

MAKING BIG DECISIONS AS ONE

<https://fiercemarriage.com/making-big-decisions-as-one>

[00:00:00] **Selena:** I feel like making decisions as a couple is a hard thing anyways. I mean [Ryan snickers], sometimes we can barely decide on what we want to eat. First world problems, right? [Ryan laughs] But—

Ryan: [Laughing] Yeah.

Selena: Making *big* decisions, like where are we going to go to church? How are we going to educate our children?

Ryan: Where we're going to live? Or—

Selena: Where we're going to live?

Ryan: Should we take this job, or should—

Selena: That's going to move us across the country? How—

Ryan: And if you're a young couple, maybe college decisions.

Selena: Yeah!

Ryan: Or any big financial decision.

Selena: Something that just changes your normal. Right? Your current normal to a very bigger, different new normal.

Ryan: Yeah!

Selena: They're hard to navigate! And I think we've had a lot of stumbling blocks. [Laughs] And we've fallen on our faces, I think, a good many times. And the cool thing about it is God is still sovereign and faithful.

Ryan: Mm.

Selena: And good to... never leave us, but also use those times to grow us together and in Him.

Ryan: And you're absolutely right. And I can't wait to dive into it! So, listeners, we'll see you on the other side.

[00:00:55] <Intro Sequence>

[00:01:26] **Ryan:** Yeah. Decisions are... But here's the thing, is decisions, they're important. They're big. But as believers, we have a special kind of call in our lives to make wise choices.

Selena: Mm-hm.

Ryan: And to live in a way that isn't arbitrary, to make decisions that aren't selfish, and to do so in unity as a couple, as a family, for the glory of God, for the good of the church, for the good of our community.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: For all these purposes that are bigger than us. And believe it or not, that reality should impact how we make decisions as a family.

Selena: Yeah. And the interesting thing about this, and I don't want it to go this way, but we're going to go there because we are in the current times that we are in, is we're recording this at sort of the big outbreak of... It's been happening for a while, but coronavirus is very real in Washington state. And we—

Ryan: I read a thing today. Sorry. I read a thing where they're calling us kind of like the Wuhan...

Selena: Yes.

Ryan: Of America.

Selena: Yeah!

Ryan: Of the United States. It's ground zero.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: In our own area. *And* ground zero, like we're in the Puget Sound, which is ground zero for our state, so, yeah.

Selena: Yeah! So, I guess there's a lot to be said for making decisions right now. And—

Ryan: Oh! Yeah.

Selena: There's a lot to be said about how we operate in a time that is dealing with a pandemic, they're calling it now. How are we loving those around us? How are we making those decisions together as a family? Are we looking out for me and my own, or are we engaging and having our faith move in our bodies, right?

Ryan: Yeah.

Selena: And we're taking action of going and talking to our elderly neighbors. How are we making those decisions?

Ryan: Woah.

Selena: Are we even *thinking* about making those decisions?

Ryan: Yeah.

Selena: I mean, as believers, again, we're supposed to be, I think, mulling over choices in our lives on a daily basis.

Ryan: Yeah! So, I just want to take a moment to encourage you if, let's try to think outside of ourselves right now. I'm not sure what's going to be happening when this episode lands in five days!

Selena: Yeah.

Ryan: But a lot can happen. These things progress *very* quickly. It's logarithm. It's exponential.

Selena: Yeah.

Ryan: So, I just want to encourage you to think outside of yourself. We are called to be hands and feet of Christ. Think of how you can help feed, shop for, the elderly.

Selena: Yeah.

Ryan: The vulnerable, all that kind of stuff.

Selena: Yes.

Ryan: Just 'cause I want to be like, "This is my family! I'm going to get ready for the apocalypse," right?

Selena: Well, I think that's our default response.

Ryan: I just want to hold you close, and...

Selena: Yeah.

Ryan: Push everyone else away. [*Inhales*]

Selena: And God's like, "Not in this time."

Ryan: And I think the better way is to lead—

Selena: Yes.

Ryan: Our family into a place of serving our community within wisdom and safety.

