

3 SURE SIGNS OF A HEALTHY COUPLE

<https://fiercemarriage.com/3-sure-signs-of-a-healthy-couple>

- [00:00:00] **Selena:** Three sure signs of a healthy couple.
- Ryan:** Mm! Three *sure* signs.
- Selena:** Sure signs! Sure signs.
- Ryan:** Note, however, they are not the three *only* [Selena giggles] signs of a healthy couple! We're just saying that these ones, for sure, you will find in every healthy couple.
- Selena:** Right.
- Ryan:** And so, I think they're worth taking a look at today!
- Selena:** Absolutely, absolutely!
- Ryan:** Yeah!
- Selena:** But in order to *know* and understand more deeply these three sure signs, we have to look at the opposite of them. [Laughs]
- Ryan:** Yeah.
- Selena:** Or kind of the opposite of the underlying foundation. So, our conversation is going to be around Gospel-fueled humility today. And if we're looking at humility, then we are also taking a big look at pride! So, Proverbs 8:13 says, "The fear of the LORD is hatred of evil. Pride and arrogance and the way of evil and perverted speech I hate." So, there's a lot about pride in the Bible! I know that's just *one* verse; we have a lot of verses. [Ryan snickers] But let's just kind of start there, how to get you thinking about pride on this side, and then we'll talk about humility on the other side.
- [00:00:58] <Intro Sequence>
- [00:01:30] **Ryan:** Like moss on a Mississippi tree stump! [Both laugh]
- Selena:** [Laughing] Gosh...
- Ryan:** We already got a thing! Why you got to make your own thing? Alright.
- Selena:** Well, yeah, that was better, though. That was a better transition.
- Ryan:** You always got to fancy it up.
- Selena:** [Laughs] You do!

Ryan: No, you do!

Selena: Yeah, I do. [*Ryan cackles*] I'm not Michael Scott!

Ryan: You know what?

Selena: You know I'm not.

Ryan: You need to learn a thing or two about contentment. All right? About just liking it—

Selena: Who is your Office person?

Ryan: [*Impersonates an Office character*] "Don't you know that change is the devil!" [*Both laugh*] We don't change anything!

Selena: I think you're an Andy...

Ryan: What?!

Selena: You're a *bit* of an Andy.

Ryan: ... No. Definitely Creed.

Selena: [*Laughs*] Probably! [*Laughs harder*]

Ryan: I'm definitely a Creed. Yeah! No, I'm on Twitter. Okay.

Selena: I'm definitely Dwight. [*Both laugh*]

Ryan: I'm on Twitter. I've been dabbling for the last few months on Twitter. I've been there for like ten years, but I just haven't really *been* there! And so, [*Selena chuckles*] I've actually started reading.

Selena: Been there but you haven't been there? I get it.

Ryan: I've had an account—

Selena: I get it.

Ryan: And I've had followers. But I've tweeted like once a year, right? *Until* the last three months. Anyway, I got this idea in my head. [*Selena chuckles*] I was like, "One of the biggest tragedies of modern evangelicalism is the lack of appreciation for ... the 'creed's'." [*Both laugh*] And it was a picture of Creed in four different situations. [*Ryan laughs harder*] I got like six likes on it. So, you know, big hit! It went viral.

Selena: [*Laughs*] If I was on Twitter, I would like it.

- Ryan:** Yeah.
- Selena:** I mean, I am on Twitter, but I don't ever pay attention to it.
- Ryan:** Listeners! If you're on Twitter, [*Selena bursts out laughing*] let's be Twitter friends! My handle is RyanFred, simply RyanFred.
- Selena:** I don't know what mine is. Is it still ChevalPhotos? [*Laughs*]
- Ryan:** SelenaFred. SelenaFred is your handle. [*Both laugh*] I don't even know why—I need to just shutter your account. [*Selena laughs*] 'Cause it's not really your account; it's mine that I set up for you, I think?
- Selena:** It's mine! So, put all your B-roll stuff there. [*Both laugh*]
- Ryan:** No! 'Cause... Yeah.
- Selena:** See what works? [*Laughs*]
- Ryan:** Yeah, we'll see. [*Chuckles*] Yeah! Whatever goes.
- Selena:** [*Laughing*] Anyways!
- Ryan:** Whatever goes off on your account, I'll put on mine. Yeah.
- Selena:** Thank you for tuning into us today. We are feeling spritely, as you can see. [*Ryan snickers*] We are excited to talk about three sure signs of a healthy couple. But before we do that, as always, we want to thank our listeners, raters, and reviewers.
- Ryan:** Mm-hm! Thank you!
- Selena:** Thank you for those! If you haven't done that, *please* go ahead and do that! That's how we get around the internet... faster!
- Ryan:** Mm. [*Both laugh*] No, I'm actually trying to find— I flagged a message that somebody sent in and it was just an amazing testimony. Go and keep going through the rundown and I'll try to—
- Selena:** You're welcome.
- Ryan:** Or go through the thing. I'll try to find it.
- Selena:** If you want to support this podcast, you can do so via Patreon. That's patreon.com/FierceMarriage. And definitely pray about that with your spouse. And if you guys want to support financially, that is the kind of direct way you can do that! If you want to lock arms with us and partner with us on mission for the Gospel and marriages, that is a tangible way you can do that! And we are

very grateful for that! We have been able to take the steps towards transcriptions, towards interviews, and we have much more that we want to unfold. But yeah! It's been helpful. And there's bonuses and insider information if you become a Patreon as well.

Ryan: Actually, you get free books, right?

Selena: That's what I said.

Ryan: Sorry. I was reading something.

Selena: Secret bonuses.

Ryan: Well, but they're not just like, "Hey, get this download thing." You get books and rings and all that kind of stuff. But don't do it for that! Do it because God is leading you.

Selena: Yeah!

Ryan: And you want to lock arms!

Selena: Yeah!

Ryan: With us. Yeah!

Selena: Why don't you run that promos thing?

Ryan: Promos thing? What are you talking about?

Selena: Well, look at your run-down.

Ryan: I'm not looking at it. I'm trying to find something else.

Selena: Promos and discounts!

Ryan: I didn't see Charles Miner.

Selena: I don't know. *[Both laugh]* I don't know when this...

Ryan: Oh, okay! So, well, Valentine's Day is in three days from now. So, hate to say it, but if you don't have a gift for your spouse by now...

[00:05:01] **Selena:** *[Chuckling]* Probably not going to—*[Snickers]* Unless you go to the store.

Ryan: Either you're taking a moral *stand* against this consumerism holiday that is Valentine's Day, *[Both laugh]* or you're just thinking—

Selena: Which, we've been there. We've been there.

- Ryan:** “You know what? It's a fun opportunity to buy something fun or to do something fun with your spouse.”
- Selena:** To buy chocolate, to buy...
- Ryan:** Chocolate! Yes.
- Selena:** *Yummy* things! [*Selena chuckles*]
- Ryan:** Anyway! So, we were running a Valentine's Day promo, but that's actually over by the time this airs. So, instead go to SeeThroughBook.com [*Selena cackles*] and jump on launch team! 'Cause See-Through Marriage is a book that's coming out in about three months, and we are going to need as many kind of...
- Selena:** Yes.
- Ryan:** I don't know, advocates, as we can possibly get!
- Selena:** Yes!
- Ryan:** To get that word out. It's all about transparency, living in the light as He is in the light, walking in the light as He is in the light.
- Selena:** Mmm.
- Ryan:** And basically, how the idea of transparency is that the clearer we are— we use a stained-glass analogy.
- Selena:** Mm-hm.
- Ryan:** The cover's really cool. And stained glass meaning that we're not perfect. We're like *shards* of glass, and there's different hues and colors and things that we all reflect, and we all do that in our own unique way. But the whole point is that we're more beautiful when we are transparent, and the light can shine through us. What makes stained glass beautiful is the *light*!
- Selena:** Right.
- Ryan:** Not the stained glass itself, but without light you can't even see it!
- Selena:** Right.
- Ryan:** But you need light! And Jesus is the light, and we are called to be *transparent*, and let Him shine *through* all of our imperfections...
- Selena:** Mmm, mm-hm.
- Ryan:** To be glorified!

Selena: Right.

