that...

**Ryan:** Mm-hm.

**Selena:** Aligning that up with our spouse and knowing our spouse and how they tend to hear things and how they tend to process and internalize things is *wise* of us to do. And instead of oversimplifying situations and how our spouse is feeling, like, stop! And start telling yourself, remind yourself that you're on the same team.

**Ryan:** Right.

**Selena:** I think that's been a big one for us, is you say that to me, 'cause I'm like, "Nope!" [*Chuckle*] Like, you're against me and I'm going to win! That arises in me, and it's not good.

**Ryan:** Mm...

**Selena:** It's not biblical. It's sin. And that—

**Ryan:** Oh. I want to jump in.

**Selena:** Yeah.

**Ryan:** A really clear area that this is helpful is around in-laws.

**Selena:** Mm.

**Ryan:** We are on the same team. It's not me versus you and your family and you versus me and my family.

**Selena:** Mm-hm.

**Ryan:** 'Cause a lot of these projections and pride, and we're going to talk later about empathy.

**Selena:** Mm-hm.

**Ryan:** We're going to talk later about a few other things, but that all comes to bear very clearly when it comes about talking about your spouse's parents.

**Selena:** Right. Right.

**Ryan:** Or maybe some annoying things they've done or ways they've hurt you or ways they've fallen short.

**Selena:** Well, and our family of origin has such a huge influence *on* us within our marriage.

**Ryan:** Yeah. Yeah. And so, we have to remind each other, "Hey, I'm on your side."

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** "We are in this together. I'm not against you."

**Selena:** You have to say that sometimes!

**Ryan:** Mm-hm.

**Selena:** That really has deflated a lot of our really [*Stifles a chuckle*] frustrating moments. I feel like it's when you've said that to me has been so helpful and so loving, it takes my emotions some time to get around to that, but my heart and my head hear it. And I'm like, "Okay! Yes. We *are* on the same team."

**Ryan:** Yeah.

**Selena:** [*Selena sighs exasperatedly*] Ugh. [*Ryan chuckles*] He feels the same way. Well, he doesn't feel the same way, but he understands that I feel this way.

**Ryan:** Mm-hm.

**Selena:** And I think that's what helps me respond better.

**Ryan:** Yeah.

**Selena:** And reminding each other that, "Okay. My husband is a child of God." So, the way I'm talking to him, if it's talking—Well, I feel like I don't talk down to you. Sometimes I do, I guess.

**Ryan:** Mm!

**Selena:** But if we're [*Ryan clicks his tongue*]— Do I talk down to you?

**Ryan:** I think it's some—

**Selena:** Or you disrespect...

**Ryan:** And some of the oversimplifying things.

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** Right? So, I had to make a kind of a critical decision recently around work and stuff, and you were just like, "Just do this!" And, like, with that broad stroke of "just do this," you're basically throwing out *all* these months of thinking—

**Selena:** Nooo.

**Ryan:** And just basically like—

**Selena:** 'Cause we've talked about it for months of thinking and conversations.

**Ryan:** Well, not [*Laughs*]—

**Selena:** But it felt like, to you—

**Ryan:** Clearly, this is resolved, ladies and gentlemen.

**Selena:** [*Selena chuckles*] It felt like, to you, that I was saying that. But... [*Ryan laughs*] We still came around to that same conclusion. [*Selena chuckles*] Can I just point that out?

**Ryan:** We don't always, though. And in that case, I did not feel loved. I felt like you were just *dismissing* all this other nuance that I was trying to work through and consider.

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** And you were just being, and in that since you were talking down...

**Selena:** Yeah!

**Ryan:** Because you were just like, "It's simple!"

**Selena:** When we oversimplify, we can talk down. Yeah.

**Ryan:** Yeah. It's simple. Just figured out.

**Selena:** It's clear, right?

**Ryan:** "Why can't you figure this out? Why are you so dumb?" [*Both laugh*]

**Selena:** Again...

**Ryan:** [Ryan chuckles] That's what you were saying to me! [Both chuckling]

**Selena:** Okay.

**Ryan:** This is a cry.

**Selena:** So, reminding ourselves [Chuckles] that we are on the same team, that there's probably more going on than we know, right?

**Ryan:** Mm-hm.

**Selena:** And it's in the life of our spouse. So, let's be humble. Let's extend some grace. Let's use wisdom. Right? Humility's wisdom, I feel like. Don't assume you just know everything.