Selena: Safety, yeah!

Ryan: And all that kind of stuff.

Selena: Absolutely.

Ryan: So! [*Inhales*]

Selena: So, I didn't want to just gloss over that, because we can—

Ryan: Thank you. Yeah!

Selena: Very much just talk about marriage in a bubble, right? And we need to know that the things that God puts on our hearts—

Ryan: Yeah.

Selena: Are real time and in a real world, and not just in the minds and...

Ryan: And it's very—

Selena: Office of Selena and Ryan Frederick. [*Snickers*]

Ryan: And very, honestly, very, *very* infrequently will we just—

Selena: Mention—

Ryan: Jump out of our lane.

Selena: Yeah.

Ryan: Like we try to just stay in the, “Hey, we're here to encourage you in Christ when it comes to marriage and family.” And there's a lot of stuff happening politically around the world in terms of just news cycles and stuff like that. So, we won't do that. But this is truly unique.

Selena: Yeah.

Ryan: This is a unique situation. So, we're praying, and we are with you and let's see the body of Christ shine in this time.

Selena: Mmm. So good.

Ryan: Okay! Start talking about decisions. You need to make a decision to leave a rating and review for the Fierce Marriage Podcast. [*Selena laughs*]

Selena: There it is,

Ryan: And let me tell you, it is wise! [*Selena laughs*] And you can pray about it, but you only get confirmation.

Selena: [*Selena laughs*] Goodness. [*Both laugh*]

Ryan: No, yeah. So, if you haven't done that, please do! It means a ton. Somebody wrote in and left a review and said, and I'm just so humbled by this, and they said that the podcast has helped kind of save their marriage, that it has set their family on a completely different trajectory. So, I'm, again, I'm humbled. We're just always pointing people to God's word. And it's God's word that transforms lives. It's not Ryan and Selena. It's Jesus Christ.

[00:05:18] **Selena:** Mm-hm.

Ryan: And so, I'm thankful for His work. I'm thankful for those who let us know what God's doing in their lives, and reviews are one way to do that!

Selena: Mm-hm.

Ryan: And they're one way to give back.

Selena: Mm-hm!

Ryan: If we've helped you, leave a rating, leave a review. Takes like 10 seconds to do the rating! Another 20 seconds to do the review. Another way, if you want to be on mission, is go to patreon.com/fiercemarriage, all one word. And you can partner with us financially. We just ask two things: pray about it! If God leads you, that you would follow through whatever level your family is led to support us at! It does buy food for our families. So, thank you. [*Snickers*] And it helps us keep this thing ad-free [*Selena chuckles*] and logistics and all that kind of stuff. It's not going out into the abyss. It has a very tangible way of helping us is what I'm trying to say.

Selena: Yes, yes.

Ryan: Finally, if you have a question, go to fiercemarriage.com/podcast and we will get back around to answering those as soon as the dust settles in our personal lives, 'cause we've been sick. Not with the coronavirus, thank God. Maybe! I don't know. [*Selena chuckles*] They say a lot of people don't know they're sick with it. We're healthy at the moment, but we're finally getting back in our rhythms of life.

Selena: Yes, yes.

Ryan: So, yes!

Selena: I think things have closed for See-Through book, the launch team, right? That door has closed?

Ryan: You know what? Well, actually, no. You weren't part of that, but I had a meeting with our marketing team.

Selena: Mm-hm!

Ryan: And we have our launch. We have a gal, Alexis, who's managing.

Selena: [*Chuckles*] Alexis.

Ryan: Yeah!

Selena: Not Alexa! [*Enunciates the end of the name*]

Ryan: Alexis, yeah. [*Laughs*]

Selena: With Alexis. [*Laughs*]

Ryan: Alexa! Manage the launch team. "Okay."

Selena: If only it were that easy. [*Cackles*]

Ryan: No. Alexis is *way* smarter than Alexa.

Selena: She is.

Ryan: Anyway, she's managing the launch team, and basically, we've opened it up and now it's just the logistics are going to change a little bit. If you still want to be interested, go to seethroughbook.com. And, you know what? We're going to give out! Here's the cool thing that—Selena, I didn't tell you this! I'm so sorry!