Ryan: Anyway! That's the whole premise of the book. See-Through Marriage is the name of the book. Go to SeeThroughBook.com. The little form there, just give us your name, your e-mail, social security number [*Selena clicks her tongue*], credit card information— I'm kidding. Name and e-mail.

Selena: Your first born. [*Both laugh*]

Ryan: Yes. And—

Selena: Some of them are like, “Yep! Take'em!” [*Both laugh*]

Ryan: Yeah. And you can be a part of that launch process. So, yeah! I was trying to find an e-mail somebody sent in! It was about how God had basically done a miracle in their marriage! And just know that, A, we get these. B, we do pray for you.

Selena: Mm-hm.

Ryan: We prayed for you before we started this podcast. Now, we don't know all your names, but we're just so thankful whenever we get to see what God's done. So, please do write those in if you have any kind of testimonies and things. You just go to FierceMarriage.com/podcast. Use the question form there. You can share a story. Yeah! So, let's get in the topic for today. Let's get into that.

Selena: Sounds good, sounds good.

Ryan: Okay! So, three sure signs of a healthy couple. So, this actually came from an Instagram post. If you're unaware, we are on Instagram; we share these about three times a week. Monday, Wednesday, Friday is what we try to do. Sometimes more, sometimes less. You know how it goes. But basically, it's like a little devotional for your marriage. And so, if you're following us, it's just [@FierceMarriage](https://www.instagram.com/FierceMarriage). You'll be able to see this content come through. And I usually roll right this content, and it'll come out of some conversation we've had, or it will come out of just maybe my personal devotional time. And I'll sit down and write it! And for this one, it was like I just feel, like soft hearts. Right?

Selena: Mm-hm.

Ryan: And that's the thing that came to mind is there's all this *study* around— so, if you go to “Gottman Institute,” they do a study and they can predict if a marriage is going to succeed or fail within like 93% accuracy.

Selena: Mm-hm.

Ryan: I just pulled that number out.

Selena: They've been around for years and years, and studies—

Ryan: Yeah! They've done this—

Selena: And I think they're... I don't know if they're "Christian," but they're—

Ryan: No, they're Jewish, I think!

Selena: Jewish, yeah.

Ryan: I think they're... Yeah. Like, whatever. They're definitely Jewish—

Selena: They're not Apostolic.

Ryan: They're not Messianic.

Selena: Messianic, yeah.

Ryan: But anyway, they've done these longitudinal studies over decades of these couples. And they've done interviews in the beginning and then middle and then at the end, and basically, they're saying the thing that's the biggest predictor of whether or not a marriage will succeed, or a relationship will succeed, has to do with how they deal with disagreement, basically.

Selena: Hm.

Ryan: How they deal with conflict. And that how they deal disagreement has to do with their sense of respect for each other.

Selena: Mm!

Ryan: It's not my body of work, so I'm probably miss articulating. I don't want to misrepresent it, but essentially, that's what they're getting at.

Selena: Yeah.

Ryan: And so, I got to thinking about that. Well, what is the underlying thing, and what are the themes that usually will drive being able to work through conflict?

Selena: Mm!

Ryan: And so, I came up with these kind of three indicators, these three sure signs, that are definitely playing in. And the three sure signs, I'll just say them, and we'll talk about these in much greater detail, is a mutual respect, soft hearts toward each other and then transparency about everything. And so, if you can take those big ideas, we're going to do two things: we're going to take those big ideas and we're going to talk through them, and we're going to kind of point to how those filter through to the other issues of marriage, whether it's

intimacy, your finances, or communication, or priorities and time. That's kind of on the output side of the equation. But on the input side, there's these *underlying* presuppositions, the underlying beliefs and underlying understanding of what is *pride*—

[00:10:03] **Selena:** Mm.

Ryan: And what is humility. Where does pride come from? Where does humility come from? And what is biblical pride versus worldly pride? What is biblical humility versus worldly humility? So, we're going to look at all that, and hopefully you can see the origins, you see how it starts to play out in these big ideas, these three big ideas, and then, how we can apply that or how that trickles down into the other aspects of our marriage. Is that a good primer?

Selena: Sounds good to me! Check!

Ryan: So, that's kind of where we're headed. We'll try to get there in the next 20-30 minutes or so. So, *buckle down!* "It's gonna get good!"

Selena: [*Giggling*] Buckle down?

Ryan: [*Chuckling*] Buckle down!

Selena: Don't you want to say buckle up?

Ryan: Yeah, you're right. [*Both laugh*] *Hunker down!* Buckle up and hunker— I don't know... [*Selena laughs*] It is kind of early.

Selena: It is a little early.

Ryan: It is a little early right now, so, I'm not quite there yet. But... So!

Selena: So, at the root of every healthy relationship lies humility.

Ryan: Hm.

Selena: Mm. [*Both say in unison*] Why?

Ryan: Why?

Selena: Because most toxic *sin*, and the opposite of humility, is pride.

Ryan: Hm.

Selena: We see pride in Genesis 3. Pride puffs up, pride is a self-sovereign, pride of self-seeking!

Ryan: Why do we see pride in Genesis 3?

- Selena:** So, in Genesis 3, we see pride enter the garden through the serpent.
- Ryan:** Okay!
- Selena:** Why don't you read it?
- Ryan:** Yeah, okay. So, "He said to the woman—" This is a serpent speaking to Eve. "Did God actually say, "You shall not eat any of the tree in the garden?" And the woman said to the serpent, 'We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, "You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'" Now the serpent said to the woman, 'You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.' So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and then she gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate." So, they're complicit in this crime.
- Selena:** You said it! [*Laughs*]
- Ryan:** No, I mean—
- Selena:** No, they are. They are.
- Ryan:** They are, but the lie. So, the lie is one of pride. So, "Did God really say that? Like, c'mon, you know a little bit better than God! God said this, but *you* know better than God—"
- Selena:** Right.
- Ryan:** "'Cause He said, 'Because you'll surely die.' But you're not going to die, right? You know that. God doesn't want to—"
- Selena:** You're not going to die on the spot is what he's implying. And--
- Ryan:** Well, no. It was a bald-faced lie!
- Selena:** Yeah.
- Ryan:** "You're not going to die. God's lying to you!"
- Selena:** Yeah.
- Ryan:** "And if you eat of it, you're going to be like Him, and He doesn't want you to be like Him. He's just a tyrant! He's just holding you down."
- Selena:** Right.

Ryan: Okay. So, Eve bought the lie.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: And it was her pride that said, “Yeah, maybe you're right! Maybe it is good for eating. Maybe it's *better* for me to eat it than not. Maybe it's better to disobey God than it is to obey God!”

Selena: [Chuckles] Well, you—

Ryan: That’s pride!

Selena: At that point, you don't think about it in those terms. You're just justifying it. [Quick chuckle] I mean, I think if we just put our sin—

Ryan: Right.

Selena: Into perspective, right?

Ryan: I’m articulating—

Selena: No, I know.

Ryan: Kind of the thought process. But that’s definitely the underlying belief, and—

Selena: We can justify *anything* in our minds, right?

Ryan: Yes!

Selena: Any type of sin, any type of disobedience, especially when pride is involved!

Ryan: Mm.

Selena: I was trying to give you an illustration of what pride is like. [Ryan snickers] It's like our *stove* in the kitchen. It's a gas stove. And so, pride is like when you turn that fire on, and just everything starts boiling! Everything starts going and you're just like, “Is pride the stove or the gas or the fuel?”