**Ryan:** Yeah.

**Selena:** And are there questions and conversations that are coming from a place of pride? Sometimes it's hard to examine our self, right?

**Ryan:** Mm.

**Selena:** And so, pray and ask the Holy Spirit, like our counselor, to help bring clarity to us.

**Ryan:** Mm-hm.

[00:29:55] **Selena:** But also, I think if there's a sister in Christ or a brother in Christ, you can say, I feel like I want to ask these questions. I don't know how they're going to respond. Knowing us, right? Advocating for our marriage. How would this come across? And that this is not in a gossipy sense. This is not unlike a dividing sort of conversation. This is more of a...

**Ryan:** Hm.

**Selena:** I can't seem to clearly, and this is something I should probably be better at, honestly, is I don't know how he's going to respond to this, so can I filter it through you? And... what do you think? You know? And again, having that community there that can say, "Oo! I don't think that's a good question," or, "Why do you want to ask this question? What are you really asking here?"

**Ryan:** Yeah.

**Selena:** And help kind of dig around in that.

**Ryan:** Yeah. So, an underlying theme on all this, and more recap everything. This feels like we're maybe going a few different directions here, but we'll recap all this. But empathy is so key, right? So, people talk about emotional—We talk about



intellect all the time, like knowledge, your IQ. Right? That's how smart you are, your intellect. That's basically your book smarts.

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** Or how well can you problem solve? Right? *Emotional* intelligence, or your EQ, is something that is oftentimes overlooked, meaning that how well are you aware of your own kind of emotional state and your emotional feelings, and how well are you aware of that of your spouse? And then true emotional intelligence, and emotional maturity I would say, comes from actually being able to *handle* that knowledge with care and with grace.

**Selena:** Mm.

**Ryan:** So, that starts with... empathy.

**Selena:** Mm-hm.

**Ryan:** So, just last night, I looked over on the couch. We were watching the baking show, as we do now. [*Selena chuckles*] And I looked over and the baby was being fussy, and I was holding the girls, I was snuggling with them, and they've kind of clung to me as you've needed to be there for the little one.

**Selena:** Mm-hm.

**Ryan:** And I just said, "Thank you for caring for our baby in the way that you do," 'cause you're the one that is giving up. That's just how it works for us. You're the one that's, obviously, she's nursing.

**Selena:** Right, right.

**Ryan:** So, I can't help there. [*Laughs*] I can be moral support.

**Selena:** Yes.

**Ryan:** But you're the one that's losing sleep in there. I lose sleep in other ways, 'cause the 5-year-old and the 3-year-old still like to get up out of their bed.

**Selena:** Occasionally. [*Ryan chuckles*] Yeah.

**Ryan:** And so, I handle that. But... Yeah. So, I just looked over and said, "Man, that can't be," in my head, I don't know if I said this 'cause I was tired last night, again, but I said, I think I said, "I can't handle how," I mean I wouldn't be able to handle how hard that is. I can't imagine how hard that is, and how it's like an *ongoing*, constant thing. And that... made me want to extend grace to you.

**Selena:** Mm.

**Ryan:** And not be just irritated because you didn't do X, Y or Z, but really say—

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** There's actually a lot going on!

**Selena:** Yeah.

**Ryan:** Yeah. Empathizing!

**Selena:** Yeah. Grace and gratefulness, I feel like it's once you hit that button of empathy, right, once you step into that, I feel like grace and...

**Ryan:** Oh, man!

**Selena:** Gratefulness can flow. And if you can't find the empathy, start listing the ways you can be grateful for your spouse.

**Ryan:** Mm-hm.

**Selena:** And *then* start talking to them. [*Laughs*]

**Ryan:** Mm-hm.

**Selena:** It's a good place to start because when you're grateful for them, you start seeing more and more of what they do and *why* they do it.

**Ryan:** Mm-hm.

**Selena:** And I think that's a big example there. So...

**Ryan:** And you know, more examples of this is you think about how your spouse has had maybe a tough day at work.

**Selena:** Yeah.

**Ryan:** Or maybe you think about how family happenings could be affecting him or her, whether it's their parents—

**Selena:** Right. Exten—Yeah.

**Ryan:** Or maybe if someone's sick or there's been a fallout somewhere...

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** Just think about how that could be handling them, or how that could be affecting them. Again, I'm sorry. I'm pretty tired today! [*Laughs*]

**Selena:** So, let's recap real quick. The themes of kind of bad communication. The first one, oversimplifying a situation or feelings of each other. The second one is ignoring or not considering kind of the subtext or connotation around these questions.

