

## FIRST THINGS AND NEXT THINGS

<https://fiercemarriage.com/first-things-and-next-things>

- [00:00:00] **Ryan:** All right. This time of year, it is *very* easy to get caught up in the... goals. [*Both laugh*]
- Selena:** [*Both laughing*] #Goals.
- Ryan:** And what we can do in life, and things we can accomplish. Of course, this time of year being that *lull* between Christmas and New Year.
- Selena:** Mm-hm.
- Ryan:** And especially where we're heading into a new decade now, so, it's like, okay, there's all this pressure to do and to accomplish things. And I think we get so caught up in the *next* things—
- Selena:** Mm...
- Ryan:** Particularly in life, that we forget... the primary things, the first things, the...
- Selena:** The fundamental *first* things...
- Ryan:** Yes!
- Selena:** That God is calling us to.
- Ryan:** Yeah. And a conviction that we felt is, even in recent days and weeks, I've been caught up, and I'm like, "What's next? What's next? What's next?"
- Selena:** Mm...
- Ryan:** And forgetting the first things altogether. And it's how can I expect to know next things if I'm abandoning first things?
- Selena:** Mm! So good.
- Ryan:** Right. And so, there's all kinds implications for that in life and in marriage and family and what's important to God, therefore what should be important to us! And that is the point of this episode!
- Selena:** Woo!
- Ryan:** So, we will see [*Chuckling*] you on the other side.
- [00:00:59] <Intro Sequence>
- [00:01:29] **Ryan:** First things first.

- Selena:** [Laughing] [Inaudible] if you want to start a [Inaudible].
- Ryan:** [Laughing] So, that's one of those phrases that we hear often. And again, like we said in the intro, being the time of year that it is, it's perhaps of relevant importance to revisit exactly what we mean by "first things."
- Selena:** Mm.
- Ryan:** All right? So, we can actually move forward into next things in a way *healthier* way, in a way more Christ-focused, gospel-centered way. And so, we're going to talk through kind of what should be our "first things" as a married couple. How can we get on the same page there? And we actually have four, I think five actually, tangible... kind of steps to take as you're thinking through this process for your life and for your marriage.
- Selena:** Yes!
- Ryan:** Yeah!
- Selena:** I'm looking forward to it because I feel like I can easily just collapse under this pressure and then want to do *nothing*. [Laughs]
- Ryan:** Oh, yeah.
- Selena:** And so, it's really great to have some perspective, some boundaries, some structure, all with the assurance of God is sovereign and He's going to walk me through this next year of life no matter what.
- Ryan:** Mm-hm.
- Selena:** And I've just got to trust Him, and I'm doing my best right now to find peace no matter the chaos, to set the boundaries in order for the growth and freedom to happen, that He's determined for us.
- Ryan:** Mm!
- Selena:** And putting His things first is just... There's glory to Him! It covers all the bases! And you thrive in it, right? It's all glory to Him. We get to experience peace, joy. We get to be sanctified [Chuckles], which may not always be... fun, but it's good! So, I'm really looking forward to this!
- Ryan:** Yeah!
- Selena:** It's going to be ministering to my own heart.
- Ryan:** Before we go there, remember to rate and review the Fierce Marriage podcast, if you don't mind. That helps us out a ton! Also, if you want to partner, go to [patreon.com/fiercemarriage](https://patreon.com/fiercemarriage). There are goodies for doing that. If you have a

question, go to [fiercemarriage.com/podcast](http://fiercemarriage.com/podcast). We answer those questions about once a week through a quick Q&A on Thursdays!

Okay. So, this week's topic, I think we're going to title it First Things and Next Things.

**Selena:** Mm!

**Ryan:** All right? As I mentioned in the intro... I was sitting down. I love this time of year, 'cause the 21st, 22nd hits. It's the shortest day of the year. [*Selena laughs*] You're just gaining daylight!

**Selena:** Yeah.

**Ryan:** If you're in the northern hemisphere.

**Selena:** [*Chuckling*] Coming out of the cave, the dark cave.

**Ryan:** If you're in the nor—

**Selena:** Winter. [*Cackles*]

**Ryan:** [*Ryan chuckles quickly*] Yes. If you're in Australia, it's the *lightest* day of the year. [*Selena laughs*] But for *us* in the northern hemisphere, it means that it's only getting brighter from here on out!

**Selena:** Mm-hm.

**Ryan:** And then you have Christmas, which... it's just a *storm* of activity. [*Selena snickers*] The kids love it. We love it. It's great! But it's busy, and it's tiring and exhausting. [*Ryan inhales*] Then you have this lull between... Christmas and New Year.

**Selena:** Mm...

**Ryan:** And New Year's my birthday, by the way.

**Selena:** [*Clicks tongue*] New year's baby!

**Ryan:** So, I've had that anticipation happening. I'm really excited about it! Not necessarily my birthday, but I mean I—

**Selena:** You just like your birth— Everyone likes their birthday!

**Ryan:** We do a really fu— [*Selena exhales a quick laugh*] Like, we go to a local island. You take a ferry to it, and we just go get breakfast there and then we play on one of the playgrounds, then we come back. It's one of my favorite days of the year [*Selena chuckles*] 'cause it's almost always nice!

**Selena:** [Chuckling] Yeah.

**Ryan:** And I love my family. And we get to spend time together. It's great!

**Selena:** [Quietly] You're so sweet.

**Ryan:** Yeah! So, I love this time of year. And so, I was sitting down, kind of writing down, "Okay, what is God going to do?" How can I have *big* vision for stewarding what God has put in our hearts and the ministry He's allowed us to have? And [Inhales] stewarding your time, listener. How do we teach well, and courses and all that sort of stuff? And then, I just felt *so* convicted because I realized that I had been neglecting my quiet time! [Ryan snickers and Selena chuckles] Like... for weeks, probably! Because we got busy with the holidays, and it's just like, I look in my journal; it's been two weeks since I've written down anything. [Inhales]

**Selena:** It's crazy! Yeah! Yeah.

**Ryan:** And I was just like, how can I expect to take right steps into the *next* things if I'm completely neglecting first things?

**Selena:** Mm-hm.

**Ryan:** And so, I got to thinking about what *are* first things?

**Selena:** Mm-hm.

**Ryan:** And how can we, as a family, keep first things, *primary* things, at the center, *so* that when we *do* finally pull the trigger, and God gives us a direction—

[00:05:00] **Selena:** Mm-hm.

**Ryan:** So that when we *do* move in the next things, it's not just arbitrary. They're not just goals we plucked out of thin air.

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** I want to do this fitness goal or this financial goal or this job goal or this whatever goal. A lot of times we pluck those out of thin air because we just happen to scroll past something on Instagram.

**Selena:** Well, yeah. I would argue they're not out of thin air. I think they're just more out of an emotional...

**Ryan:** Hm.

**Selena:** Uprising. Right?

- Ryan:** Okay. Yeah.
- Selena:** I'm more of a *feeling*, more of a just kind of a fleeting motivation.
- Ryan:** Yeah.
- Selena:** And not necessarily *rooted* in... They can be! But I think the perspective here is not going outward-in, but in-ward, out. Right?
- Ryan:** Right, right. [*Inhales*] Yeah. And so, okay. I'll take that. Not everything is out of thin air per say, but it might not be out of the first things.
- Selena:** Right.
- Ryan:** [*Inhales deeply*] And so, I guess just to lay the groundwork for this, what is a first principle? Okay. Thinking philosophically! Okay. There are things called first principles, right? Or first things.
- Selena:** Mm-hm.
- Ryan:** And basically, it's a proposition or assumption that cannot be deduced from any other proposition or assumptions. So, [*Inhales*] in philosophy, for example, first principles are from a first cause, right? This is a specifically at attitudes and it's taught by Aristotelians, students of Aristotle, and then Kant came on and nuanced it even further into his postulates, right? So, Aristotle said this regarding the first cause. Okay, so, I'm quoting this from Physics, one of Aristotle's works. Alright. He said, "that there must be an immortal, unchanging being, ultimately responsible for all wholeness and orderliness in the sensible world." Sensible meaning things I can touch and feel with my senses. Right? See, touch, taste, all that kind of stuff.
- Selena:** Mm. Five senses. Yeah.
- Ryan:** And so, he's saying that what remains, he's asking questions. What remains? All right. When everything else is boiled away? What is the very first? What is the essence, the beginning—
- Selena:** Mm.
- Ryan:** Of all of this? Of course, for Christians, right, we have a worldview that's not just sensory, right?
- Selena:** Right.
- Ryan:** We believe there is a God, and He is spirit, He is triune, and He is not accessible to our senses. We can't *see* Him. We can't *taste* Him, touch Him, hear Him all the time, whatever the senses are. [*Inhales*] And so, we believe that *He* is our, if everything is reduced down, we have God and we have God's word, namely.

**Selena:** Mm-hm.

**Ryan:** We reduce. Go down to the source of God's word, we have God Himself. So, it's upon *Him*, our first cause, that we *build* upon, that He is our rock, our first thing that *everything* else is birthed out of. Right?