Ryan: I was like, “Wait. Which one’s the—”

Selena: “What is it? Or the fire? What?” [Chuckles] And I’m like—

Ryan: So, where—

Selena: “How is this unclear!?” [Laughs]

Ryan: How is the boiling bad? [Selena laughs harder] Sometimes you want to boil something. [Ryan laughs]

- Selena:** I'm just like, "Pride is—"
- Ryan:** It's what a stove is for! [*Laughs*]
- Selena:** Pride is like the little flicker of fire, though, on a...
- Ryan:** You could have just been like, "It's a wildfire," right? You light a match and it starts a wildfire.
- Selena:** Yes, yes.
- Ryan:** So... [*Laughs*]
- Selena:** C.S. Lewis wrote once [*Ryan laughs harder*] that pride is spiritual cancer. I'm just going to jump to C.S. Lewis, 'cause he says things way better than I do. "For pride is spiritual cancer: it eats up the very possibility of love, or contentment, or even common sense." But there's good news! He didn't say that.
- Ryan:** Hold on!
- Selena:** He said, "But there's good news."
- Ryan:** Hold off, 'cause we'll get into the good news part, but I feel like C.S. Lewis is smart enough to use words on purpose. [*Selena quickly laughs*] He said it's "spiritual cancer."
- Selena:** Yeah!
- Ryan:** It wasn't just this pejorative "cancer," like it's a generally bad thing. He's saying it's a cancer, which cancer is what? It's when cells don't know when to stop multiplying—
- Selena:** Mmm.
- Ryan:** And they end up taking over different organs, they crowd out different parts of your body. If you have a brain tumor, usually you die because there's too much pressure on your brain.
- Selena:** Mm-hm.
- Ryan:** And it ends up... You know? And there's other things, and it ends up dividing tissue and all that sort of stuff.
- Selena:** Yeah.
- Ryan:** So, pride, it's like a wildfire! Like you said. When a cell divides, it's one cell into two.

Selena: Mm-hm.

Ryan: Two cells into four, four into eight, 16, 32, 64—

Selena: Right.

Ryan: 128. So, and it's—

Selena: [*Quietly*] Look at you.

Ryan: It's exponential!

Selena: Yeah.

Ryan: And so, it grows, and it just takes off! And so, it's a spiritual cancer in that it *crowds out* much like a tumor—

Selena: Yeah.

Ryan: Would crowd out space for healthy tissue, pride crowds out the ability. He says it eats up the very possibility of love!

Selena: Mm-hm.

Ryan: So, if you have pride, it's going to crowd out the possibility of love, true, I think, biblical love—

Selena: Yeah!

[00:14:56] **Ryan:** In your relationship, in the fullest sense, it's going to crowd out the possibility for contentment. If God says, "You have more than you need. I will take care of your needs. I will always be there for you. I will be enough for you. You have everything you need for life and godliness." God says that! But if we say, "No. I need this house," or, "I need that job," [*Selena snickers*] or, "I need that thing," or, "I need this aspect of our relationship," that's a sense of pride! It's going to crowd out our ability for contentment! That wasn't a jab at you, by the way. [*Both laugh*] We've been having the conversation around the house, the house thing! [*Selena laughs*] And just to give you a glimpse into our real time [*Selena laughs*] marriage here [*Both laugh*], like as of ten minutes ago. [*Both continue laughing*] It's all good! You've been great, by the way. So, and here's what He also says, "It crowds out. It *eats up* the possibility of our common sense."

Selena: Mm-hm.

Ryan: So, think back to even the garden again.

Selena: Mm!

Ryan: Common sense.

Selena: Mm-hm.

Ryan: What's better? Do I trust God, who I've walked with in the garden?

Selena: Hm.

Ryan: This creator God? Or do I trust this little slithering serpent?

Selena: Mm!

Ryan: What's common sense in that scene? [*Chuckles*] It's, "Don't trust the serpent! Trust God!" [*Ryan laughs and Selena quietly chuckles*] "Trust the guy who created everything. Not the guy—"

Selena: Isn't it funny that we will lean towards the "off limits," right? We're like—

Ryan: Mm! [*Smacks lips*] Yeah! Here you have—

Selena: And maybe that's a post-sin thing, right?

Ryan: There's a thousand trees in the garden. You can eat of nine hundred and ninety-nine of them... [*Selena laughs*] And they're all delicious, and they're all perfect and they're all what you need.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: And you had to go eat the one? How is that common sense? That's—

Selena: Yeah!

Ryan: I mean, clearly there's a sin nature in there. There's something in us that— You know?

Selena: Yeah!

Ryan: So, I think C.S. Lewis is very articulate in that, saying it's a spiritual cancer. I would even go as far to say it's a cancer for your marriage, 'cause the worst thing about pride is it's oftentimes a blind killer. You don't even *know* it's killing you.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: 'Cause you're blinded with pride!

Selena: Right.

- Ryan:** So, let's try to have soft hearts here. And so, the antidote to that and that you started saying in the— What is the good news, Selena?
- Selena:** The good news is the Gospel, first of all, but Gospel-fueled humility—
- Ryan:** Mm!
- Selena:** Is kind of our key underlining foundation of where we're starting. This is where the three sure signs of a healthy couple can be found, is in this Gospel-fueled humility. Christ is king, so we don't have to be! We're all sinners saved by grace and we're loved by God. So, there's no need to pretend otherwise. But we do! And so, what do I mean? What do we mean by Gospel-centered—Sorry. Gospel-fueled humility? [*Chuckles*] I'm—
- Ryan:** Yeah.
- Selena:** We're Gospel-centered. There's a lot of Gospel-centered, not Gospel-fueled, [*Both laugh*] in our vocabulary.
- Ryan:** Gospely-gospel-gospels.
- Selena:** [*Laughs*] A lot of the gospels...
- Ryan:** So—
- Selena:** So— Oh, go ahead.
- Ryan:** What? You're going to define the Gospel first? This really succinctly?
- Selena:** It's the good news, yes! That we are sinners saved by grace, and Jesus lived a life we can't live, died the death we should have died and rose again, defeating death.
- Ryan:** And He will return again.
- Selena:** And He will return again, yes!
- Ryan:** And our hope is in His return. And it is in His life, His death, His resurrection, and His return. I think that's the part that really gets me, is that *that* is the source of our hope!
- Selena:** Mmm.
- Ryan:** That is the object of our hope.
- Selena:** Yes.

Ryan: That reality, not whatever reality I feel now. So, that's when we say Gospel-fueled. That baseline truth and reality is very foundation that we *build* on top of!

Selena: Right.

Ryan: To get to a place of humility.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: So, before—

Selena: Well—

Ryan: Go ahead.

Selena: In Ephesians 2, and I'm not going to read all of one through ten, but the title of the chapter of that section is, "By Grace Through Faith." So, just reading, obviously, through our Bibles and studying about what does the Gospel mean? I mean, the whole *Bible* is a message of the Gospel around Jesus. But talking about how are we saved? What tangibly is the Gospel for us and in our lives? And just the first few versus:

"And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—"

And then you go down a few more verses, verse four:

"But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ— by grace you have been saved— and raised up with him."

And yeah, you can keep reading those. But that "by grace we are saved through faith"!

Ryan: Mm...

Selena: And that is where this "good news of the Gospel," and again, we're going to talk about these themes of knowing the Gospel. Knowing the Gospel gives us a right perspective of ourselves!

Ryan: Yeah.

Selena: Which fuels and enables us to also have softer hearts, to respect each other at a deeper level. Which all of this... brings out how we interact with each other.

Ryan: Wow.

Selena: Like how we function together, right?

Ryan: Yeah, yeah.

Selena: In the right way, in the Godly way.

Ryan: I want to tease out something you read in Ephesians real fast, 'cause we talked about pride being the cancer.

Selena: Mm-hm!

Ryan: And we talked about the Gospel being the antidote or the cure for it!

[00:20:00] **Selena:** Mm-hm.

Ryan: So, if pride is what we see in the garden with Eve and the serpent, then the antidote to that is seeing how Jesus has basically cured us of that sickness, that sinfulness that was born there in that moment—

Selena: Mm-hm.

Ryan: That has carried through humanity, that's birthed our own sinfulness. We are born in need of this grace! And the antidote itself is that we— What does it say? "But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ— by grace you have been saved—"

Selena: Mm-hm.

Ryan: So, it's the antidote to that pride!

Selena: Mm-hm.

Ryan: Meaning that I don't have to act in my own sinful pride. I can respond to the Gospel and I can trust that God's way is a better way.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: That I can see that story and I can respond in a better way. So. Okay. So, let's go ahead and just redefine and clearly and quickly, succinctly, define pride here. All right. Just for a minute. So, we've read the verse. I think you said the fear of the Lord is hatred of evil. God hates pride, basically. Pride goes before destruction; that's Proverbs 16. A haughty spirit before a fall. It's better to be of lowly spirit with the poor than to divide the spoil with the proud. So, the Biblical view of pride is in contrast to the worldly view. The worldly view thinks pride is more of just a kind of having a strong sense of identity—

Selena: Mm-hm.