Selena: This is my life, people.

Ryan: We're giving out free books, like physical books, to people who leave reviews—

Selena: What?!

Ryan: Up to a certain number! So, it's really going to come down to who are the first people to sign up.

Selena: Wow!

Ryan: Who're the first people to pre-order, who are the first people to write a review. And you're going to get a free *digital* copy of the book!

Selena: Wow.

Ryan: So, you can... Yeah, there's some strings. But you know what? It's pretty minimal compared to the alternatives, which is *nothing* cool!

Selena: Cool. Nothing! [*Both laugh*] *Nothing*.

Ryan: Yeah, yeah! So, I got to be honest. I'm feeling a little bit waxed today. I went surfing yesterday, which is not normal, but I'm hoping to make it normal. So, I got up at 5, drove with two buddies two hours out to the coast! We surfed for *four* hours! That's a *long* time surfing. I got swept away twice by the current.

Selena: I don't want to hear this.

Ryan: [*Laughs*] There's a big jetty. There's these little jetties where we went. Those were garbage. And I had to... It was terrible! It was terrible. [*Clears throat*]

Selena: You were out getting lost in the ocean! I don't want to hear this.

Ryan: And then we went to the big jetty, and there's a little river you ride. It's a current river, and I rode it. And then I was like, "I got to get out of this thing." And it was like, "You're not getting out of me! I'm taking you out further." And then, I got out and I was exhausted. And I was like, "This is how people die." And I'd say it was like a six and a half out of ten in terms of my worried scale. [*Selena exasperatedly sighs*] But it's all good!

Selena: That's like a real worried!

Ryan: [*Laughs*] Selena's finding out about this *right* now. [*Laughing*]

Selena: [*Exasperatedly sighs*] That's not fair.

Ryan: Kyle was right there! My buddy, Kyle. And he gave me the okay sign to make sure I was good, and I was giving him the okay back. And I was like, "This is my pride talking!" [*Both laugh*] No, but I really was okay! I was floating and I was warm, so I was good.

Selena: [*Whispers*] Oh my goodness...

Ryan: Anyway! I'm excited to be here today. [*Both laugh*] I'm appreciative of this other new day.

Selena: [*Laughing*] I'm glad that *you're* excited, 'cause I'm a little frustrated with you right now! [*Both laughing*]

Ryan: [*Laughing*] Okay. That's why I had to break the news on the podcast!

Selena: Well, this is surfing is just— I'm just like, "Don't ever go alone, people. Don't ever go alone."

Ryan: Yeah!

Selena: At least I'm not on the Washington coast! There are some serious rotunds out there.

Ryan: Not during the winter on the Washington coast.

Selena: No! Don't be dumb.

Ryan: I'm not smart. You will get roughed up!

Selena: Yep!

Ryan: And potentially killed. So...

Selena: [*Takes a deep breath*] Okay! Well...

Ryan: Where we going today? So, we have—

Selena: You're— Go ahead! [*Both laugh*]

Ryan: Go ahead, Selena?

Selena: [*Laughs*] Nope! Go head!

Ryan: Yes ma'am!

Selena: I just wrote it. It's fine.

Ryan: [*Cackles*] Just wrote the rundown.

Selena: And you're telling me you almost drowned. It's fine. [*Ryan laughs*] Okay. Well, in 2009, before we were—

Ryan: You've got to tell them where we're going to go first before we get into it. [*Selena sighs and Ryan laughs*] We talked about this! [*Selena laughs*] We talked about it! Alright. So, we're going to talk about what decision making, kind of what our tendencies are around decision making in marriage!

Selena: Yeah!

Ryan: Not just Ryan and Selena, but in general, culturally, and—

Selena: Yeah, and what we see is—

Ryan: I think in our *human* tendencies.

Selena: Yes.

Ryan: And then we'll talk—

Selena: In big decisions!

Ryan: In big decisions, yes.

Selena: And then we'll define those.