**Ryan:** Right.

**Selena:** And I think we've kind of talked about this through that first section of how instead of oversimplifying, we can extend grace. We can be empathetic; we can be grateful.

**Ryan:** Right.

**Selena:** And we can kind of filter, and not act out of arrogance, pride, and projecting *how* we feel and how we communicate onto our spouse. So, this second one of ignoring or not considering the subtext around kind of the questions or circumstances that you're dealing with, the conflict, basically...

**Ryan:** Mm-hm.

**Selena:** That's a big one for me, because I, again, asked a question... that I did not consider all of the sub-context [*Ryan snickers*] around it.

**Ryan:** [*Snickering*] You're somewhat culpable, because you literally started with, "Don't get mad, but I'm going to ask you a question." [*Laughs*]

**Selena:** Well, because I had been considering in my heart— It's not like I'm setting out to be malicious.

**Ryan:** I know.

**Selena:** I was concerned in my heart, maybe this is something that you're struggling with, and we should *work* on it together or talk to each other about it.

**Ryan:** Mm.

**Selena:** And it did not go over well. [*Snickers*] It was basically saying, you don't— I was asking him, like, maybe our family is frustrating to you, and I was implying to *you* that, and I didn't mean to, that you don't love our family, and I was implying to you that you don't love our family and that you haven't shown that in a while, it seemed like.

[00:35:02] **Ryan:** Mm-hm.

**Selena:** And I was questioning these things, and you were like, "I'm sorry, what? [*Both chuckle*] Because I've been taking time off work, I feel like I've been helping you." And so, there was a big clash of the titans. You know, and another way this kind of can generally be spoken to, I think, from a husband to maybe a

mom who stays at home or just a wife in general, like what have you been doing all day?

**Ryan:** Yeah.

**Selena:** Or again, the personal favorite of mine, is anything about the laundry is just a nice big trigger for me.

**Ryan:** Yeah. That's why we bring it up all the time. *[Both laugh]* Yeah...

**Selena:** So, the question here is, again, not what is being said, but what's happening around this situation.

**Ryan:** Yeah.

**Selena:** So, the words, it's not about the content, like you said. It's about the context here.

**Ryan:** Mm-hm.

**Selena:** So, I'm not Ryan. I don't process things the way he does, which is I think, a great strength and a weakness in our marriage. Right?

**Ryan:** Yeah.

**Selena:** I think it's a *good* thing that you can process things differently, because I come to you a lot and say, "I don't understand this. Help me."

**Ryan:** Mm.

**Selena:** "What are you seeing here that I'm not seeing here?" And vice versa, right?

**Ryan:** Mm-hm.

**Selena:** So, I think that if we know each other, we can then know how to communicate well with each other, or bad. *[Laughs]*

**Ryan:** Yeah.

**Selena:** 'Cause you're more familiar with what's going to go over well. But again, we're 16 years into marriage and I was like, "I think this is going to be helpful." *[Laughing]* And it *blew up* in my face!

**Ryan:** Yeah.

**Selena:** So again, I was like, "Well, I was really trying to consider the situation and everything, but sometimes there's just repentance and grace that has to be extended.

**Ryan:** Mm-hm. Well, the tendency is—

**Selena:** Things you have to walk through!

**Ryan:** Is that when those, again, how we handle conflict is so much more of a predictor of our ability to—

**Selena:** Communicate well.

**Ryan:** Communicate well and have health.

**Selena:** Yeah.

**Ryan:** So, a lot of times, any one of these triggers, right? So, just like you already recapped, oversimplification and then the recoil that comes from that. Then there's the ignoring and not considering subtext connotations around a question or a circumstance.

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** Alright. And then we're going to talk about timing and tone. Those are the three kind of scenarios that create the conflict!

**Selena:** Mm.

**Ryan:** Pride or humility are what will keep us from resolving that conflict in a healthy way.

**Selena:** Mm-hm.

**Ryan:** And pride, a lot of times, will keep us from empathizing. It'll keep—

**Selena:** It doesn't help us communicate well at all!

**Ryan:** It will keep us—

**Selena:** Yeah.

**Ryan:** It'll keep us from admitting that we're wrong.

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** It will keep us from actually wanting to ask questions that leave us meaningfully vulnerable, where you can actually speak into my heart.