Ryan: Whether it's a group identity or some sort of personal accomplishment or identity. And to be honest, when I read the worldly definitions, or I guess the dictionary definitions, they felt pretty innocuous. Consciousness of one's own dignity, confidence and self-respect as expressed by members of a group, typically one that has been socially marginalized. Okay? That one's talking about the whole pride movement in specific. And then the first one's a feeling of deep pleasure or satisfaction derived from one's own achievements. Okay! So, that seems pretty... harmless.

Selena: It's hard 'cause I think, yeah, because it's like if, say you were like, "Oh, I went to the gym for a year and I did really well." You can take some good sense of accomplishment in that, right? It feels *good!* Is that pride?

Ryan: It is, but they're— Okay. So, there are two Biblical views of pride.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: There's the kind that God hates and there's the kind that is spoken of by Paul in Galatians 6:4. He says, "But let each one test his own work, and then his reason to boast will be in himself alone and not in his neighbor." That's kind of taking a sense of pride in what you do.

Selena: Mm-hm!

Ryan: Then there's I Corinthians 7:4. It says, "I am acting with great boldness toward you; I have great pride in you; I am filled with comfort. In all our affliction, I am overflowing with joy." And that's the kind of pride that we express over the accomplishment of loved ones.

Selena: Mm!

Ryan: Right? And so, there are senses where pride is, I think, Biblically permissible, Biblically beneficial! But the type of pride we're talking about here today is the kind that I would say God hates, the kind that is self-aggrandizing, puffing one's self up.

Selena: Well, it consumes you, right?

Ryan: Yeah.

Selena: In that your thoughts are more about you, yourself, and less about God and His ways. Right? So, when your pride begins to puff you up and you have a wrong perspective, a higher view of yourself, and too low of a view of God, that's kind of where we fall, right?

Ryan: Yeah. And that would be what I would say is the Biblical definition of that kind of pride.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: How this plays itself out in marriage can be really kind of small or it can be huge!

Selena: Yeah.

Ryan: It just depends on maybe you have an argument over faith, right? And one of you, whether the husband or the wife, thinks that God is irrational or that Christianity is foolish or whatever. They're elevating themselves above all the whole scripture.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: All of Christian tradition, God himself. That's the kind of pride that can really kind of erode the foundations. But then the pride that comes from saying, "You don't know."

Selena: Right!

Ryan: "You can't convince me. Until I'm convinced, it's not true."

Selena: Right.

Ryan: That's a pride that elevates itself above God, my ability to rationalize above everything else. If I can't rationalize it, therefore it must be false.

Selena: Right. And that's taking the place of God, obviously. And humility, I think has the same sort of battle. Right? It teeters on this—

Ryan: Yeah.

Selena: Either we're humble and we're doormats, or we're just walked all over, and that's being humble. Right? We think that, "Oh, if I'm like this, if I just think poorly of myself and woe is me, and I'll just let him do whatever and trample all over me, say what he wants..." We kind of label that as humility, when *really*, it's not. The humbleness...

Ryan: Mm...

Selena: Humility that God talks about, and that's in the Bible, is that, again, it's rooted in the Gospel. So, we are sinners saved by grace.

Ryan: Right.

Selena: It's having a right understanding of who we are and who God is.

Ryan: Mm. *Right* understanding.

Selena: Right understanding.

Ryan: That's good.

Selena: So, God is king, God is creator, God is sovereign. He is Lord overall. We are not!
We are—

[00:25:02] **Ryan:** Right.

Selena: We submit to His authority. We—

Ryan: Mm-hm.

Selena: And that's good! There's a gladness. There is a good thing—

Ryan: Hm.

Selena: To come from our humility.

Ryan: Yeah. A verse that we love, I personally love, is the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Right? And so, why does it say that? Because fearing the Lord is not, "I'm afraid of God," but it's, "I see God as God."

Selena: Mm-hm.

Ryan: "And I see myself as not God."

Selena: Mm.

Ryan: Right? And that is the beginning, the trailhead, on this path toward wisdom.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: And to have that posture is a humble posture. Right?

Selena: And that's good, though! It's a good thing to be humble, because...

Ryan: Hm, yeah!

Selena: That is where we are able to kind of own our sin and repent.

Ryan: Right.

Selena: And then be brought into God. Right? And where He is able to do His work in transforming our hearts, renewing us, making us a new creation in Him, right?

Ryan: Mm-hm.

Selena: When we are not the end-all-be-all, but when Christ is, when we are— Romans 12 talks about living sacrifices.

Ryan: Yeah.

Selena: From verse three, “For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think—”

Ryan: Yeah.

Selena: “But to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned.”

Ryan: Yeah.

Selena: So..

Ryan: Sober judgment.

Selena: Sober judgment.

Ryan: That’s humility!

Selena: Mm-hm.

Ryan: It’s seeing things rightly! When you're not sober, you— [*Chuckles*] When you're drunk or you're high or something, [*Both snicker*] you can't see straight!

Selena: Right.

Ryan: You can't walk straight!

Selena: Your perception of—

Ryan: Up is not up.

Selena: Your perception of life is inaccurate!

Ryan: Left is not right.

Selena: Yeah!

Ryan: Yeah! Your perception is distorted.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: But a sober view is, “Nope. This is right! This is up and down. This is left and right.”

Selena: Right.

Ryan: “This is truth.” And so, having that sort of view is the beginning of humility, or is humility.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: And here's the thing that I just love, okay? ‘Cause... a Christian sense of humility, it's not a lowliness that it's just for lowliness sake.

Selena: Mm!

Ryan: It's this sense of, “My identity is not king, but here's the reality. I am loved by the king.”

Selena: Mm.

Ryan: “I have been *saved* by the eternal God of the universe. The Triune God has chosen to reveal Himself to me and soften my heart to Him. And here I stand, a product of His goodness.”

Selena: Mm-hm.

Ryan: And so, I'm humbled by that! But also, my identity is so secure, it's secure! Right?

Selena: Mm-hm.

Ryan: Being humble does not mean you're insecure.

Selena: Right!

Ryan: I think that's what I'm trying to get at.

Selena: Yeah.

Ryan: We have a security in Christ that can still be rooted in and reminded and informed by a *great* sense of humility, but certainly not insecurity!

Selena: Right.

Ryan: And so, I think a lot of times we conflate the two, and we say, “If you're humble, that means you're insecure. And if you're prideful, that means you're a secure person,” —

Selena: Right.

Ryan: Meaning you're confident.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: Well, you can be confidently humble! And I think there is much wisdom in that heart orientation, that heart stance.

Selena: Right. And so, you're asking, “Okay, wait. How does this all tie in to three sure signs of a healthy couple?” [*Laughs*]

Ryan: [*Inhales briefly*] Here we go! Yeah.

Selena: In our marriage. So, again, seeing ourselves rightly, understanding, having Biblical humility and understanding what pride is according to Bible, what humility is according to the Bible, and we see ourselves rightly, we can then enter into understanding and living out what it means to *have* a mutual respect for one another in our marriage, to have soft hearts towards each other and to live in transparency about everything within our marriage!

Ryan: Hm...

Selena: So, the Gospel-fueled humility, it's kind of our key term we want to highlight here, is just the beginning. Like you said, it's the trailhead *into* these things.

Ryan: Yep.

Selena: And into having these signs and this fruit produced in our marriage.

Ryan: Mm.

Selena: So, the first one, talking about mutual respect in marriage. We can have mutual respect, *why*?

Ryan: Mm.

Selena: Because the Bible talks about us both being created in the image of God. I mean, Genesis 1.

Ryan: Yeah. When we see each other as an image-bearer...

Selena: Mm-hm. Has huge implications—

Ryan: It changes everything.

Selena: Of how we treat each other, how we talk to each other. When I value you, I will talk more respectfully to you.

Ryan: Mm-hm.

Selena: When I see that you're worth— Not “worth respecting.” [Laughs]

Ryan: Well, that’s what—

Selena: [Laughing] That’s not the right thing!

Ryan: [Chuckles] Well, and that’s what, I mean—

Selena: I mean, you are! You are. Sorry, that came out funny in my head.

Ryan: I know. You’re fine.