**Selena:** Mm.

**Ryan:** Is everything comes from Him, not only our own lives, but every ought, ought not, right?

**Selena:** Mm.

**Ryan:** Things that should and shouldn't be. [*Inhales*] Right? We have... Let's see. So, well, with Him, we have His revealed word. Right? His authority, a solid path forward to right living! [*Briefly inhales*]

**Selena:** Mm.

**Ryan:** We *have* a foundation!

**Selena:** Mm-hm.

**Ryan:** That's the problem. Without a Christian worl— [*Selena chuckles*] I don't want to get too apologetical here, but without a Christian worldview, we have no presupposition.

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** We have no reason to say this should or shouldn't be. You can *try*. I'm going to say try. You can *try* to make arguments...

**Selena:** Mm-hm.

**Ryan:** Based on whatever your worldview is that, hey, this is for the better good of all humanity, therefore, it's better. Well then, I would say, "But why is better better? Why can't worse be better?"

**Selena:** Hm.

**Ryan:** "What's better for you? Why do I care if it's better for you, if it's not better for me?" So, it quickly, if you start asking hard questions, it crumbles.

**Selena:** Unravels. Yeah, yeah.

**Ryan:** But with God of the Bible, we don't *have* that problem.

**Selena:** Mm!

- Ryan:** [*Inhales*] We actually have a *sound* foundation, a rock.
- Selena:** Mm-hm.
- Ryan:** Okay? There's the word rock there for a reason! [*Selena chuckles*] He's a rock! All right? He's not going to crumble.
- Selena:** Right.
- Ryan:** He's not going to go away. It's weighty. It's substantial. It's there. And it's unchanging. And so, now we can start moving forward, now that we know, okay, here's what first things are. What does that mean specifically for us *as* Christ-followers, as a married couple?
- Selena:** So, you're saying that first things are just the boiled down, taking everything away, is God, right?
- Ryan:** Yeah, well—
- Selena:** God is the first...
- Ryan:** Specifically, God's word because—
- Selena:** Okay.
- Ryan:** God's word is how He's revealed Himself to us. So, He—
- Selena:** Right.
- Ryan:** You know, there's general revelation, there's special revelation. Special revelation is that which is useful for His soteriological purposes. Right? For our salvation.
- Selena:** Okay.
- Ryan:** Okay. And then we have general revelation, this *idea* that we have this innate sense of God, the “*sensus divinitatis*,” I think is what they called it [*Ryan briefly chuckles*] ... in Bible school. [*Both laugh*] Which I'm currently in!
- Selena:** [*Chuckling*] If you can't tell!
- Ryan:** [*Laughing*] Sorry to use these words, but they're—
- Selena:** As long as you define them, you can use whatever you want.
- Ryan:** I think our audience is tracking.
- Selena:** Yeah!

**Ryan:** So...

**Selena:** Okay.

**Ryan:** There's this *innate* sense that, okay, there's something out there. God exists.

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** *Who* is this God, and the sense that I *need* Him?

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** Okay? But it's, without special revelation, without God's *word*, namely the special revelation as fulfilled in Christ, I'm hopeless...

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** For salvation. So, general revelation is enough to condemn us! Special revelation is what is necessary to *save* us. And the beauty of it is we have God's *word*, which is the culmination of all these things that *now* is our foundational piece. Now, if you strip away God's word, we have God himself, right?

[00:10:08] **Selena:** Mm-hm.

**Ryan:** Theology proper: *who* is God? It's the study of God Himself.

**Selena:** Hm.

**Ryan:** That's, I think, a little bit le— it's harder to apply practically. [*Snicker*] So, we're going to ask based on God's word, and that's really all we have, and that's what we should root our lives in as authoritative.

**Selena:** Mm-hm.

**Ryan:** Well, what are our first things as a couple?

**Selena:** Got'cha.

**Ryan:** So, we're going to answer those generally. But I do want to preface this. There's going to be five specific ways forward through this as a family, Fierce listener, that you can talk and process through these things, and hopefully



come out the other end with some clarity and some conviction based on these first things.

**Selena:** Well, and I think it's important to remember our perspective. [*Inhales*] I mean, you said this before when we were talking before we started recording. You could say this about all of our episodes, that the big picture here is what to a, to glorify God, b, when we glorify God, we are probably being [*Chortles*] sanctified by God in that process.

**Ryan:** Right.

**Selena:** Right? And we want to be able to— It's not about just checking the box of the first things, but *trusting* that those first things that God has...

**Ryan:** Mm-hm.

**Selena:** Commanded for us, we're trusting that there's a *bigger* picture, there's an eternal... part to this piece. Right?

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

**Selena:** And it's not when He says seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, it's not about just going to the Bible every day and *seeking* what you can get from it. It's more than that. It's allowing God's word to penetrate your heart and your soul. And it's absorbing everything that He's saying—

**Ryan:** Mm-hm.

**Selena:** Everything that every bit of who He is, we're allowing the Holy Spirit to kind of come and infiltrate our lives at that point. And so, when that happens, though, I think it's like the seeds in our hearts are getting planted. They're being watered. And then growth comes from that. And we can't anticipate that.

**Ryan:** Hm.

**Selena:** So, I think when we're just doing the first things, it's not a *list* of these are the first things you have to do. God's saying these are foundational and first because things are going to grow from here that you can't anticipate. Things are going to grow from here—

**Ryan:** Yeah.

**Selena:** That are going to go on into eternity. Things are going to grow here that you never thought possible. And so, when we talk about impossible dreams and things in our hearts, I feel like *that* is what...

**Ryan:** Right.

**Selena:** God is talking about in terms of, “I'm going to make the impossible possible for you, and you're not going to understand it, but you have to just trust Me in these first things.” And we want to walk away from it when it doesn't feel good. We want to walk away from it—

**Ryan:** Oh, yeah.

**Selena:** When it doesn't make sense.

**Ryan:** Yeah, they— [*Inhales*]

**Selena:** But trusting that the first things are made the first things *for* a reason.

**Ryan:** And how's that evidenced in our lives, I think—

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** Is what I want to get at, because I think, by virtue of people listening to this podcast, they probably would say, “Yeah, absolutely! God's word is the rock, or Christ is the rock, the cornerstone of the church. God's word is that solid foundation. I have to *trust* that.” Right? But functionally, we often have to say, “Oh, yeah, that's a great rock.” I think of the parable when Jesus said, “Build your house on the rock,” right? He says everyone who hears these words of Mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock.” That's Matthew 7:24. And He's saying, “You build your house. It's not just you recognize the rock and say, ‘That's a beautiful rock,’ but you *build* your house on it!”

**Selena:** Right!

**Ryan:** You actually apply it. So, a lot of times—

**Selena:** Well, that's what I mean, by *trusting* it.

**Ryan:** Right, but a lot of times, functionally, and that's what I'm getting at, is we'll say, “Oh, that's a great rock. Yes! Hard rock is good!” [*Selena chuckles*] “And, however, I'm going to go build my house on the sand, because I *really* believe the sand is where the beautiful scenery's going to be.”

**Selena:** [*Chuckles*] Sans little rock, right? [*Laughs*]

**Ryan:** It's going to be— [*Chuckles lightly*] That's right. That's great!

**Selena:** [*Laughing*] It's a bunch of little rocks!

**Ryan:** That's true! And our rocks are much smaller than God's rock.

**Selena:** Uh-huh.

**Ryan:** And they tend to be washed away by the storms of life are a lot more quickly!

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** And so, that would look like... All right. God is the foundation. However, I'm going to build my life in a way that actually answers this deeper question that I don't believe Christ is my identity.

**Selena:** Hm...

**Ryan:** So, I'm going to go try to find my identity elsewhere. Not going to build it on God's word, because I'm not going to actually functionally study God's word. I'm not going to functionally apply it in my life, and in the life of our marriage and our family.

**Selena:** Yeah. Or maybe I'll—

**Ryan:** Instead, I'm going to just labor harder at work because I want to get that financial goal I've been going for.

**Selena:** Yeah.

**Ryan:** Or I'm going to go to the gym because that'll make me feel better. That'll make me feel like I'm worth something. So on and so forth! So, what we're saying *here* is, yes, God's word is His rock, is the rock. We're called to build our *house* on it! Now, let's *actually*, people, let's build our house on this rock!

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** Let's actually do it! Selena said, what you said, *trusting* that when we do that, the view is actually far better. [*Chortles*]

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** Yeah.

**Selena:** Well, and there's so much more to be had that you can't anticipate. So, I think that's—

**Ryan:** Yeah.

**Selena:** Just a word of encouragement to not walk away from God's word when it really clashes with either your decisions or your priorities, or how you understand your marriage covenant and how to love each other. God's word is our authority in this!

**Ryan:** Mm-hm.

**Selena:** And it's creating these first things, which our life is going to flow out of. And so... [*Inhales*]

[00:15:00] **Ryan:** Right.