**Selena:** Mm-hm.

**Ryan:** So, pride and humility go hand-in-hand with empathy, which goes hand-in-hand with actually communicating well, *particularly* in the marriage context.

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** So, let's talk about context here, I guess the timing and tone, right? 'Cause that's about content.

**Selena:** Well, there's one thing I just wanted to touch on is in terms of scripture.

**Ryan:** Yeah.

**Selena:** Of considering the situation, right? And not just what's being said, but what's been said around it. So, when I was looking, you know, it says to love your neighbor as yourself. And so, when we're considering and loving, when we're asking these questions, when we're going to our spouse, we are *essentially* trying to love them.

**Ryan:** Mm-hm.

**Selena:** You know, as we love ourselves. And so, knowing them I think really combats this. And when I was reading around the context to, right, we're not just reading the verse, but I'm reading around it—

**Ryan:** Mm-hm.

**Selena:** Which is what we're *talking* about [*Chuckles*] here in Luke 10:27. There are a lot of references, but in this specific reference, it was the Good Samaritan story.

**Ryan:** Mm.

**Selena:** “And Jesus answered, you shall love the Lord, your God with all your heart and all your soul, your strength, with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.” And they were, again, this was out of the Good Samaritan story, and when you look at that story, there's a lot of assumptions made between Jews and Samaritans.

**Ryan:** Mm.

**Selena:** There's a lot of just dichotomy between them.

**Ryan:** Yeah.

**Selena:** And it was easy for them to objectify and dehumanize each other. Right? Like, “Oh, they're a *Samaritan*,” or “They're a *Jew*.” Like, there's *all* these things that are—

**Ryan:** Implied. Yeah.

**Selena:** That going against them and implied, when really they're two humans, right? And so, I think that happens in marriage. I think that we can be like, "Oh, my husband's *always* like this," or, "My wife *always* does these things." But if we really are loving how Christ has called us to love, then we need to set those assumptions aside. We need to set anything that might dehumanize them or objectify them in terms of turning them into an enemy in our minds.

**Ryan:** Yeah.

**Selena:** And we need to remind ourselves again, we're on the same team. We need to remind ourselves that God loved *us* first.

**Ryan:** Mm.

**Selena:** That our hearts can rest in that love. That we are called to love the Lord our God with *all of* our heart. And part of loving God is, this sounds really bold, maybe I need to back this up, but loving God, part of loving Him means loving those around us as well.

**Ryan:** Oh, absolutely. There's going to be an overflow of His love if it's genuine in our *hearts*. Right?

**Selena:** Right. And when we're considering the situation and loving our spouse, we're ultimately loving them in a way that God calls us to, without pretense, right?

**Ryan:** Mm.

**Selena:** And that's a hard thing to do!

**Ryan:** So... Speaking of the Jew and the Samaritan thing. Okay, so, we tend to do that. There's all the conflict that was there, all the cultural differences, all the things that made that story remarkable, we can do that to each other.

[00:40:02] **Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** In that I think love is faithful in a lot of ways, meaning that I'm faithful to you.

**Selena:** Mm-hm.

**Ryan:** But I'm also faithful in the sense that I'm always hoping for your best.

**Selena:** Mm.

**Ryan:** I'm hoping for God's best in your heart.

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** Always *believing*. It's I Corinthians 13:7, "Love hopes all things, believes all things" ...

**Selena:** Endures all things.

**Ryan:** Endures all things, love bears all things."

**Selena:** Mm.

**Ryan:** Okay. So, if I am faithful in that sense, that I'm not just saying, "You're a Samaritan and you'll never change."

**Selena:** Mm!

**Ryan:** "We are opposed to each other."

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** "You won't change who you are, your DNA, your nation of origin, so to speak" ...

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** "You're always going to be stubborn! You're always going to be like the things that I can't stand [*Both laugh*] in this moment."

**Selena:** Why are you... [*Inaudible as they start laughing*] Why do you choose to be...

**Ryan:** And so... But that's not loving.

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** That's not love, okay? You have *seared* that side that's facing your spouse.

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** And saying, "You can't get in here anymore, 'cause you're you, I'm me. We're not going to be one flesh in this sense."