Selena: And in my words. [Chuckles]

Ryan: But when we say we're created in the image of God and image-bearers, we're saying that is, in itself, a declaration of dignity.

Selena: Yes.

Ryan: That I think you were getting at.

Selena: Yes.

Ryan: That God has said, “You bear my image.”

Selena: Mm-hm.

Ryan: And in that, it is good. And you have equal value, worth and importance, at whether you’re a husband or a wife, you are valuable, worthwhile, and important!

Selena: Mm-hm.

Ryan: As a person made in that image, and that is the baseline.

Selena: Right!

Ryan: Gary Thomas, we had him on the podcast. His interview’s coming out in a few weeks, probably. But he once said something in a blog post that was like, when you see your spouse as... So, if I'm looking at you, Selena, God is my Father-in-law. You're God's daughter before you're my wife.

[00:30:02] **Selena:** Mm!

Ryan: You're God's daughter before you're my wife. And so, therefore, you're God's daughter-in-law. In other words, I will report to my Father-in-law, my divine Father-in-law, *[Both chuckle]* with a sense of like, "Here's how I've honored your daughter. I've loved her well. I've cared for her heart. I've provided for her. I've not just financially, but I've provided spiritually and emotionally. And I've been a generous husband to her."

Selena: Mm-hm.

Ryan: Or I can say, "I've abused her in a way that maybe I've not valued her." And I'm not meaning physical abuse, although, God forbid that's the case. I don't want to gloss over that part of it. Pride will well up in all sorts of kind of insidious ways.

Selena: Mm-hm.

Ryan: But if I've taken her for granted, I've not appreciated her, I have not cared for her— *[Inhales deeply]*

Selena: Or loved her how Christ has loved the church, right?

Ryan: Yeah, yeah! So, that's what we mean by mutual respect. We see each other through that lens of you are a co-chair with Christ. You are an adopted son or daughter of God. You are made in His image, and therefore you are valuable, worthwhile, and important and worthy of loving well!

Selena: Right.

Ryan: That's mutual respect.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: And your opinion is valuable. *[Chuckles]*

Selena: Mm-hm.

Ryan: The way you articulate things is worthwhile.

Selena: So good!

Ryan: So many times in our early years, and I still struggle with this... *[Both laugh]* It is, I would— *[Ryan laughs]*

Selena: Go ahead, go ahead! *[Ryan laughs again]*

- Ryan:** I am a good arguer. And so, when we get in an argument, and Selena's a good arguer, too, but for whatever reason, I'm her kryptonite when we get into certain arguments. And I could belittle your side of the equation.
- Selena:** Mm!
- Ryan:** And that sometimes looked like belittling *you!* And it was never like I set out to belittle my wife.
- Selena:** Yeah.
- Ryan:** It's just I would say things in a way that was very dismissive and very— making you feel small in how you thought about something.
- Selena:** Mm-hm.
- Ryan:** And that's a constant struggle in just my own pride! And that's where it comes from, is this sense of pride that I'm right, you're wrong.
- Selena:** Right! Which is the contrast, yeah!
- Ryan:** And so—
- Selena:** On the flipside of not seeing each other in the image of God, our pride can definitely reject this truth that we are made in His image. We're, again, equally valued, or worth respecting. But our feelings and emotions can sometimes determine whether or not respect should be given. Sometimes there's pride, and then the pride kind of fuels those emotions. And those emotions affirm, again, what we want to think and believe in that moment. And so, we're at a crossroads. Instead of deciding to be humble and to trust God and to trust His word and His instructions on how we should deal with each other, how we should communicate, and how we should love each other, we take our road, our high road of pride, right? And then it leads us to destruction, which go figure. Right? *[Laughs]*
- Ryan:** Yeah!
- Selena:** *[Laughing]* That's what God's word says about pride!
- Ryan:** So, when you say, "choosing God's way," I'm thinking of the Biblical definition of love in those moments when you're fighting.
- Selena:** Mm-hm.
- Ryan:** Or you're disagreeing, and you think, hopefully you've memorized it. If not, go into I Corinthians 13 and memorize what love is!
- Selena:** Yeah.

Ryan: And it's two verses.

Selena: We're finding out that [*Chuckles*] I can tell you... about music.

Ryan: Love is patient, love is kind, it is gentle, it's not self-seeking, it does not boast. Right? It hopes all things and endures all things. It's long-suffering. And so, if we're having an argument and I'm thinking to myself, "I'm going to choose to be right—" It doesn't say love is right. [*Laughs*] It doesn't say love is correct.

Selena: [*Chuckles*] It's true!

Ryan: It says love is patient, it's kind, right? So, in those times of disagreement, if I'm operating out of a sense of Biblical perspective, meaning I'm seeing things, so really, I'm seeing myself soberly, knowing that this needs to instruct how I love my wife. They're not just suggestions.

Selena: Mm-hm.

Ryan: They're declarations of what love is, the substance of it itself!

Selena: Mm-hm.

Ryan: I can say, "I need to be patient right now."

Selena: Mm-hm.

Ryan: "I don't feel like being patient right now." Well, you know what? Humble yourself to God's word and be patient!

Selena: [*Snickers*] The feelings need to submit, yeah.

Ryan: Humble yourself to God's word and endure this with your wife.

Selena: Mm-hm.

Ryan: Be kind, do the actions of love and wait for the feelings of love to follow.

Selena: Right, right.

Ryan: It's an action-reaction thing.

Selena: Yeah.

Ryan: But it starts from a humble posture towards God's word. So, I think that's what you were talking about when you say we...

Selena: Yeah!

Ryan: In contrast, we humble ourselves to God's way and not choosing our higher way of the pride. So...

Selena: And we can, again, have mutual respect because A, we're both created in God's image.

Ryan: Mm-hm.

Selena: Therefore, we're both valuable. B, even though we're different, we're both, again, of equal value, worth and importance... in God's eyes.

Ryan: Yeah.

Selena: We have different *roles*, but we're *equal* in value. So, how this might play out on the pride side is we look at Ephesians 5, talking about submission, wives submitting to your husband, the husband's the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church. But there's also the husband love your wives. So... [Ryan chuckles] this whole "roles" area is obviously a hot topic. But when we see ourselves, again, as co-heirs, as children of God, made in His image, mutual respect can flow into this.

Ryan: Yeah.

Selena: And understanding that we don't have to—

Ryan: Oh, man.

Selena: There's a lot of pride around, I think, Ephesians 5, that—

[00:35:01] **Ryan:** Oh, for sure!

Selena: We don't always want to dig into or allow to happen.

Ryan: I want to jump in, I'm sorry.

Selena: Go ahead, yeah!

Ryan: This is one of those areas where a culture will say, "Did God really say that?" [Selena snickers] "Did God really say wives submit to your husbands?"

Selena: Yeah...

Ryan: I mean, even in the church, they'll say—

Selena: Well, it's both sides, I think. "God said this!" or, "Did God really say this?"

Ryan: Yeah! It's always a distortion.

Selena: Yeah.

Ryan: Pride always *distorts* it.

Selena: There it is.

Ryan: And it gets us away from the sober view of it.

Selena: Mm-hm.

Ryan: The humble view of it, the letting God's word bear its weight on us. We're not bearing our weight on it!

Selena: Mm-hm!

Ryan: And so, yeah, the world will say, even in the church, they'll say, "Did God really say submit? I mean, what's the Greek word of submit?" [*Selena laughs out loud*] "And what is the context and—"

Selena: [*Snickering*] "Let's look this up."

Ryan: "How does—" And the reason why I think there's backlash there—

Selena: And those are good questions.

Ryan: They're all good questions, but I think it'll come back around to a truth that's probably hard to swallow unless you have a position and a heart posture of pride!

Selena: Yeah.

Ryan: Of humility. [*Laughs out loud*]

Selena: Yep.

Ryan: Unless you have a heart posture of humility. So, and I think there are valuable questions to be asked around that, 'cause you said the other distortion is, "Hey! You're my wife! You need to *submit* right now!"

Selena: [*In a funny voice*] "Submit!" [*Resumes normal voice*]

Ryan: "Or *submit*!" Or, "You are sinning, and I am going to correct you 'cause I'm the head of this household!"

Selena: Mmm...

Ryan: Does that sound humble or prideful? Does that sound like me loving you as Christ has loved the church?