**Selena:** What is it? Proverbs 3 is like, "Seek—" Not seek first. It's...

**Ryan:** "Seek first the kingdom of God, always."

**Selena:** It's the desires. No, no, no!

**Ryan:** Oh, yeah.

**Selena:** It's, "When the Lord gives you the desires of your heart."

**Ryan:** Yeah. [*Selena chortles*] Yeah. Sorry. We're...

**Selena:** Blanking.

**Ryan:** We haven't looked that one up.

**Selena:** But it's very obvious one that everybody knows it. [*Chuckles*]

**Ryan:** "Delight yourself in the LORD—"

**Selena:** There it is! [*Chuckles*]

**Ryan:** "He will give you the desires of your heart."

**Selena:** [*Chuckling*] There it is.

**Ryan:** Yeah.

**Selena:** But He will give you, He will plant those seeds of desires. Right? And that's what we're building our house on. On Him, because then He will give us the desires. He will give us the things that we *should* want, that our hearts are really longing for.

**Ryan:** I want a nuance. That's my word! [*Chuckles*] I want to add to what you're saying.

**Selena:** I like your nuances. [*Ryan laughs*] I appreciate them.

**Ryan:** It's not about getting things. It's not about getting things or accomplishments or whatever.

**Selena:** No...

**Ryan:** It's about having our actual desires given to us.

**Selena:** Yes!

**Ryan:** Is what you're saying.

**Selena:** Yes. Thank you.

**Ryan:** Yeah. So, the first part is not to be looked over! *Delight* yourself in the Lord.

**Selena:** Mm-hm.

**Ryan:** When you delight in something—We have a three-month-old baby at home. I delight in her!

**Selena:** Mm-hm.

**Ryan:** I just want to look at her. I just want to just...

**Selena:** Spend time with her. [*Chuckles briefly*]

**Ryan:** Just nuzzle her!

**Selena:** Time flies when you're with her.

**Ryan:** Just spend time with her. Make her giggle. I want to give her kisses. I want to give her snuggles. All those things! [*Selena giggles*] I'm delighting in her. [*Ryan inhales*] And when we do that with God [*Ryan breathily chuckles*] When we are delighting in God, and saying, "You are all I care about!"

**Selena:** Mm-hm.

**Ryan:** "You are all I want. I'm completely content in this moment with You."

**Selena:** Mm-hm.

**Ryan:** Our very desires are flipped upside down!

**Selena:** Mm-hm.

**Ryan:** And the things that matter to the world *shouldn't* matter to us in the same way!

**Selena:** They start to *not* matter.

**Ryan:** They start to fade away.

**Selena:** Yeah.

**Ryan:** And we start to see that anything is only of worthwhile value, eternal value, when they are built on this rock.

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** So, let's talk about marriage, okay?

**Selena:** Yeah!

**Ryan:** So, specifically, a lot of people within marriage will say that, oh, their marriage *is* what it is. Right? And so, [Ryan exhales quickly] I'm always amazed at how *few* people actually work *intentionally* on their marriage, that they just think, "It's going to be what it's going to be." [Selena chuckles] "We're going to co-exist together and try not to kill each other," [Ryan chuckles] "and try not to get a divorce."

**Selena:** Right. And...

**Ryan:** "And try to be happy."

**Selena:** Sort of be happy together.

**Ryan:** Right! And I think underneath that idea is the belief that we can't really change!

**Selena:** Mm...

**Ryan:** And so, in a way, I would say that's probably true because without God's grace and help—

**Selena:** Mm-hm.

**Ryan:** We're hopeless to change anything of substance in our life, in our marriage. However, okay, and that's a big however, we believe that God is always at work and He wants to see us *grow* and mature, both as individuals and as a couple, both for our good and for His glory.

**Selena:** Yeah!

**Ryan:** So! As 2020 ramps up, that's the assumption. Okay. God's word is our rock. We're going to build on that. We *can* change! God *wants* to change and sanctify us. And, by the way, our marriage to one another is one of the primary ways that He might go about doing that!

**Selena:** Mm-hm.

**Ryan:** So, we're encouraging you to think about how your marriage can improve to that end! Right?

**Selena:** Mm-hm.

**Ryan:** In the coming months and in the next year, and if you're unsure what that could mean, we're going to give you five specific ways forward. All right?

**Selena:** Awesome!

**Ryan:** [*Inhales*] All right!

**Selena:** Let's do it!

**Ryan:** Let's do it! So, here we go! Five ways to, I don't know, keep first things first and move on the next things in a wise way. Okay?

**Selena:** Mm-hm.

**Ryan:** So, first things and next things. The first one is, and I love this one, is *reflect*. Okay. I think the best way to look forward [*Selena chuckles*] oftentimes is to—

**Selena:** Is to look backwards?

**Ryan:** Is to look back!

**Selena:** Nice.

**Ryan:** Is to remember exactly all the things that God has done.

**Selena:** Mm-hm.

**Ryan:** I think there's many instances... in the Bible where God's people are called to *remember* His covenant with His people.

**Selena:** Yeah.

**Ryan:** They're called to remember His mighty works. Right? [*Sniffs in*] I think, what is it? Psalm 106? "Our fathers, when they were in Egypt, did not consider your wondrous works; they did not remember the abundance of your steadfast love, but rebelled by the sea," —

**Selena:** Mm...

**Ryan:** "At the Red Sea." [*Pauses*] Okay. So... [*Both chuckle*] "Rebelled by the sea." What happened at the Red Sea? Do you remember?

**Selena:** It parted.

**Ryan:** Not by itself! God parted it. [*Laughs*]

**Selena:** Right! Sorry. [*Giggles*] I thought it was a bad descry—I was just trying to answer the question.

**Ryan:** Yeah. I pop-quizzed you.

**Selena:** *God* parted the Red Sea!

**Ryan:** Yeah! For them to cross the Red Sea! [*Snicker*]

**Selena:** Yes.

**Ryan:** And it's saying that they literally rebelled *by* the Red Sea [*Selena snickers*], whether they— [*Ryan cackles*] So, we're so... [*Ryan quickly chuckles*]

**Selena:** We are *still* like that, right?

**Ryan:** Absolutely.

**Selena:** We see the miracles of God and yet we still... want. I see this in our kids so much, *especially* around the holidays!

**Ryan:** Mm. Yeah, yeah.

**Selena:** There's been— We're trying to teach them gratefulness.

**Ryan:** Oh, my word. [*Selena snickers*]

**Selena:** I'm like, "Why don't you understand this?!" [*Ryan gives a quiet, breathy chuckle*] And I'm like, "Well, I probably don't understand this." I'm sure God's like [*Selena chuckles*], "Why don't you understand this?"

**Ryan:** [*Chuckling*] Yeah.

**Selena:** [*Chuckling*] Right? We just want more and more and more. And we *forget* the goodness of God.

**Ryan:** Mm...

**Selena:** We forget how He brought us out of enslavement. Right? The Israelites, if you want to look at the story of them with Egypt...

**Ryan:** Mm...

**Selena:** And how they wanted to go back because [*Snicker*] they had forgotten!

**Ryan:** Wow!

**Selena:** Because they had some lack. The lack was the food, right? They wanted food!



**Ryan:** Yeah.

**Selena:** They wanted to be— And it's like, “Well, you could go back, but it would cost you your freedom—”

**Ryan:** Mm-hm.

**Selena:** “To have bread.” Right? And I *feel* like we're always in that position! I mean, I feel the stress of that decision, the weight of that decision, so many times! And I know it sounds terrible, but it's like what's an easy fix here? But usually the easy fix is going to strip you of something that God's like, “I want to give you this. I want to *grow* you in this.”

[00:20:12] **Ryan:** Mm-hm.

**Selena:** So, we are constantly faced with new battles, new fire. Right?

**Ryan:** Mm.

**Selena:** But then if we reflect on those old fires, those old moments, other moments, that when God brought us face to face with trials, with frustrations, with hurts, with pain within our marriage, [*Clicks tongue*] and we look back at that and we see how He mended our hearts, how He mended our covenant, how He showed us that when we forgive, we too experience that forgiveness.

**Ryan:** Mm-hm.

**Selena:** When we forgive our spouse for maybe some hurt, some dark things that we have just been holding onto, that we can experience *freedom* in that. It's when we reflect on what He's done, the more we see what He's done, the more we see who He is and the more we can even *reflect* who He is.

**Ryan:** Yeah. [*Inhales*] Yeah, yeah. And the key there is we have to be conscious and we have to do it intentionally.

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** Because we are apt to forget.

**Selena:** Mm-hm!

**Ryan:** And worse yet, when we do forget, we fall into the same patterns and pitfalls.

**Selena:** Mm-hm.

**Ryan:** We fall into the same traps of discontentment—

**Selena:** Mm!

**Ryan:** Or just forgetting all that the gospel means.

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** And all that Jesus has done for us and all He's done in our marriage!

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** Right? So, here's the thing. So, here's the practical application. Number one is to reflect on what God has done. Here's how to do it practically. Take, I don't know, an hour. Okay. This is the beginning of the year! I think we can all invest an hour into this. [*Selena cackles*] Maybe go on a date!