Ryan: Yeah! And then we'll look around. Okay. What are God-honoring decisions, and what are some tools we can use to make good decisions? And how do we align kind of the thought patterns with God's word? There is a really beautiful way to do that that we've just started kind of scratching the surface on. And then we will talk about gaining agreement around decisions, and then more tangible tools, like specific tools—

Selena: Right.

Ryan: That can help you make big decisions.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: So.

Selena: I think there is definitely a process to making big decisions. And the actual decision itself typically is a fast thing.

[00:10:06] **Ryan:** Hm.

Selena: But when it comes to the process of—

Ryan: Yes.

Selena: We're going to pray and think about this.

Ryan: You're absolutely right!

Selena: It's going to...

Ryan: You're right.

Selena: Take some time.

Ryan: You nailed it. Good job!

Selena: Are you trying to be extra encouraging right now?

Ryan: You're doing great! [*Selena scoffs*] I love you. I love just how patient you are.

Selena: That's just 'cause, that's just—

Ryan: And how forgiving you are.

Selena: Yep!

Ryan: How gracious you are. [*Selena scoffs*] Man. What would I do if you weren't gracious? [*Both laugh*] What would I do? [*Ryan laughs*]

Selena: Get out of here! I'm running this podcast.

Ryan: [*Laughing*] Okay.

Selena: [*Laughing*] You're done! You're done for the day.

Ryan: All right, all right.

Selena: No. But, so, when we're thinking about big decisions in our life, we did move to Southern California in 2009. We had been married for about seven years. We had not embarked on having children quite yet. And we decided, hey, we got— Well, I don't know if I should jump there.

Ryan: You're— Okay.

Selena: I don't know where to jump in here. We—

Ryan: You love glossing over our stories. [*Selena laughs*] You're like, "We moved! Get over it." [*Selena cackles*]

Selena: [*Laughing*] That's not it!

Ryan: "Who cares about the details?"

Selena: Hey!

Ryan: People want to know 'cause there's context to get.

Selena: Be gracious to me. There is! No! We went on a trip to Europe. Again, first world problems, right? We probably couldn't have afforded it. You found some crazy tickets online for like \$200, to where?

Ryan: \$350.

Selena: To—

Ryan: To Munich and back.

Selena: Right. To Germany from Seattle.

Ryan: Yeah.

Selena: Crazy! And you surprised me with them on a Valentine's Day. So, we literally got backpacks and went to...

Ryan: Yeah, we just went to Munich, and—

Selena: Germany for two weeks.

Ryan: Caught trains.

Selena: Yeah! And we just kind of—

Ryan: Around—

Selena: Backpacked around Austria, Switzerland. We had went to go see the family that where you had heart surgery, where we had stayed many years before.

Ryan: And so, you know, it's not that this trip was some extravagant thing. We stayed in hostiles.

Selena: *[Laughs]* We did!

Ryan: We stayed, and we didn't have any real plans.

Selena: No.

Ryan: The tickets cost us \$700 total.

Selena: Yeah. The internet still—

Ryan: And so...

Selena: Was like you kind of had to pay for it in a lot of ways.

Ryan: We didn't have smartphones, so—

Selena: Yeah. It was—

Ryan: It was a long trip, but it was definitely, we were scrappin'.

Selena: Oh, yeah!

Ryan: We were scrapping by.

Selena: We took night trains, and we thought, "Oh, we'll have a nice train car to ourselves." Yeah! With like eight other people.

Ryan: Yeah.

Selena: They stack those beds like four high on each side! *[Laughs]*

Ryan: Yeah. It was awkward.

Selena: So, it was an adventure! It was a bit awkward, but it was an adventure. And so, again, this was on a low budget. Saw it, said, "Let's be responsible and go!" So, we did. And after, I think it was, 14 days or so, we came back and God had really kind of shown us how much time we hadn't really been spending together because of church volunteering, full-time jobs. Just chasing the—

Ryan: Our priorities were just off.

Selena: Our priorities were off, yeah! And so...

Ryan: Yeah.