Selena: Right.

Ryan: I'm going to say no.

Selena: No, no.

Ryan: It doesn't. It sounds like—

Selena: Sorry, I thought that was rhetorical.

Ryan: It sounds like I'm trying to...

Selena: Manipulate, you're trying to—

Ryan: I'm asserting my authority over you in a way that is domineering and tyrannical!

Selena: Right.

Ryan: And not loving and kind and patient and faithful and all the things that love is!

Selena: Right, right.

Ryan: So, God's word, we tend to isolate passages like that and forget about the *rest* of Scripture.

Selena: Yeah!

Ryan: Forget about God's heart for both sides of the marriage. [*Chuckles*]

Selena: Right, right.

Ryan: And also, scripture like that is not meant to be a battering ram or a bludgeoning stick that I hit you over the head with it and say, "You submit!"

Selena: Right.

Ryan: No, it's— You read that scripture—

Selena: It's destructive.

Ryan: Husband, wife, whoever's reading that, you read that and read it to yourself. Don't read it to your spouse. Read it to yourself.

Selena: Yeah.

Ryan: Take on your part. Let your spouse take on their part. And then you talk about it, instead of you telling them—[*Snickers*]

- Selena:** Right.
- Ryan:** How they need to apply it to their heart. [*Selena chuckles*] Let the Holy Spirit do what the Holy Spirit does.
- Selena:** Right!
- Ryan:** Change hearts. So.
- Selena:** So, yes! And mutual respect, again, can only come from this position of humility, Biblical humility in marriage.
- Ryan:** Mm.
- Selena:** Knowing we're both created in God's image. We're different, but we have equal value. Our roles are different. We're also siblings in Christ and we can esteem each other as co-heirs. I mean, you were kind of touching on this earlier with Gary Chapman, talking about how we are children of God, and we're co-heirs with Christ, so, with that—
- Ryan:** It was Gary Thomas. Did I say Gary Chapman?
- Selena:** Thomas. Did I say Chapman?
- Ryan:** I don't know. I was Gary Thomas, for the record! [*Laughs*]
- Selena:** One of those good Gary's!
- Ryan:** Yeah. Good Gary? [*Both laugh*] [*Ryan speaks with an accent*] "Good Gary!" [*Ryan resumes normal speech and laughs*]
- Selena:** Romans 8, *again*— You know, Romans is just filled with this, I think. "The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs— heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ—" So, again, knowing who we are, we are co-heirs with Christ. We are made in His image.
- Ryan:** Mm-hm.
- Selena:** This is how mutual respect comes. And this all takes humility. This all takes us having a right understanding of who we are.
- Ryan:** Yeah... Yeah.
- Selena:** And it helps us! Humility and that mutual respect also helps us maintain soft hearts, which is the second big point here.
- Ryan:** Yeah, that's where it all feeds into these next two.

Selena: Right!

Ryan: And soft hearts is the next... quality.

Selena: Yeah, soft hearts towards one another.

Ryan: Yeah.

Selena: Because again, we're reminded of who we are. We are sinners saved by *God's* grace.

Ryan: Yeah.

Selena: How can I hold imperfections and sin against my spouse when I have been saved from so much, right?

Ryan: Mm.

Selena: My own sin is something that we need to mutually come together on and say, "Please help me!" You know, I mean, an example of this is, yes, we've been talking about possibly getting a little bit of a bigger house because there's five of us! [*Chuckles*]

Ryan: Our family's growing! Yeah.

Selena: Our house is great, and we are content in it. We are also trying to think, we want to have room for people to be able to *stay* with us longer than 24 hours. [*Chuckles quickly*] And be able to be a haven for people.

Ryan: And not on a terrible futon thing that we—

Selena: Right! [*Both laugh*]

Ryan: Something that's more comfy, yeah.

Selena: Right! And so, this has been kind of a teaching ground for us because you're coming and saying, "I'm not sure this is the right decision," on a specific house, and I'm saying, "But I feel like it's a right decision!" I'm not coming in and manipulating. You're not coming in degrading and just being tyrannical about it. We're having soft hearts. "These are my feelings." I've said this to him probably the last three or four days, like, "These are my feelings. I'm not trying to manipulate you. I'm not trying to undermine anything. I just need you to know these, and help me to find God in them—"

Ryan: Yeah.

Selena: "Because I'm having a really hard time. And I just want to be transparent with that struggle."

Ryan: And this morning I said, “Well, what we need to do is revisit what really matters, ‘cause it seems like you're saying, ‘This is what really matters,’ and we do not have the same vision of what really matters on this.”

[00:40:02] **Selena:** Right, right!

Ryan: And your response was, “Yeah, you're probably right.” [Both chuckle] And even though that's just one time—

Selena: And I trust you! I mean, I trust you on that. And that trust has come at a cost. We've had to learn that trust by failing many times.

Ryan: Yep, yeah. So, having a soft heart...

Selena: ‘Cause my pride would easily well up there.

Ryan: Yeah.

Selena: And so, we see soft hearts and marriage are kind of the result of a true experience of God's grace.

Ryan: And it's also understanding the power of what marriage is, and how we're on the same team.

Selena: Mm-hm.

Ryan: I think one of the biggest problems is couples will forget, “I'm advocating for us, just like you're advocating for us.” I'm not—

Selena: [Snickers] You say that so many times to me in the heated moments of my arguing, and I'm like, “I don't want you on my team!” [Both laugh] “I'm mad at you right now! I want you to be on the *other* team.” [Both chuckle] But then you so graciously remind me that you're on my team, and I'm like—

Ryan: I *want* your flourishing. I want in your best— I want—

Selena: In my blind rage, I can't hear it! [Cackles]

Ryan: I want your joy.

Selena: Yes.

Ryan: I want to see your joy. And so, I think we can harden our hearts toward each other if I don't think you're actually looking out for me, or I think that you are somehow just trying to undermine me.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: And I think that's where Paul— I mean, he said... God so graciously inspired Paul to write those words, that love hopes all things!

Selena: Mm-hm.

Ryan: Right? It doesn't just hope for what it wants; it hopes for the best and those whom it loves!" [Snicker]

Selena: Right. Mm!

Ryan: Like, if I love you, then I'm going to hope for the best. I'm going to assume the best, that you're not out to get me!

Selena: Yeah. Ugh! It's hard!

Ryan: That you are my wife, the woman that I love that God has given. [Selena huffs] And so, that kind of keeps your hearts soften toward each other.

Selena: Right. And I think another fruit of kind of the soft hearts area is this area of forgiveness, right, in marriage?

Ryan: Yes! Thank you.

Selena: Soft hearts, they can come from a humble heart that *understands* forgiveness! You know, in the parable in Matthew 2, Peter, he comes up to Jesus and he's like, "Lord, how often," verse 2, "will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?" And verse 22— Sorry. It was 21 and 22.

Ryan: Mm...

Selena: "Jesus said to him, 'I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times.'" So, this whole idea of forgiveness was, I think, radically changed by Jesus, right?

Ryan: Mm-hm.

Selena: Because before that, you had to go to the temple, you had to offer sacrifices. There's a whole cultural thing about how forgiveness is granted.

Ryan: Mm-hm.

Selena: Where Jesus is saying, "No. No one is holier on this whole playing field of life. It's *you all* and *me!*" Right? Jesus is the only one that is above us!

Ryan: Wow! That's good.

Selena: And so, when he's saying 77 times, he's trying to paint that picture. "Peter, you're forgiven! The amount that you forgive does not make you better or

bigger or purer. Right? It's the amount that you're forgiven is how much I'm forgiving you!" So, there is no *end*—

Ryan: There's no limit to it.

Selena: No limit to how many times you forgive. And that's not just applicable to the relationships around us, but what's the first relationship, obviously, is our marriage! And that's where we see, I think, forgiveness *needing* to be... exercised the most!

Ryan: Mm-hm.

Selena: Is in our marriage relationship, as well as in our relationship with our kids.
[*Chuckles*]

Ryan: Yeah.

Selena: Again, it starts with in our home, with God and ourselves, with our spouse, with our kids. It just radiates out from there. When our hearts are hardened, we need, again, to be reminded of verse 22, Jesus saying, "I do not say to you seven times, but 77 times."