**Selena:** Sorry! I just think it's funny. [*Ryan chuckles*] It seems like...

**Ryan:** It seems like a big ask!

**Selena:** But it shouldn't be! Like...

**Ryan:** [*Chuckling*] Right!

**Selena:** This should be a couple days! I mean... [*Chuckle*]

**Ryan:** Well, I'm thinking, "When are we going to have time for this?" [*Both laugh*] That's what I'm thinking! 'Cause we have the baby and everything, but... I think it's worse figuring out how to make it happen, put it on the calendar. I think the challenge is between now and the end of January, or the next month.

**Selena:** Mm-hm.

**Ryan:** If you're not in January now, then listen between now and the next month, end of this month. Figure it out! Go through each month and recap meaningful moments.

**Selena:** Mm....

**Ryan:** Okay. So, look over the last year, the last 12 months and reference your work or family calendar or whatever you need to do to jar your memory. But look at the struggles and the successes you experienced. Okay. What are those? What milestones did you pass?

**Selena:** Mm!

**Ryan:** I know for us, I was looking back, we had Louisa...

**Selena:** Mm-hm.

**Ryan:** [*Inhales*] Back in October. That's unbelievable.

**Selena:** Mm-hm.

**Ryan:** We got to be chaplains for our local minor league baseball team, the Rainiers, the affiliate of the Mariners.

**Selena:** Mm-hm.

**Ryan:** That was— I mean, look how God worked in that. We had over half the roster showing up on a weekly basis!

**Selena:** Yeah. It's crazy!

**Ryan:** And we're presenting the gospel to them. What else did we have? I mean, I'm just using us as an example. But look at the meaningful milestones that you...

**Selena:** Oh, look in your—

**Ryan:** That you went through.

**Selena:** Yeah! Look in your community group, too.

**Ryan:** Mm! And what—Yeah. What relationships did you nurture?

**Selena:** Right?

**Ryan:** And how did God work in those?

**Selena:** How've they grown!

**Ryan:** Yeah!

**Selena:** And have they *deepened* in the word and your understanding of each other's stories and how God is maybe used somebody that you thought had a rough edge and you guys have become great friends!

**Ryan:** Right, right! And other things. Look at other significant events that might have happened.

**Selena:** Mm-hm.

**Ryan:** If you had a child that graduated from high school, or...

**Selena:** Yeah, look at those big life events for sure! [*Inhales*]

**Ryan:** Yeah! I would say rhythms, routines, rhythms and rites of passage—

**Selena:** Yeah.

**Ryan:** They're all really important things for formation, but also looking at how God is working.

**Selena:** So, you're saying to stop and look at your calendar and go through some of those milestones and the feelings around those times?

**Ryan:** Mm-hm!

**Selena:** And what did God do in those situations?

**Ryan:** Specifically, *remember* who God is and how—

**Selena:** In those situations.

**Ryan:** His character was revealed in those situations.

**Selena:** Right, right! And then, finally, how did each kind of happening impact your marriage? So...

**Ryan:** Yeah! And it doesn't have to be a big exhaustive list, but just try to find maybe five *key* moments. And *just* so you remember, okay, God is at work!

**Selena:** Mm.

**Ryan:** Look how far He's brought us.

**Selena:** Mmm...

**Ryan:** And we're not still in Egypt. He's taking us into the promised land.

**Selena:** Mm=hm.

**Ryan:** We are His people. He's loving us. He's lovingly shepherding us.

**Selena:** Mm-hm.

**Ryan:** Remember those things, okay? [*Inhales quietly*]

**Selena:** It's very encouraging and it bolsters confidence, I think.

**Ryan:** Yeah.

**Selena:** And assurance in God.

**Ryan:** Yeah.

**Selena:** More and more.

**Ryan:** So—

**Selena:** His character.

**Ryan:** With that in hand. Okay? Looking at what God had done, now you're starting to look at the present, though. So, you're contextualizing your life. Okay?

**Selena:** That's number two.

**Ryan:** So, this is number two: contextualize your life. And what I mean by that is talk about all that God is doing around the world! Okay?

**Selena:** Mm!

**Ryan:** [*Inhales*] This may seem odd, but we must remember as believers, we are part of a greater context. God is at work in your heart and He's at work in your life, yes! But God is at work in the entire world.

**Selena:** Mm.

**Ryan:** And He's working and moving through His local churches, His global church, everywhere around the world! And when we lift our eyes from our day-to-day, our kind of "in the weeds" reality toward a bigger picture, to a larger picture, it helps us handle our current situations with better perspective and greater wisdom.

**Selena:** Right, and I think doing this together obviously is the most important thing. Being aware, I mean, we try to give to missionaries, local and abroad, of course.

[00:25:01] **Ryan:** Mm.

**Selena:** And we try to be aware of [*Inhales quickly*] the struggles they're facing, 'cause thankfully there's newsletters, there's prayer requests that are sent to us. And we are constantly talking about... how can we be praying for these leaders in this area? Do we need to give more in this area? How are our lives serving the global church?

**Ryan:** Mm.

**Selena:** And how are we exposing our children to that in where they're at?

**Ryan:** Yeah.

**Selena:** 'Cause we're all at different stages and phases. And so, [*Inhales*] how can we bring to light more of what God's doing in the world, showing our kids that it's not just us, but we're a part of the bigger body?

**Ryan:** Yeah.

**Selena:** Like, why do we go to church? Why do we give to missionaries? Why do we get on board with Compassion, World Vision, those kinds of things?

**Ryan:** Yeah. Mm!

**Selena:** What's the whole picture behind that? Because then we're raising our eyes, right? We're not just looking at our own life, and we're— I don't know! That just gives me a big breath of *fresh* air, to know that it's not just about me and my house, but it's about His house. Right?

**Ryan:** Yeah.

**Selena:** And how we're contributing and how He's leading us to...

**Ryan:** Mm... It's not just about what I'm building or what we are building.

**Selena:** Yeah!

**Ryan:** It's about what God is building!

**Selena:** What He's building. Yeah!

**Ryan:** And how Christ is the centerpiece of that, [*Enunciates next two words*] not me.

**Selena:** And we're linking arms with—

**Ryan:** Yes.

**Selena:** With other people, other believers in different parts of the world. And it's *beautiful!*

**Ryan:** So... [*Sharp exhale*] I don't think—

**Selena:** It's a very reminding thing!

**Ryan:** If I'm honest, I don't think we do a great job of doing this. You had mentioned that we do think through some of that stuff. We have some rhythms in place. We'll talk about rhythms a little bit later.

**Selena:** I think it's something that—

**Ryan:** That kind of *keep* this at the forefront of our minds! [*Sniffles*]

**Selena:** Yeah. It's something we can improve on! I definitely talk to the girls about, like, they see the pictures of the kids that we help.

**Ryan:** Mm-hm!

**Selena:** And we talk about them, and...

**Ryan:** Right. Right. And I sit on the board. Okay. If you're wondering how to kind of get a pulse on what God is doing to the global church, through the persecuted church, through the reformers around the world, go to NationsMedia.org, It's just Nations Media. I sit on the board. It's a non-profit. And they create these magazines, almost like National Geographic magazines. One or two a year!

**Selena:** Mm-hm.

**Ryan:** *Beautifully* done! Joel Parker, he's a good friend of ours. He's the founder and the president. And through being on the board, I've gotten to know him really well! But, man, it's just amazing to see how God is working in Iraq!

**Selena:** Mm-hm.

**Ryan:** How He's working— I mean, despite the presence of Islam and ISIS and all that—

**Selena:** Mm-hm.

**Ryan:** How God is working through the persecuted church, and *how* they're seeing miracles happen!

**Selena:** Yeah.

**Ryan:** And how the very persecution that we tend to avoid in the West...

**Selena:** Mm...

**Ryan:** Is what is sharpening and enlivening and growing the church in those contexts.

**Selena:** Mm.

**Ryan:** Look at how the church is flourishing in China *despite* the government's efforts to suppress it.

**Selena:** Yeah.

**Ryan:** Look at how the church in Hong Kong, the protests that are happening there...

**Selena:** Mm-hm!

**Ryan:** Look how the gospel is working. I mean, that's just a glimpse! But if you're trying to stay kind of on the—what's happening—

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** Follow Nations on Facebook and all that kind of stuff. Go to NationsMedia.org. Support them! I think we get the magazine. But anyway! That's one of the ways that we kind of keep this on the forefront of our minds. And so, I think just spending a little time thinking about global church missionaries, again, will keep us *rooted* in—

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** God, God. We are...

**Selena:** Mm-hm.

**Ryan:** Small. He is huge! He is working in big ways, and we are just a small part of how He's working.

**Selena:** Yep! And if don't do anything outside of kind of the local area that you're in, I guess I would *challenge* you to, let's try to go up a little further. Pray about it, obviously!