Selena: It was after a few months, wasn't it?

Ryan: I felt God really lead me to a place of, "You're responsible for your family, and—"

Selena: Mm.

Ryan: "The way you're leading them is not honoring Me."

Selena: Mm-hm.

Ryan: And so, that really caused me to come to you and say I really feel like it's time for a change.

Selena: Right!

Ryan: There's a decision coming! And the decision for us was what is the change going to be? We didn't know! We just knew change had to happen.

Selena: Yeah!

Ryan: And God graciously kind of began getting rid of options. *[Laughs]*

Selena: Yes, yes.

Ryan: Until we basically had a lot fewer options.

Selena: Yeah! Over time, yeah. It was a few months.

Ryan: Yeah.

Selena: But all that to say, we ended up in Southern California. And—

Ryan: So, the reason we moved to California—

Selena: I'm telling that!

Ryan: [Laughs] Okay.

Selena: There's a lot of unrest! We knew that a change was coming, and we had gone to visit friends down there and we're like, "Oh, yeah. This is great! We can start a business with them. We're going to be friends with them! And we need a new start." And *ironically*, we went down there and what? Like, six months later, they moved home, well, home back to Washington. The economy crashed. So, the idea of a solar company just didn't make sense. [Laughs]

Ryan: Yeah. So, my background's in energy engineering. And so, we were starting a solar design and installations company.

Selena: It sounds so cool, but you know?

Ryan: We sold nothing!

Selena: It's all—[Laughs]

Ryan: So, it was awesome!

Selena: And then we were like—

Ryan: Yeah.

Selena: "Oh, we need a new start with sunshine and palm trees." Well, the funny thing about wherever you go is there you are. So, you kind of take all your problems and angst with you, right?

Ryan: Right.

Selena: So, we were kind of trying to exercise our agency, if you will.

Ryan: Yeah!

Selena: That's what you like to say.

Ryan: Yeah!

Selena: Can you define that word, agency, for me?

Ryan: Well, okay, so, God gives us the ability to make decisions!

Selena: Mm-hm.

Ryan: Okay? And we are accountable for our decisions.

Selena: Yes!

Ryan: And when the Bible says heed wisdom—

Selena: Right.

Ryan: And reject folly, okay. So, we have agency in that process.

Selena: Did you take heeded of the wisdom? [*Snickers*]

Ryan: I took heeded of the words.

Selena: He-heeded.

Ryan: Headed. I headed the words! [*Selena giggles*] Yeah. [*Both laugh*] And so, we have agency in that. And God is not making those decisions for us. Now, there's a lot to be said around God's sovereignty—

Selena: Mmm...

Ryan: And salvation.

Selena: Mm-hm.

Ryan: And how that process unfolds. And when you read Romans and what you see in the book of Romans, in terms of how God saves His people—!

Selena: Yeah.

Ryan: That's not what we're talking about. We're talking about our being on mission, being commissioned in terms of in the garden when God said, "Go forth. Bear fruit," right?

[00:15:01] **Selena:** Mm-hm! Are you talking about the Great Commission, or are you talking about...?

Ryan: No, no! The initial commissioning of the first couple in Eden. And then also...

Selena: Multifl—Multiply. Not multiply! [*Chuckles*]

Ryan: Bear fruit and multiple, fill the earth and subdue it.

Selena: Yes.

Ryan: That's a go-and-cultivate, *work* the land.

Selena: Mm-hm.

Ryan: Be on mission with me as God. Not me, but God, God. [*Chuckle*]

Selena: Yes.

Ryan: And then, Jesus commissioning us as disciples. Right?

Selena: Right.

Ryan: So, there's this sense that we are free! Okay? In a way—

Selena: Yeah!

Ryan: To make decisions. There's a lot can be said about, philosophically, about really, are we? Because every decision we make is just a result of some other cause. And then that cause was the result of some other cause, and it's just an infinite regression of causes. And you get, that's Thomas Aquinas, get all the way back to how God is the uncaused Causer [*Selena laughs*], the unmoved Mover, right? He is the Originator. So, yes, there's all that stuff. But I'm saying basically, as far as we're concerned and how you live your life, you basically have agency. Right?