**Selena:** Mm...

**Ryan:** And so, love hopes all things, endures all things, *believes* all things, and—

**Selena:** It bears it all things.

**Ryan:** It bears all things.

**Selena:** Yeah.



**Ryan:** So, if I'm going to be faithful in my marriage, I'm going to trust that God is at work in your heart.

**Selena:** Yeah.

**Ryan:** That you *can* change. That I can be a force that God uses to catalyze change in your heart...

**Selena:** Mm.

**Ryan:** Through the power of the Holy Spirit. I can speak God's truth to you *in love*. I don't have to be right; I can give up on all that stuff! I can just be loving and speak truth to you...

**Selena:** Mm-hm.

**Ryan:** Because I love you. And so, I think that will do *so much* to allow you to handle conflict in a healthier way.

**Selena:** Right. And allow you to communicate clearly in that conflict.

**Ryan:** Mm.

**Selena:** And in a loving way.

**Ryan:** Yeah.

**Selena:** So, timing and tone. This is our last sort of peace to this whole communication issue.

**Ryan:** Right.

**Selena:** Timing and toner everything.

**Ryan:** Mm.

**Selena:** And I think that's just been a personal one from our own marriage that we've learned. And again, I want to be clear that timing is not a manipulation thing. It's about using wisdom.

**Ryan:** Mm.

**Selena:** It's not saying, "Well, I'm just going to wait until he's all happy and all this, and then I'm going to ask him something that I want," or whatever! You know?

**Ryan:** Mm.

- Selena:** It's not a manipulation tool. It's asking ourselves when is the best time to talk about this? 'Cause I think it's a loving act toward your spouse to find a good time, because you're giving them the best opportunity to answer well!
- Ryan:** Mm. Yeah.
- Selena:** And when they're in a good place, basically, like when they're *rested*, when they're fed, when their heart is full. I think that is giving them the best opportunity, again, to respond in a loving and generous way.
- Ryan:** Mm-hm.
- Selena:** And I'm not saying, again, this is not a manipulation tool. Wisdom is taking the time to think and pray about this. It's saying, "When is a good time to approach?" 'Cause the last thing you want to do is communicate some great way, like, "I love you," or some good truth or some generous act, and they're just coming home from work. And it's just been a *rough* day.
- Ryan:** Mm.
- Selena:** And there's all these things, like I guess one example is like when we wake up in the morning, the one thing you *don't* want me to do is just like start off on all the things we need to do. You want a *good* morning [*Ryan snickers*], right? [*Selena chuckles*]
- Ryan:** A greeting of some sort.
- Selena:** [*Laughing*] A greeting, an acknowledgment of some sort!
- Ryan:** "I acknowledge that this is our first meaningful contact for the day" ... [*Selena laughs*] "Good morning to you... sir!"
- Selena:** Good morning. Right. [*Ryan laughs*]
- Ryan:** Yeah. Yeah. I mean, the timing and tone. So, one of the ways that this is very practical is, you know, like you said, you think about the time when you're bringing things up.
- Selena:** Mm-hm.
- Ryan:** But one way you can deal with really hard things is you can actually set a date with each other—
- Selena:** Mm-hm.
- Ryan:** And say, "Hey, can I talk to you about that hard thing tonight?"
- Selena:** Yeah.

**Ryan:** Or, “Can I just talk to you tonight? I have something I want to hash out. I'm working through it.” See how that's already kind of a more humble posture—

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** As opposed to like, “You're the enemy!” Or “You're wrong.”

**Selena:** It's very disarming. Yeah.

**Ryan:** “I'm right.”

**Selena:** Yeah.

**Ryan:** And so, what happens is you come to that conversation kind of with your wits about you.

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** And you're on your better behavior, hopefully.

**Selena:** Leave your guns at home! [*Laughs*]

**Ryan:** Yeah! Leave your weapons off to the side. And I think as you listen, the timing and tone is hard.

**Selena:** Yeah.

**Ryan:** Like tone... You can't really fake it. It's [*Selena snickers*] like a micro-expression that you can't really fake having a good tone.

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** ‘Cause you'll just sound really sarcastic. [*Chuckles*]

**Selena:** Yes.

**Ryan:** If you don't mean to, like I think of Angela in The Office, whenever she's talking to Phyllis. She's like, “*Spoons* are used for *scooping* the food.”