**Ryan:** Yeah.

**Selena:** But I think that it's so good for us to just see what's going on in God's world. And...

**Ryan:** Yeah!

**Selena:** See how He might lead us to be a part of it, either sacrificially, through giving, or prayer!

**Ryan:** Yeah!

**Selena:** Or bringing our children into... Like, integrating some of what they're learning about God.

**Ryan:** [*Inhales and exhales quietly*] Yeah!

**Selena:** Bringing that to light in terms of across the world.

**Ryan:** [*Sniffles quickly*] And oftentimes, God will bring those opportunities right through your front door, right?

**Selena:** Right, right.

**Ryan:** Through people that you know...

**Selena:** mm-hm.



**Ryan:** Or through close friends of close friends. We have Cameron. Cameron and Amy. They run a non-profit called ABSOLUTE. It's a rehab. It's like a... It's not a halfway house, but it's a way for people who have suffered addiction [*Inhales*]...

**Selena:** Mm-hm.

**Ryan:** To get not just back on their feet. Okay? It's how to get rooted in Christian community, and therefore have a full life transformation.

**Selena:** Right, right.

**Ryan:** Starting with the gospel.

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** So, I mean, that's an opportunity to support [*Selena chuckles*] what God's doing globally!

**Selena:** Yeah!

**Ryan:** Right in our back door! [*Quick chuckle*]

**Selena:** Yes, yes!

**Ryan:** Like, in our backyard, I should say.

**Selena:** So good! So good.

**Ryan:** So, look for those opportunities! They'll make themselves known to you. God will make 'em known to you.

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** So, let's recap, real quick. The first thing was reflect on what God has done, specifically taking some time, looking back at your calendar, going through each month, trying to capture maybe five main moments throughout the last year of how you've seen God work, what He did, how your hearts were changed and touched, and... writing that down, making that known, making that tangible for you in the coming year. The second one: contextualize your life. So...

**Ryan:** Look at the greater context globally.

[00:30:00] **Selena:** Mm-hm.

**Ryan:** And whatever that means for how God is leading you to do that. Missionaries, nonprofits, those sorts of things.

**Selena:** Mm-hm!

**Ryan:** But just don't gloss over it. Look at it and rejoice in it.

**Selena:** Mm!

**Ryan:** And then rejoice in your small role in that.

**Selena:** Mm-hm!

**Ryan:** And then, the third one, moving along here, is root your hope in *becoming* and not doing! Okay?

**Selena:** Mm!

**Ryan:** So, what I mean by this is talk about what you hope God does in your family in the coming year through changing you as people.

**Selena:** Mm!

**Ryan:** Not just, "Hey! When can God complete X, Y and Z?"

**Selena:** [Chuckles] Right!

**Ryan:** But how is God forming us into people that glorify Him, the way—

**Selena:** Right! And this is kind of the inside-out change we were talking about.

**Ryan:** Yeah!

**Selena:** Versus the outside-in. Really taking the time to... I think becoming and being, they're such *freeing* words. [Chuckles]

**Ryan:** Mm-hm.

**Selena:** Like, I feel so enslaved by goals and [Snicker] things like that, and that's probably partially just my personality. I don't mind *working* for them, but I need a breakdown and a plan.

**Ryan:** Mm-hm.

**Selena:** But becoming and being is so much more of a slower, richer [Inhales], deeper growth and transformation than just kind of changing a few things about my schedule. Right?

**Ryan:** Mm-hm! So, just to make it clear, that's absolutely true. And then to make a contrast here, the tendency is for us to say, "All right. January 1st, I'm going to floss more." [Ryan snickers and Selena laughs] Boom! [Both speak in unison]

Blood everywhere! [Ryan laughs and then continues speaking solo] No. But we say “Oh, I want to run five miles a week,” or, “I want to save this person.” Whatever that milestone is!

**Selena:** Mm-hm!

**Ryan:** Or, I'm going to say it, “I want to read my Bible more.” Right? You say, “I want to read two chapters a day,” or, “I want to read a chapter at night, a chapter a day.”

**Selena:** Great.

**Ryan:** “I want to journal for at least an hour,” “I want to pray for seven hours a day,” and [Both snicker] whenever those— Usually the goals are too far reaching is what I'm trying to say. [Inhales quickly] But instead—

**Selena:** No, you're not working hard enough.

**Ryan:** [Laughs] Yeah.

**Selena:** [Giggling lightly] I'm just kidding.

**Ryan:** Yeah [Selena bursts out laughing], exactly. Thank you for that. Very encouraging.

They're all great, especially reading more of God's word. Obviously, that's a good thing! But we tend to focus far too much on what we do and far too little on the kinds of people we're becoming, which is what we're just saying. [Inhales quickly]

So, Jesus's message was not about... Excuse me! It *was* about becoming people formed in His very image.

**Selena:** Mm-hm.

**Ryan:** So... Like, James. All right. So, does that mean we never *do*? I'm looking at James. All right. So, James says the fruit in our life always indicates the root in our life.

**Selena:** Right!

**Ryan:** He said faith without works is dead.

**Selena:** Right. James 2.

**Ryan:** Okay! People love to use that verse and say, “Oh, you have to do works in order to get the faith,” or, “In order to be saved—”

**Selena:** Right. Your faith without works is dead, right?

**Ryan:** He's saying that if you have a tree...

**Selena:** Yep.

**Ryan:** That bears no fruit, that tree is dead!

**Selena:** Hm.

**Ryan:** If you are that tree, you bear no fruit; you are dead. [*Selena cackles*] You're faith is dead.

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** So, basically don't be delusional, into thinking that, yes, you're a Christian. If you call yourself a Christian and there's no fruit of the Spirit...

**Selena:** Hm...

**Ryan:** There's no fruit of discipleship and evangelism, there's no fruit in the things of God, understanding and growing in your relationship with God.

**Selena:** Mm...

**Ryan:** Then you may need to make sure that you're actually believing the gospel.

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** You actually are beholding all it means to be saved by God's grace! And Jesus talked about this, I can't remember where, but He's talking about "he who forgives much loves much."

**Selena:** He who is— Right. [*Speak in unison*] "He is forgiven—"

**Ryan:** [*Continues on solo*] "Little loves little."

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** That's what Jesus was talking about! He's saying, "If you don't fully grasp all that I've done—"

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** "The God-man coming down..."

**Selena:** How much I've forgiven.

- Ryan:** Yeah! Then you'll never bear the fruit you so desperately want.
- Selena:** Right.
- Ryan:** And it's like you're going to staple fruit onto your branches and it's going to rot! And it's not going to last. And you're going to grow tired and weary in doing that...
- Selena:** And I think it's recognizing, too, that we *are* the ones that are forgiven much!
- Ryan:** Mm.
- Selena:** I think we just say, "Oh, I'm this person," or, "I sometimes—" Even I struggled! I feel like, "God, I don't have this big grand testimony of like, I really messed up and I didn't trust You." And I don't feel like I have a lot to bring to the table. And God's like, "I've forgiven you of so much! Look and see, look and see what I've forgiven you of."
- Ryan:** Yeah.
- Selena:** And sometimes I'm like, "I don't know," and God's like, "It's okay! I'm going to show you!" You know? [*Chuckles*] We've been given so much grace in our lives. We deserve nothing! And He's given us everything.
- Ryan:** Right.
- Selena:** You know? The little things. There's so much to... be thankful for, I think. Just if you look at your own life, where you came from, your family of origin and how God can even turn the heartache and the bad into good. Nothing is ever wasted in our lives. Nothing is ever wasted—
- Ryan:** Yeah.
- Selena:** In God's kingdom. And just personally, saying my word for 2020 is "beholding" because I've been really convicted of that! Because I think there's...
- Ryan:** Mm-hm.
- Selena:** There's a book out by Ruth Chou Simons that she's written. It's called *Beholding and Becoming*. [*Clicks tongue*] Maybe it's *Becoming—Beholding and Becoming!* 'Cause what you behold you become, right?
- Ryan:** Yeah. Mm!
- Selena:** And what you behold is a source of your joy and your strength and all of those things. And so, but before I even read anything from her, it was "beholding," and God used kind of those words to affirm [*Inhales*] what that word would be

moving forward. Because I think I've been *beholding* the wrong things! I haven't been beholding *Him* or His word or the gospel in ways that—

[00:35:06] **Ryan:** Right.

**Selena:** I know that I can.

**Ryan:** Mm!

**Selena:** And when that starts to happen, I think when I'm rooting who I am in who God is, the *doing* starts flowing out of that!

**Ryan:** Mmm...

**Selena:** Well, I don't want to be doing to become. I want to become so that the doing starts to happen. Is that clear?

**Ryan:** I think so! I think so.

**Selena:** The doing flows out of becoming.

**Ryan:** Right. And so, I guess this number three, the rooting your hope and *becoming* and not *doing* is basically a reminder to say... look to Christ!

**Selena:** Mm.

**Ryan:** Let your goals be Christ-oriented in that you are looking to *Him* and putting your hope in Him and the person He will turn you into.