Ryan: Right! [*Inhales*] Yeah. By the way, I think you said Matthew 2...

Selena: I mean, Matthew 18?

Ryan: It's Matthew 18.

Selena: My bad!

Ryan: Go ahead and read that!

Selena: Oh, that makes sense!

Ryan: Yeah!

Selena: I'm looking at Matthew 2. Matthew, 18:21-35. That makes sense; that's what that is.

Ryan: Yeah!

Selena: I'm sorry!

Ryan: So, go ahead and read this. Listeners, I mean if forgiveness is something you're struggling with, this passage is for you! [*Both chuckle*] Because it basically, like you said, it forces us into a posture of, "I am so forgiven in Christ."

Selena: [*Quietly*] Mm-hm.

Ryan: “So, I need to forgive my brother.” Brother or sister! Now, that doesn't mean that you immediately are over the consequences.

Selena: Right!

Ryan: You're immediately over the fallout of something, a betrayal or being sinned against.

Selena: Mm-hm.

Ryan: But it does mean that we actually have to view each other rightly in the sense that...

Selena: Mm-hm.

Ryan: When we don't for— Just go read that parable! We also have an episode on this, by the way. It's—

Selena: Yeah.

Ryan: It's-it's—

Selena: [*Chuckling lightly*] How to apologize or something like that?

Ryan: It's like, “[The Art of Apologizing](#).”

Selena: Yeah! It was a good one!

Ryan: There was also one of forgiveness, I think, too. So, go back and look for that.

Selena: I just want to say, too, that I've been reading a lot of books lately. I don't know. It's been so good for my heart and soul. And it's caused the Bible to become more alive as well, because you read these stories and they're good, but then you read the Bible and it's *life*, right?

Ryan: Mm-hm.

Selena: And so, when Jesus, I believe it was in— I can't remember where it was. I was dealing with worry and anxiety, and I was talking to you about that, and Jesus says, “Is not life more important than food and clothing?”

Ryan: Yeah...

Selena: And Jesus has this way of presenting such a rich reality to us that is...

Ryan: Hm! It's almost like he's the Messiah.

Selena: Right?! [*Ryan snickers*] Obviously. And then here, he does it again, though! Jesus said to him, “I don't see seven times, but 77 times!” Here's the open door to this greater, beautiful, brighter way of living!

[00:45:02] **Ryan:** Mm!

Selena: Not just for the livings' sake, but for God's *glory*, right?

Ryan: Yeah!

Selena: And for our *goodness*! When we are able to understand rightly that we are forgiven of much, that life is more important than food and clothing—

Ryan: Yeah.

Selena: That life— There's more to this than what you're seeing, Peter! Right? This whole seven times, there's *way* more to this! And let me just... Jesus, he's such a good author of that, right?

Ryan: Yeah.

Selena: And... speaker and illustrat—

Ryan: Yeah!

Selena: He is king! [*Giggles*]

Ryan: Yeah!

Selena: He is the Messiah.

Ryan: Yeah! Well... And again, back to the Gospel, right? Gospel-fueled humility.

Selena: Mm-hm.

Ryan: When you can see Him as the King that He is, then we can say, “Oh! Your words bear a lot of weight on this situation.”

Selena: Right, right!

Ryan: “And I can actually rest in that.”

Selena: Mm-hm.

Ryan: Okay, so, recap! We got one more sign, but these three signs of a healthy couple. The first one is mutual respect, and that plays itself out in three different ways. Go ahead and listen again if you want to hear those three ways.

Then the second one is soft hearts, having soft hearts toward one another in marriage and soft hearts toward God.

Selena: Mm-hm.

Ryan: In a way. And then the third one is transparency about everything. And this is kind of a chord that we harp on a lot because I just think it's such a necessary, rare thing nowadays. Is that for a couple to live in a way that's completely known, and therefore enjoying the joys of being fully loved, both— You're already fully known by God, whether you know it or not. *[Both chuckle]* Whether you admit it or not.

Selena: Want to believe it or not, yeah!

Ryan: And therefore, you're loved vastly more than you ever realized. Tim Keller has a quote; he says, "The beauty of the Gospel is this, that I'm far worse than I ever imagined and loved far more than I ever dreamed."

Selena: Mm-hm.

Ryan: All right. Something to that effect.

Selena: Aw, Tim.

Ryan: Oh, Timmy! O-Timmy-Kay. It's so—

Selena: *[Exasperatedly exhales]* We should just end the podcast there. *[Laughs]*

Ryan: And so, transparency is the way that we kind of get to the root of those things and actually see sanctification happen in our lives.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: And we see connection happen *around* the Gospel—

Selena: *[Quietly]* Right.

Ryan: Not just because of, but *around* it! It's this warm fire. We are in this forest and we are freezing 'cause it's wintertime, and there's snow. And here we are huddling around this warm, life-giving truth of the Gospel—

Selena: Mm-hm.

Ryan: And saying, "We're in this together. I am freezing out here. I *need* the Gospel to sustain me!"

Selena: Mm-hm.

- Ryan:** It's so much more than a small fire, by the way.
- Selena:** Right.
- Ryan:** But the imagery is strong, is that we are now huddling around it together. It is the objective, not my sin, not my shortcoming, not my perfection!
- Selena:** Mm-hm.
- Ryan:** Not what I think is perfection.
- Selena:** Mmm.
- Ryan:** But it's instead, we can rally around this truth, that we are loved in Christ and we can walk in the light, as John instructs us in I John 1. And this is another one I just love! It says this, I John 1:5— We'll start in verse 5: "This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." We talked about light at the beginning of this podcast. "If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth." And that's the same lie that Eve believed in the garden.
- Selena:** Mm-hm.
- Ryan:** And Adam and Eve believed in the garden. "But if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another. And the blood of Jesus, his son, cleanses us from all sin." So, a few things there. These are covered in our book, See-Through Marriage, which will come up in a few months. A quick plug, go to SeeThroughBook.com to join the launch team. *[Both laugh]* But a few things that come out of there: it says if we walk in the light. Walking is an active verb, it's not sitting, staying, standing, waiting!
- Selena:** Mm-hm!
- Ryan:** It's walking! It's going through the business of life, moving forward in life, going about your days...
- Selena:** Mm-hm.
- Ryan:** Walking as one in the light. Okay. *Then*— Okay. So, that's the first one. It's a verb, active verb. *Then* we have— What? We have fellowship...
- Selena:** Mm-hm.
- Ryan:** With one another— We actually know each other!
- Selena:** Right.

Ryan: We can actually be known and loved! I can know and love you; you know and love me. This is in marriage, but also within the context of Christian community. And then the second thing, the second result, is and the blood of Jesus, His son, cleanses us from all sin. All right. So, we are already positionally righteous!

Selena: Right.

Ryan: But there's still a cleansing happening.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: A sanctification happening out.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: Of being made more holy! That's what sanctification means.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: And so, that's a beautiful picture.

Selena: And verse eight, you didn't go to it, but I want to just read it. It says, "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us."

Ryan: Mmm.

Selena: If we confess our sins, though, verse nine, "He's faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Ryan: Mm-hm.

Selena: So, again, the flip side of this—

Ryan: Yeah.

Selena: Of humility, of being transparent, is pride! The opposite side, the contrasting side—

Ryan: Uh-huh.

Selena: Which makes humility shine brighter, is *pride*, right?

Ryan: Mm-hm!

Selena: Pride wants us to hide! [*Laughs*] Pride would say, "You know, we have it all together. We're going to put up this front. We don't need anybody's help. We just need to take care of it ourselves. Everybody deals with things, right?! We

can do it! It's fine." Transparency is no! Transparency is humility.
Transparency—

Ryan: Well, it—

[00:50:00] **Selena:** Is saying, "I'm going to allow myself to be known. I'm going to end this struggle and the yuck."

Ryan: Yeah.

Selena: "And everything that I'm going through..."

Ryan: The reason—

Selena: "Because I trust!"

Ryan: Yeah. But yeah, that's just it—

Selena: God's word is...

Ryan: Is when you are transparent, you are functionally putting to use the belief that you proclaim with your mouth, by saying that, "I trust my identity's in Christ!"

Selena: Mm!

Ryan: You can't be transparent without actually doing that.

Selena: Yeah!