**Selena:** [*Chuckles*] It's very patronizing.

**Ryan:** Yes!

**Selena:** Yes. For sure. For sure.

**Ryan:** So, it's very patronizing. So, the way, I think, to a better... *tone* is to think through what it means to listen in good faith.

**Selena:** Yeah.

**Ryan:** Right? And listen with charity, meaning that you're giving your spouse the benefit of the doubt when they're speaking to you and, so, in that sense, you're not the one using the tone, but you're filtering through their tone.

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** With charity.

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** And thinking, "Maybe they don't mean what I think they mean."

**Selena:** Right!

**Ryan:** "Maybe she's trying to say what she's trying to say, and not all the things that I'm reading into it."

**Selena:** Right. And honestly, sometimes it's hard to get to that point on your own. Another tangible thing we would say is get with another couple that you trust!

**Ryan:** Ooh! That's a good one.

**Selena:** And we've done this with another couple. They've done this with us, a couple of them. A couple of couples! [*Chuckles*]

**Ryan:** Yeah.

**Selena:** That we've done this with. Because usually you are more reserved with your words. You're more intentional about them.

[00:45:04] **Ryan:** Yes.

**Selena:** And you're on *better* behavior!

**Ryan:** Mm-hm.

**Selena:** Although, I think we are definitely vulnerable in those conversations where we've allowed people to see us in our ugly, and how we talk to each other!

**Ryan:** It's a good vulnerability, though.

**Selena:** Yeah! It's a safe space where we can be like, "He is always like..." That's not a good one, but! [*Both laugh*] I feel like I can allow my tone to shine through as far as like sometimes the anger or frustration, because I know that they're going to say, "This is what I'm hearing, and this is what I'm seeing." And...

**Ryan:** Mm-hm. Yeah.

**Selena:** “Do you think that that is a way that you want to respond?” Or, “Why are you responding like this? I'm sensing some anger in your tone. [*Selena chuckles*] I'm sensing frustration.”

**Ryan:** And good friends will do this, is they will let you work it out and they will just be kind of that buffer for you.

**Selena:** Yeah.

**Ryan:** I think of in The Wizard of Oz, Dorothy comes upon the Tin Man, and he's all locked up because it rained, and he was out there chopping—

**Selena:** And rusted. Yeah.

**Ryan:** He's all rusted. And what did she do? All she did was she took some oil and just put it on his mouth.

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** Put it on his joints. A good friend, a couple friend, will be that—

**Selena:** Oil can?

**Ryan:** They'll add oil! Yeah, they'll be your oil can [*Selena chuckles*] and basically get you talking.

**Selena:** Yeah.

**Ryan:** Get you moving. But they're not moving or talking for you!

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** They're just there to facilitate the communication in a healthier way.

**Selena:** Yeah, yeah.

**Ryan:** And that's what you're talking about, is that— I remember that conversation we had. And we were going through a fight. Some friends of ours, they loved us well.

**Selena:** Mm-hm.

**Ryan:** They brought us in and say, “We've noticed this. Let's talk!”

**Selena:** Yeah.

**Ryan:** And all they did was get us talking to each other, and then they observed.

- Selena:** Right.
- Ryan:** And then they offered their observations.
- Selena:** Yep! And they asked a few questions—
- Ryan:** Mm-hm.
- Selena:** That were—
- Ryan:** And they helped us see the gospel more fully in that area.
- Selena:** Very key! Yes.
- Ryan:** They helped us love each other more empathetically.
- Selena:** Right.
- Ryan:** They helped Selena be a lot better in every way. [*Selena chuckles and Ryan laughs*] I'm sorry. You're just like, that caught you off guard. [*Selena makes a noise*] Okay, let's recap capital fast! [*Selena laughs*] So, we're trying to talk about [*Both laugh*] ...
- Selena:** Ironically, this feels like it's not very clearly communicated.
- Ryan:** Clearly communicating [*Selena chuckles*] when things aren't so clear, or things don't feel so clear. So, the first thing is be aware of these— actually be aware of these three things. Oversimplifying the situation and oversimplifying each other's feelings. Okay, that's how you can start to clearly communicate.
- Selena:** Yeah.
- Ryan:** Be aware of ignoring or not considering the subtext or connotations around maybe a question or a circumstance, a question you're asking or how you're answering it; be aware of those connotations, the subtext, things that aren't said. The final one is be aware of timing and tone, 'cause a lot of times those two things will contribute *far more* to a [*Selena chuckles*] healthy conversation than the words that are actually being said.
- Selena:** Right.
- Ryan:** And underneath all that, be aware of empathy, empathizing with and for each other. But also pride, and how pride is playing a role in how you're either having a faithful view of your spouse, and a faith-filled view of God working in your spouse and a faith-filled view of how God can use your words to either encourage or instruct.
- Selena:** Mm-hm.