**Selena:** Mmm...

**Ryan:** And so, you said your word's kind of a beholding and becoming! Mine is just simply "faithfulness."

**Selena:** Mm.

**Ryan:** What does it mean to be faithful with what God has put in my hands to care for?

**Selena:** Mm-hm!

**Ryan:** Starting with my family, and in some ways my own heart!

**Selena:** Mm.

**Ryan:** In that giving it to God. [*Quickly chuckles*]

**Selena:** Allowing Him to...

**Ryan:** Allowing Him to do His work.

**Selena:** Let you become, and not just...

**Ryan:** Yeah!

**Selena:** Yeah.

**Ryan:** And not just being so busy that I'm not actually daily just repenting and believing.

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** And giving my heart to Him, and saying—

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** “Help me believe. Help me believe. Help me trust.” But also, being faithful of how I care for *you*, care for our daughters, care for—

**Selena:** Mm-hm.

**Ryan:** This podcast! How I care for...

**Selena:** [*Inhales*] For sure!

**Ryan:** Everything, and our car. [*Ryan chuckles*] It's still getting the oil changed! [*Both giggle*] So, I'm getting silly, but the—

**Selena:** It's hard to adult sometimes! [*Chuckles*]

**Ryan:** Adulting is hard! [*Selena giggles*] Faithfulness. Okay.

**Selena:** Yeah.

**Ryan:** But then, the second part that is being *filled* with faith, meaning that trusting that God will do only what He can do, and in that, He will transform my heart, but He'll also transform my desires.

**Selena:** Mmm!

**Ryan:** And I can delight in not only Him, but the things He does because they glorify Him.

**Selena:** Yeah!

**Ryan:** Okay. So, this is a call, again, to just root your hope in becoming, and therefore you fix your eyes on Jesus. Behold *Him!*

**Selena:** Mm!

**Ryan:** Okay! And this is where it gets really tricky. And so, that was number three. Number four is now, okay, make plans, act wisely, remain teachable! So, we just said, "Don't do". We said, "Become." The thing is, is we have already become. If you're in Christ, you are a new creation.

**Selena:** Mm-hm.

**Ryan:** Your identity is secure before God. You have been called a son or a daughter of the living God, the living King!

**Selena:** Mm.

**Ryan:** And *that* is a foregone conclusion. It's done! All right. But our tendency, I think, is to flip the upside down, but *from* that, now we can say, "Okay. Given my identity in Christ, I can *now* act. I can make plans. I can act wisely, and I can remain teachable. And in other words, I'm *trusting* God to use, by His grace, to use whatever things I have in my care for His glory.

**Selena:** Mm-hm.

**Ryan:** So, I'm going to start making plans with a very open hand! Right?

**Selena:** Mm-hm.

**Ryan:** And so, that's where this will get really tangible. But basically, what I want to focus in on is the actual teachable part of it.

**Selena:** Mm.

**Ryan:** So, there's a quote from a book. It's called How to Read Proverbs. And it came from... So, I follow this account on Instagram. He's actually a Patreon supporter! His name's Walter, but he has an account: WTSreads. And it's amazing 'cause he goes through these incredible books, and he gives little... really beautiful pictures. And then he will talk about what's in the book.

**Selena:** Oh, man!

**Ryan:** And then, if you're interested, you can go pick up the book.

**Selena:** That sounds like...

**Ryan:** It sounds like a money pit!

**Selena:** Exactly, for me! *[Both cackle]*

**Ryan:** *[Laughing]* Yeah.



- Selena:** I'm like, "Oh, that sounds amazing! Buy!!"
- Ryan:** No, but definitely--
- Selena:** Buy that book! [*Chortles*]
- Ryan:** [*Chuckling*] Go ahead and follow it. So, WTSreads. It's on Instagram. He's an awesome, awesome account to follow. But he quoted from this book called *How to Read Proverbs*, that, "The difference between the simpleminded (or young/immature person) and the fool or the mocker may be summed up in one word: teachability."
- Selena:** Mmm...
- Ryan:** So, "The difference between the simple-minded and the fool or the mocker may be summed up in one word: teachability." All right. So, if we're not teachable, we're fools.
- Selena:** Mmm.
- Ryan:** Right? And so, what does it look like to be teachable? All right. Look to Proverbs again! Proverbs 19. "Listen to advice." Excuse me. 19:20 and 21. "Listen to advice and accept instruction, that you may gain wisdom in the future. Many are the plans in the mind of a man, but it is the purpose of the LORD that will stand."
- Selena:** Mm!
- Ryan:** Kay, so, this is not an excuse to just... ignore making plans!
- Selena:** Mm-hm.
- Ryan:** It's saying make the plans, but as you look to and listen for advice and accept the instruction, again, you have to qualify it. It can't be instruction from just any voice anywhere. They have to be people that are God-fearing, God-loving, and they love you!
- Selena:** Right!
- Ryan:** That's when the purposes of the Lord are going to begin to basically stand out and they're going to be able to stand the test of that scrutiny!
- Selena:** Mm-hm!
- Ryan:** Right? And that's where, if we're teachable, we can hear those goals, or we can hear that instruction, and let that inform our goals.
- Selena:** Mm-hm.

**Ryan:** Right? So, if you go to someone to say, “Hey, my goal is to... build my business,” all right, just theoretically speaking, “to this X number of whatever revenue, whatever customers, whatever that metric is.”

**Selena:** Mm-hm!

**Ryan:** And you have a mentor in your life that says, “Listen, I've been in business for 30 years. The things you're talking about are going to mean that you're at the office for 60 or 70 hours a week.”

**Selena:** Hmm...

**Ryan:** “And that's going to hurt your family. Is that what you really want? By the way, I don't think you should want that.” *[Both chuckle]* Okay. If you're humble!

[00:40:05] **Selena:** Mm-hm.

**Ryan:** You're going to at least hear that and say, “Oh, maybe I'm miscalculating what these goals are going to mean.”

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** “Either the goal has to shift or I'm going to disregard this advice.”

**Selena:** Mm!

**Ryan:** What is a teachable person going to do?

**Selena:** Mm.

**Ryan:** Teachability means that you acknowledge you don't know everything!

**Selena:** Mm-hm.

**Ryan:** *[Exhales sharply]* Man! That's hard to... *[Chortles]*

**Selena:** That's hard!

**Ryan:** *[Laughing]* That's hard! Because we—

**Selena:** 'Cause pride's involved. *[Snickers]*

**Ryan:** Well, we live a culture where everybody's an expert, right?

**Selena:** Yeah!

**Ryan:** If you have a Twitter handle and more than 300 followers, you should have an opinion on everything, and everyone should value your opinion.

**Selena:** Hello, Pride.

**Ryan:** But the bottom line is that we are not experts in everything.

**Selena:** Mm-mm.

**Ryan:** There are people that know more than us. And if we—

**Selena:** And that’s a good thing!

**Ryan:** If we— [*Exhales*] Yes! And if we understand that, we can humbly and gratefully take advice, and let it actually inform us. And what does the Bible *promise*? “Listen to the advice and accept instruction that you may *gain* wisdom in the future.” Gaining! You don't have it yet.

**Selena:** Mmm...

**Ryan:** Get wisdom! You need to get it. When? Not today, not now, but in the future.

**Selena:** Gosh! And the cool thing about wisdom is I feel like it just sticks into ya. It sticks by ya!

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

**Selena:** It goes with you from then on. It's not like this [*Inhales*] thing you forget. [*Snickers*]

**Ryan:** Yeah!

**Selena:** Because it's a *well* learned lesson, and it's saved you probably a lot of heartache and it's led you down a brighter path.

**Ryan:** Mm...

**Selena:** And... I don’t know. Wisdom is just one of those things. It's not a little piece of advice that you just kind of put in your pocket. It's like, “Yep,” “Nope,” “Know this forever and ever and not going to ever forget it.”

**Ryan:** Yeah, yeah!

**Selena:** God’s good like that.

**Ryan:** So, I'll just use a for instance. In the next year, by God's grace, we hope to do a number of different things within the Fierce Marriage community. Different initiatives that will require more time.

**Selena:** Mm-hm.

**Ryan:** I have created what I will call “goals in a box.” All right. I haven't told you about this.

**Selena:** [*Slight snicker*] Oh?

**Ryan:** Yep! This just gets—You’re hearing it now for the first time!

**Selena:** [*Chuckles and states with excitement*] Woo hoo!

**Ryan:** Basically, it's a list of things that I kind of hope will happen. All right? But I'm not going to look at it for the rest of the year. I'm going to say, “This is what I'm hoping for.”

**Selena:** Mm.

**Ryan:** I'm going to take that and I'm going to fold it up. I'm going to lock it away in a box, and I'm going to look at it at the end of this year.

**Selena:** Mm!

**Ryan:** And see, “Okay, what has God done? Has He done the—” And I'm just going to be okay with whatever the result is *because...* what I want, what I'm hoping God will help me do and what I hope to do, is to focus more on—What is it? Character driven goals! Right?

**Selena:** Got’cha.

**Ryan:** So, that will create the fertile ground for everything else to flourish, right?

**Selena:** Mm...

**Ryan:** So, if I focus on little rhythm's, little habits, little things that I can tweak, like getting up at a time that's not lazy, but a time that's good stewardship.