Ryan: It's easy to hide and say you do that when you actually don't do that, which is what John talks about in verse 10—

Selena: Mm-hm!

Ryan: Which you didn't get to! *[Both laugh]* It says, "If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar and his word is not in us."

Selena: Yeah. Mm!

Ryan: Let that soak in! So, when we're not transparent, we're effectively saying we've not sinned.

Selena: Mm! I've always... felt like, or thought— Is Instagram just one big lie? *[Ryan laughs]* Are we just lying? Putting out *lies*? I mean...

Ryan: Well, what's the alternative though? I mean, no one wants to see...

Selena: No, no, no!

Ryan: You know, like...

Selena: I want to see your beautiful mess, Ryan! *[Both laugh]* He loves that!

Ryan: Just a... messy bun!

Selena: Yep!

Ryan: I've got a messy top bun!

Selena: Stop.

Ryan: *[Speaks with a lisp]* It's my mess. *[Laughing]* It's beautiful!

Selena: You're going to have to delete! *[Both laugh]*

Ryan: Ah, it's a thing.

Selena: No! I just—

Ryan: Yeah.

Selena: That's where my conviction lies in some of that stuff. Am I being prideful? Am I hiding things? Or am I just really displaying kind of a moment in time?

Ryan: Mm.

Selena: Anyways! That's a whole 'nother podcast. But—

Ryan: It's funny how it beca— It was started as a platform just to kind of share beautiful moments, and then it became this platform for *proving* that you—

Selena: *[Exhales the word]* Yeah!

Ryan: Your whole life is a beautiful moment. *[Both laugh]* And... Anyway.

Selena: Ya'll know that ain't true!

Ryan: Yeah. And you know what? Okay. Again, it's in the book that's coming out *[Selena giggles]*, but there's a bunch of research on how people are literally going into debt to fake this life!

Selena: For sure! Yeah.

Ryan: And what the study said is they're like superheroes in reverse! That their public identity is, the one that everyone knows them by, is not their hidden identity, which would normally be your superhero identity!

Selena: Right.

Ryan: Their public identity is their superhero identity! And then their hidden identity is that they're at home crying themselves to sleep [*Chuckles*] at night.

Selena: Let's not laugh. That's not—

Ryan: I'm saying, no—

Selena: Sorry.

Ryan: The trend is...

Selena: Yes! It's...

Ryan: To me, it's so...

Selena: Ironic!

Ryan: Yeah.

Selena: And yes. Interesting.

Ryan: It's so ironic and... [*Deep inhale*]

Selena: So, we kind of fall in one of two camps, right?

Ryan: Yeah.

Selena: We either are experiencing kind of these three signs of being a healthy couple, where we have mutual respect for each other...

Ryan: Yeah.

Selena: We have soft hearts and we're living in transparency. And sometimes that's cyclical. We can be nailing it and feeling good about our marriage, and sometimes we're not! So, I guess kind of the questions, I would say the Conversation Challenge would start with, talking about these three steps of do we have mutual respect for each other? Do you feel respected by me? Why or why not? And then beliefs are going to come up in this whole idea of respect and...

Ryan: Mm.

Selena: Do you feel like my heart is soft towards you in these things? Why or why not? "I don't feel like we're being transparent about some things. Let's talk about this."

Ryan: Yeah.

Selena: So, go through these, have a conversation. You know, we really pray that your marriage is one marked by mutual respect, soft hearts, transparency on every level!

Ryan: Yeah.

Selena: And we're trusting that there's going to be tools. These will be some tools to help you walk through some of the storms.

Ryan: Speaking of which, I do want to touch on a few different— I know we have very few seconds left, but this translates and trickles down into, like we said at the beginning, into every area that you might have experienced frustration and barring any kind of psychological needs, right?

Selena: Right, right.

Ryan: Sometimes there's hurt that's so deep that you can't just get over it.

Selena: Yeah!

Ryan: You need to have someone walk with you through it!

Selena: Yeah!

Ryan: That person could be a psychologist.

Selena: Right. A counselor.

Ryan: Could be a pastor, it could be a friend, a counselor.

Selena: Yeah, a mentor.

Ryan: Mentor! So, barring anything like that! Okay. If that's you, go get help!

Selena: Yeah!

Ryan: First off. Don't just listen to this podcast and try to fix it.

Selena: Yeah. Don't hide! Pride would hide.

Ryan: Yeah, go get help!

Selena: Don't feel like you've got to hide.

Ryan: If you don't have a way of getting help, find a good church. On our website, there's a way to find a counselor, there's a way to find a church. There are *amazing* resources out there.

Selena: Mm.

Ryan: But if that's not you, meaning that there's not a trauma that is psychologically kind of embedded right now, this can trickle down into ways that would change even the aspects of your sex life!

Selena: Mm-hm.

Ryan: How are you approaching your sex life with humility?

Selena: Mm-hm.

Ryan: Instead of trying to get out of my spouse when I'm supposed to get out of them...

Selena: Mm-hm!

Ryan: Maybe I need to bring something and be humble.

Selena: Mm.

Ryan: And it's not a matter of just serving myself, but how can I serve you?

Selena: Mm-hm.

Ryan: A posture of service, a posture of generosity!

Selena: Yeah!

Ryan: And your finances, maybe your decision making has been rooted in pride instead of humility, rooted in discontent instead of contentment. Maybe that discontentment comes from thinking that God doesn't actually know what's best for you and hasn't provided what's best!

Selena: Mmm...

Ryan: He just needs to figure out what's best for you, and then He'll be on board [*Snickering*] with your masterplan.

Selena: [*Clicks tongue*] Yeah! Yeah.

Ryan: Or maybe your communication?

Selena: Yeah!

Ryan: In every aspect. Okay? So again, we're short on time, but definitely maybe think through that in your Couples' Conversation Challenge, and how... Find a pain point in your marriage and talk about that in light of pride and humility.

Selena: Yeah.

Ryan: Okay. Maybe just do that!

Selena: Yeah.

Ryan: Okay, with that said, Selena, can you pray us out today?

Selena: God, thank You so much for Your word and how it instructs us! Help our hearts, God, when our pride rages. Help us to take the path of humility. Lead us Farther. In Your name, amen!

Ryan: That was short and sweet! This episode—

Selena: Just trying to keep it...

[00:55:00] **Ryan:** [*Laughing*] Trying to keep it short and sweet!

Selena: Mm-hm!

Ryan: And a little salty along the way. [*Chuckles*]

Selena: Yep!

Ryan: [*Laughing*] Salty and sweet! Oh, what a treat. [*Selena chuckles*] This episode is!

Selena: In the can!

Ryan: All right, ladies and gentlemen! Once again, thank you for joining us for the Fierce Marriage Podcast. We will see you in about seven days! And until then!

Selena: Stay fierce.

[00:55:22] <Ending Sequence>

[00:55:40] Podcast ends.

PODCAST NOTES

- **[00:00:00]**
 - Scripture reference:
 - Proverbs 8:13, *ESV*
- **[00:10:03]**
 - Scripture reference:
 - Genesis 3:1b-6, paraphrase, *ESV*
 - C.S. Lewis quote:
 - Taken from the book *Mere Christianity*, by C.S. Lewis.
- **[00:14:56]**
 - Scripture reference:
 - Ephesians 2:1-2, 4-6a, paraphrase, *ESV*
- **[00:20:00]**
 - Scripture reference:
 - Proverbs 16
 - Galatians 6:4, *ESV*
 - I Corinthians 7:4, misquote:
 - Actual verse used: II Corinthians 7:4, *ESV*
- **[00:25:02]**
 - Scripture reference:
 - Romans 12:3, *ESV*
- **[00:35:01]**
 - Scripture reference:
 - Romans 8:16-17a, *ESV*
- **[00:40:02]**
 - Scripture reference:
 - Matthew 18:21-22, *ESV*
 - Note: *Misquoted earlier in podcast as being Matthew 2:21-22.*
 - Podcast reference:
 - The Art of (Actually) Apologizing: <https://fiercemarriage.com/the-art-of-actually-apologizing>
- **[00:45:02]**
 - Timothy Keller quote paraphrase:
 - From Mr. Keller's book: *The Meaning of Marriage: Facing the Complexities of Commitment with the Wisdom of God*

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