- Ryan:** So, just be aware of those things below the surface.
- Selena:** And I liked what you said. A lot of, I think, the Holy Spirit and God are so good, right, in teaching us how to clearly communicate, but by *developing* the fruits of the spirit within us.
- Ryan:** Yeah.
- Selena:** Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness—
- Ryan:** Wow! Yeah.
- Selena:** Gentleness, all of those things.
- Ryan:** Self-control! Don't forget it!
- Selena:** [*Chuckling*] Self-control. There it is. All of those things contribute to this area of communication, right? And so, I think if we can go back and read, this would be my first Couple's Conversation Challenge. Ryan didn't like it. I said, [*Uses dramatic voice*] "The best advice comes from Vanilla Ice. Stop, collaborate, and listen. [*Resumes normal voice*]
- Ryan:** [*Chuckling*] Goodness.
- Selena:** So good! It's good marriage advice, but that's as far as it goes. But I would say go into Galatians and read—
- Ryan:** [*Sing-songy voice*] Something... grabs a hold of me tightly! [*Resumes normal voice and laughs*]
- Selena:** Stop! I'm saying it! Go read about the fruits of the spirit as a couple and start identifying how those are either being produced or not being produced and ask the Holy Spirit to continue to produce those within you, especially in this area of communication. How can I be more patient with you, spouse, person I'm married to? How can I be more loving and gentle and more self-controlled when we get around these hot topics? How can I extend grace in these areas and be filled with joy when we're talking about hard things? Where does that come from?
- Ryan:** Mm.
- Selena:** So, definitely go back, read the fruits of the spirit, talk about those.
- Ryan:** Where's that found?
- Selena:** Galatians—
- Ryan:** Five.

**Selena:** Mm-hm.

**Ryan:** It's Galatians 5. And then, so that's very, very good. Read Galatians 5. It's incredible!

**Selena:** Listen to Vanilla Ice.

**Ryan:** And then tangibly— [*Ryan laughs*] Go ahead. [*Selena laughs*] Tangibly think through maybe three things.

**Selena:** Mm.

**Ryan:** Three ways that you can empathize with your wife or with your husband... How can you empathize with him or her? And actually write those things out and present those to each other.

**Selena:** Yeah.

**Ryan:** And then see if maybe you've hit the mark or how you can improve it. Alright? So, with that said, I think baby's getting a little restless over there. Do you want me to pray?

**Selena:** Yeah! Go ahead.

[00:49:57] **Ryan:** Okay. Lord, I thank You for this time, and I thank You for this grace over our words, Father. I pray that they would be fruitful in people's lives, that they wouldn't be words that glorify us or our ideas, but just illuminate Your truth and glorify You, Jesus. And God, I'm just so grateful for the gift of communication and what it is, that You've given us the physics of speaking and words, and You've given us language. You've made Yourself *known* in human language so that we can know Your will. God, I'm just so thankful for the gift of communication, how You have communicated so clearly. Help us to do the same. And God, I pray for the husband and wife who might be going through a hard time in their marriage. I pray that You would fill them with hope, that You would fill them with faith, that You would compel them, God, to want even more of You, to be hungry and thirsty for Your word, and hungry and thirsty for righteousness, God. And I pray that You would have Your way in their relationships, and You would strengthen and bolster their faith throughout the process. In Jesus name, amen.

**Selena:** Amen.

**Ryan:** Alright ladies and gentlemen, this episode is!

**Selena:** In the caaan!

**Ryan:** Once again, it's been a blast joining you here for the Fierce Marriage podcast.



**Selena:** Mm-hm!

**Ryan:** And we will see you in about seven days! And until then!

**Selena:** Stay fierce!

[00:51:14]           <Ending Sequence>

[00:51:32]           *Podcast ends.*

## PODCAST NOTES

- **[00:19:48]**
  - Scripture references:
    - Psalm 59:12, *ESV*
    - Psalm 59:16-17, *ESV*
- **[00:40:02]**
  - Scripture reference:
    - I Corinthians 13:7, paraphrase, *ESV*

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