**Selena:** Right!

**Ryan:** Or focus on what—

**Selena:** Little—

**Ryan:** Less on what, but more on *who* will I become if I do X and Y.

**Selena:** Yeah.

**Ryan:** I think those bigger goals will take care of themselves.

**Selena:** So, “little” meaning daily and weekly kind of things?

**Ryan:** Yes! Like little habits.

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** I would call them— There's a book out called Atomic Habits. He talks about how these, our little building blocks...

**Selena:** Yeah, for sure!

**Ryan:** And it's good stuff. Yeah.

**Selena:** That's why I'm detail oriented over here! I know the little one, the little things will create the big things. But if you're not aware of the big things then... [*Both chuckle*] you can really determine those little things sometimes.

**Ryan:** Yeah, exactly. If you—Yeah.

**Selena:** Right? It's that whole being versus doing.

**Ryan:** Mm-hm. Yeah. So—

**Selena:** But—Oh!

**Ryan:** Go ahead!

**Selena:** No! I was just going to go to number five, but I think you're still on number four.

**Ryan:** Well... No. [*Sighs*] I mean the fifth one is consider creating rhythms *in* or removing clutter *from* daily life *based* on those little character-driven goals. Okay.

**Selena:** So good.

**Ryan:** So, the people we become as a result of the rhythms we welcome—

**Selena:** Mm!

**Ryan:** Is what I wrote down there.

**Selena:** Mm-hm.

**Ryan:** So, what do I mean by that? Another for instance.

**Selena:** Uh-huh. Okay.

- Ryan:** I'm talking a lot. So, bear with me. [*Selena giggles and Ryan inhales quietly*] A couple years ago, I got into going to the gym with a good friend. It was some of the best years of my workout life! [*Selena laughs*] I'm just going to be honest.
- Selena:** [*Laughing*] My work out life...
- Ryan:** Because we got to hang out, we worked out harder than I've ever worked out in my life! I got stronger than I've ever gotten in my life! Like, those little decision... [*Inhales quietly*]
- Selena:** Mm-hm.
- Ryan:** And that rhythm was welcome in my life. And it was more than just lifting. It was relationship. It was... I've lost all of whatever gains I got, by the way. [*Inhales*]
- Selena:** [*Snickers*] Me, too.
- Ryan:** Yeah, we're getting old! It's happening, Freddy!
- Selena:** [*Laughing*]. It's happening.
- Ryan:** And so, that little rhythm changed me. When I was in high school, I said, "I'm going to read, no matter what, I'm going to read my Bible every day, and I'm not going to compromise on it."
- Selena:** What a spiritual high schooler you were.
- Ryan:** Well, it was God was working in my heart.
- Selena:** Nah, I know!
- Ryan:** And it was—
- Selena:** I don't mean to tease ya.
- Ryan:** But I never grew so much my entire life! Because I just got this hunger for— It's like you get this... it's this *momentous* hunger that just grows in you as you create rhythms that are God honoring and God focused!
- Selena:** Right. And God meets you there, too.
- Ryan:** Mm-hm! He does.
- Selena:** It's not just—
- Ryan:** Oh, man!

**Selena:** I'm going to go do this, and on my own. God's shows up big time! And that is just more encouraging, right? You just see...

**Ryan:** Mm.

**Selena:** I don't want to say see *results*, but if you're exercising, then you're going to see results. God created that...

**Ryan:** Mm-hm.

**Selena:** Cycle! So, the more we meet with Him, the more we *see* of Him! There was a quote! Where did I read that? I think it was in Ruth Chou Simons' book. It's like the more you— It's a Spurgeon quote. "The more you see God the more He is seen in you," kind of thing.

**Ryan:** Hm! That sounds like something Spurgeon would say.

**Selena:** Yeah!

**Ryan:** [*Inhales*] Sounds smart. So, for marriage! Okay. I want to root this in marriage. So, the people we become, I think, is a result of the rhythms we welcome...

[00:45:08] **Selena:** Mm-hm.

**Ryan:** In your marriage, what rhythms are you welcoming?

**Selena:** Yeah!

**Ryan:** Okay. So—

**Selena:** And are you welcoming them together, or is it one on one?

**Ryan:** Mm-hm.

**Selena:** 'Cause, I mean, or individually! If you're working on some sort of thing and I'm working on some sort of thing, but we're not really coming together on it... [*Inhales*] There are those things. Don't get me wrong! There's things that we're individually working on.

**Ryan:** Right!

**Selena:** Right?

**Ryan:** Right.

**Selena:** And God is building and changing and transforming in us. But what are those things that we are working on together? How are we...

**Ryan:** Right.

**Selena:** Keeping those first things first in unity?

**Ryan:** Yep! I'm at—

**Selena:** At a foundational level?

**Ryan:** And a lot of couples don't *get* to work together. They, I mean, they may be working—

**Selena:** Well, I'm not taking work, like, work-work.

**Ryan:** Oh, okay.

**Selena:** I'm just saying, generally speaking—

**Ryan:** Got'cha. [*Inaudible*]

**Selena:** In our marriage, in our life, together.

**Ryan:** Okay!

**Selena:** How are we working... together, in unity, or how are we on the same page with these rhythms and the end goals?

**Ryan:** Mm! [*Clicks tongue*]

**Selena:** And... how are we...

**Ryan:** Yeah.

**Selena:** Helping each other become the person that God wants us to become?

**Ryan:** So, specifically, what could that look like? What are those rhythms that we could welcome together?

**Selena:** Reading our Bible together, praying together...

**Ryan:** Or just separately and discussing it together.

**Selena:** Absolutely!

**Ryan:** There's—

**Selena:** How can we define that? How can that "together" be...



**Ryan:** Well, you're in agreement on it. You're not physically together, but you're doing it...

**Selena:** Right!

**Ryan:** Side by side.

**Selena:** Right!

**Ryan:** And saying, "I'm going to ask you what you read. You ask me what I read. We talk about that together, and it becomes a means of our spiritual development."

**Selena:** Maybe it's part of our date night, you know?

**Ryan:** [*Inhales*] Yeah! Well, speaking of that, that's another rhythm that I think is very important!

**Selena:** Mm-hm.

**Ryan:** It's so cli—

**Selena:** So overlooked. [*Chuckle*]

**Ryan:** [*Sigh*] It's so cliché to say, "Hey, go on a date!" You know what? Dates are more than just having a fancy meal. It's about connecting relationally.

**Selena:** Yeah.

**Ryan:** Consistently... enlivening your friendship.

**Selena:** Mm-hm.

**Ryan:** Creating new experiences together. [*Inhales*]

**Selena:** Having time for that romance. I think we had a big 'ole fight about that last week.

**Ryan:** Mm! [*Exaggerates the next word*] Boy, did we! On Christmas Eve.

**Selena:** How'd we—

**Ryan:** That was great!

**Selena:** Yep! I was crying. He was—

**Ryan:** Emanuel! [*Both laugh*] God is with us!

- Selena:** He was, though! He was with us, and we worked it out! And God helped us. You know?
- Ryan:** Yeah. Lots of shouting! We shouted. And the Lord—
- Selena:** Not in front of the kids. We put ‘em in the car first [*Ryan snickers and Selena giggles*], ‘cause we were on our way out the door!
- Ryan:** We were going to go, and I was like, “I don't want to go to our family's house and be... mad at each other [*Selena laughs*] and acting like we're not mad at each other. So, we're going to finish this now!” [*Ryan laughs*] And you're like, “We got to go!” And I was like, “I don't care!!” [*Both cackle*]
- Selena:** We laugh now. It wasn't— It was *hot* for us, because—
- Ryan:** [*Exaggerated*] Whew!
- Selena:** We don't...
- Ryan:** Yeah.
- Selena:** Usually get hot and steamy like that! [*Laughs*]
- Ryan:** Ooh!
- Selena:** That's probably not the right words. [*Chuckling*]
- Ryan:** Wow.
- Selena:** We don't get super frustrated like that very often.
- Ryan:** You keep—
- Selena:** But I think things had—
- Ryan:** Yeah.
- Selena:** Kind of built up, and there are some underlying things that we kind of needed to air out a bit. And God was good and brought us back together!
- Ryan:** Mm!
- Selena:** And there were some tears and there's some heartache. But you got to walk through the fire sometimes! That's the only way—
- Ryan:** Oh, for sure!

**Selena:** You get sanctified and reminded of who God is and what He's doing in your life. So...

**Ryan:** Speaking of hot and steamy... *[Both laugh]* Having rhythms for your intimate life together. *[Both cackle]*

**Selena:** *[Laughing]* There you go! I didn't think of that transition!

**Ryan:** Is really important to do.

**Selena:** It is.

**Ryan:** Talk through what frequencies make sense to stay connected with each other.

**Selena:** Talk about expectations.

**Ryan:** Yes.

**Selena:** Guys, we got lots of episodes on sex. Just go look at 'em. *[Cackle]*

**Ryan:** Well, not as many as other podcasts, but we do talk about it.

**Selena:** We're not a sex podcast. That's the thing.

**Ryan:** Well...

**Selena:** We're a *marriage* podcast!

**Ryan:** That's true!

**Selena:** Sex is part of marriage.

**Ryan:** It is!

**Selena:** It's an important part! But it's not the whole thing.

**Ryan:** Yeah. And then, finally, I would just say, look at rhythm's for how you can operate in your day-to-day life as a married couple, in agreement, helping and serving each other.

**Selena:** Mmm. So good.

**Ryan:** So, things like chores, things like helping with the kids, things like giving each other time to kind of decompress, if that's what you need.

**Selena:** Right! Or if you need to go out and climb a mountain, you know?

**Ryan:** Yeah! For a while, I was doing most of the kitchen work, just because I knew that was a way to serve you.

**Selena:** How *dare* you. [*Ryan snickers quickly and Selena laughs*] Just kidding!

**Ryan:** Well, I mean, I was making meals and trying to keep up.

**Selena:** It is the best days of my life, people!

**Ryan:** Those were the days! [*Both laughing*]

**Selena:** It was just two weeks ago.

**Ryan:** And that'll shift, and we reminded ourselves today that even though our house—

**Selena:** I had to remind! [*Cackle*]

**Ryan:** I had to remi—

**Selena:** What were you going to say?! [*Cackle*]

**Ryan:** [*Chuckling*] I had to remind you! [*Both laughing*]

**Selena:** [*Laughing*] Just say it!

**Ryan:** I was like, “Hey, just ‘cause I'm up in the office *working* doesn't mean that we're not a team.”

**Selena:** I *know*!

**Ryan:** But you wanted my help in other more *tangible* ways! [*Selena chuckles*] So, think through rhythms and how you can [*Selena laughs*] serve each other... around the house, so that whatever that pain point is, talk about it. Whatever causes the most fights in your marriage, talk about it and create rhythms that will more inform who you are becoming. All right. I want to finish with this verse. Proverbs 6:6. “Go to the ant, O sluggard. Consider her ways and be wise.” Okay. Think of an ant. And notice how it's a *her*, by the way. [*Both laugh*] I'm just saying... I'm just saying.

**Selena:** [*Laughing*] You said it! [*Chuckles*]

**Ryan:** The Bible is not misogynistic. [*Selena laughs*] I'm going to say that. I think women get a lot of credit that is very much deserved. But, “Go to the ant, O sluggard. Consider her ways and be wise.” Okay. An ant works consistently, daily, small grain of sand at a time. You know, a little leaf at a time. And it builds what? A massive network of tunnels in this massive anthill. Okay, and so

there's something to be said for the small things that transform the outcomes of our life.

[00:50:03] **Selena:** Mm... Right. Well, and the faithfulness there, right?

**Ryan:** And the faithfulness of, like... tending to small things well.

**Selena:** It's not fun bringing that rock everyday...

**Ryan:** Mm-hm.

**Selena:** All the time. Right?

**Ryan:** No!

**Selena:** It's not always joyful!

**Ryan:** For the ant, it is. That's the thing, is that's what it— it's doing, what was created to do. In our case...

**Selena:** Yeah!

**Ryan:** As people of Christ, we're—

**Selena:** I guess that's what I'm saying.

**Ryan:** Loving and serving in this way.

**Selena:** If you're not joyful in it, don't abandon it.

**Ryan:** Sure! Some days, yeah.

**Selena:** Remember that this is one way that we're serving God and that should bring some joy, hopefully...

**Ryan:** Yeah.

**Selena:** [*Inhales*] To our hearts. All righty!

**Ryan:** All right. So, I'm going to recap the five things real fast.

**Selena:** Real fast.

**Ryan:** Hopefully, this has been helpful for you all. But the first one is, start here: reflect on what God has done. The second one is root your hope in *becoming*, not doing. I recognize it—Oh, I'm sorry! That's the third one. The second one is contextualize your life. Talk about what God's doing around the world. The

third one is root your hope in becoming and not doing. The fourth one is make plans, act wisely, but remain teachable.

**Selena:** Mmm...

**Ryan:** In other words, hold your plans with an open hand and trust that God will work. The fifth one is consider creating rhythms in or removing clutter from, rhythmically I mean [*Chuckles*], your daily life. So—

**Selena:** So good!

**Ryan:** Look at areas that maybe aren't bearing fruit and transform them into ways and rhythms that *can* bear fruit in your heart and in your life.

**Selena:** That's so good. I think that's the—

**Ryan:** [*Inhales*] All right!

**Selena:** Those are the challenge! Just go through those five things and *do* 'em!

**Ryan:** Yeah! Take an hour or a couple hours. Go out for a nice seafood dinner. [*Both chuckle*] Or Italian! Or Mexican, whatever your thing is. Let your wife get cheeseburger—cheese on her hamburger. [*Selena laughs*] That's one of our jokes! I would say, "Selena, this year for your birthday, I'm letting you get *cheese* on your burger!" [*Laughs*]

**Selena:** You're so funny! That's been since we were high school, I think!

**Ryan:** It is. I think my dad said it at one point, and it just— I never let it go. [*Selena laughs*] It's like *the* first dad joke [*Selena cackles*] ... of our relationship. It's not that good either. I give it like a D. [*Inhales deeply*]

**Selena:** But we laugh at it.

**Ryan:** Ahh... [*Exhales*]

**Selena:** Gets a little chuckle.

**Ryan:** It gets a laugh, like half the time. [*Both chuckles*] Anyway! Selena, you want to pray us out?

**Selena:** Oh, sure! [*Inhales deeply*]

**Ryan:** Thank you.

**Selena:** God, thank You so much for who You are, for the words that You've given us, the instruction and the authority that You've given us to live by, to embrace and to build our house on, God. Help us to build our house and Your rock every

day. Help us to *be*. Help us to listen, to not give in to the pressure and the weight of feeling like we're not doing enough, God, but to rest in who You've created us to be, to rest in the rhythms that You've given us. Help us to see those. Help us to keep those first things first, meaning You! Help us to keep *You* first. Your word, Your kingdom, God. In our marriage, in our relationships, in our families. We love You, God.

In your name,

Amen.

**Ryan:** Amen. All right! This episode of the Fierce Marriage Podcast *is!*

**Selena:** In the can!

**Ryan:** All right, ladies and gentlemen, thank you so much for listening. We hope it's helped you grow. If you feel compelled to partner with us, please do so by praying first. If the Lord leads you...

**Selena:** Mm.

**Ryan:** Go to [patreon.com/fiercemarriage](https://patreon.com/fiercemarriage). You can join us there. \$2 a month on up. Everything helps! Keeps us ad free, keeps this content coming. And we will do our best to be faithful in it—

**Selena:** Mm!

**Ryan:** And to it, for God's glory, for your good.

**Selena:** Yeah.

**Ryan:** So, anyway! Thank you again for joining us. We will see you in about seven days! And until then!

**Selena:** Stay fierce!

[00:53:23]            <Ending Sequence>

[00:53:42]            *Podcast ends.*

## PODCAST NOTES

- **[00:05:00]**
  - Aristotle. *Physics*. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, December 17, 2012.
    - <https://www.amazon.com/Physics-Aristotle/dp/1481274627/>
- **[00:10:08]**
  - Scripture reference:
    - Matthew: 7:24
- **[00:15:00]**
  - Scripture references:
    - Proverbs 3, incorrect reference given
      - Correct reference: Psalm 37:4, paraphrase, *ESV*
    - Psalm 106:7, *ESV*
- **[00:25:01]**
  - Compassion International:
    - <https://www.compassion.com/>
  - World Vision:
    - <https://www.worldvision.org/>
  - Nations Media:
    - <https://nationsmedia.org/>
    - <https://www.facebook.com/nationsfoundation/>
  - ABSOLUTE Ministries
    - <https://www.absoluteministries.org/>
- **[00:30:00]**
  - Scripture reference:
    - James 2, *faith & good works discussion*
    - Luke 7:47, *forgiven much reference*
  - Ruth Chou Simons:
    - Book: *Beholding and Becoming*
      - <https://ruthchousimons.com/beholding-becoming/>
- **[00:35:06]**
  - Scripture reference:
    - Proverbs 19:20-21, *ESV*
  - Longman III, Tremper. *How to Read Proverbs*. InterVarsity Press, September 12, 2002.
    - <https://www.amazon.com/How-Read-Proverbs/dp/0877849420/>
  - WTSreads Instagram:
    - <https://www.instagram.com/wtsreads/>
    - Paraphrased quote taken from:
      - <https://www.instagram.com/p/B6rPJKalf34/>

*Continued on next page.*



- **[00:40:05]**
  - Clear, James. *Atomic Habits: An Easy & Proven Way to Build Good Habits & Break Bad Ones*. Avery, October 16, 2018.
    - <https://www.amazon.com/Atomic-Habits-Proven-Build-Break/dp/0735211299/>

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