Selena: Yes.

Ryan: It's by God's grace that we do anything good. So, okay. When we were making the decision to move to California, we had wisdom in the back of our minds. We're thinking this is a good choice because—

Selena: Did we? [*Laughs*]

Ryan: Yes! I do think we— well, we had—

Selena: We did, but there were a couple—

Ryan: We weren't, yeah. It was very...

Selena: There were a couple of reasons that we're going to bring to *you all* that you should avoid. [*Laughs*]

Ryan: We were trying— Yeah, you're right. I feel like God used our tiny sliver of agency to—

Selena: Yes.

Ryan: And He transformed our desires to fulfill His grander purpose—

Selena: Yes!

- Ryan:** That we we're only able to see in hindsight.
- Selena:** Yes.
- Ryan:** And that's one of the big pieces of this, is we do exercise our agency, but we also have to rest in God's sovereignty.
- Selena:** Yes.
- Ryan:** While we're making big decisions. So, we kind of get to a point where you just need to make a decision, and trust the decision that...
- Selena:** Right.
- Ryan:** That God has led you to make, or wisdom has led you to make.
- Selena:** Right.
- Ryan:** And so, we ended up in California. And we went down there to have, like, I had *ambitions* of building this business.
- Selena:** Yes.
- Ryan:** And I ran the numbers out five years, and I was like, "We're going to be millionaires," [*Selena laughs*], "by the time we're 30. It's going to be awesome! And I'm just this brilliant mind." [*Ryan chuckles and Selena continues laughing*] "And all of my numbers are going to work *perfectly!*" [*Selena laughs harder*] "And as soon as I walk through the door, someone's going to *buy* a forty-thousand-dollar system." Right? Well, none of that happened.
- Selena:** [*Laughing*] Obviously none of that happened.
- Ryan:** The economy crashed.
- Selena:** Yes.
- Ryan:** Boom! Gone. Like Selena was saying. Our friends moved away, boom! That hope was gone.
- Selena:** Yeah.
- Ryan:** And all the sudden, we were stripped of our reasons...
- Selena:** Mm-hm.
- Ryan:** Of being, and there we were! And we're like, okay, well, somehow, we're here.
- Selena:** Yeah.

Ryan: What now? *[Laughs]*

Selena: Yeah.

Ryan: And so, what we saw through that is God used that as a time to really repair our hearts!

Selena: Yeah.

Ryan: In deep ways. It was a time when God really... That's where Fierce Marriage was birthed!

Selena: Yep!

Ryan: Out of that season. You were a Young Life leader for four years.

Selena: Yep, yep!

Ryan: And we have relationships still from—

Selena: Almost five years. Yeah! We kind of relearned how to do ministry, I feel like. In a lot of ways, we helped. We were part of a church plant.

Ryan: Yeah! I'd argue we've learned it for the first time, but...

Selena: For the first time, yeah! And the *theme* was that it was not about us, right? And the theme was...

Ryan: Mm.

Selena: How do we love people and show them Jesus. And that was a personal struggle from my own heart for just a minute here I'm going to say, because the Jesus that I knew, that I grew up with, was one that, yes, He saved me, but He was also someone who was going to give me what I wanted if I did all the right things.

Ryan: *[Chuckles]*Oooh!

Selena: Right?

Ryan: Yeah.

Selena: And so...

Ryan: Wait, what? *[Laughs]*

Selena: To present that to a teenager that's like, "I'm going to drink and party and sleep around. Why wouldn't I?" And it's like, "Uhhh..."

- Ryan:** In Young Life, you mean, when you're talking to them?
- Selena:** In Young Life, yes. Sorry. And there's no context at all. [*Snickers*] Yes! When I was—
- Ryan:** That's why I'm here, people!
- Selena:** When I'm in [*Both laugh lightly*] Young Life, when I— Yes! Meeting young people and saying, “Hey! Don't you want to know Jesus? You can't drink, you can't party, and you don't sleep around!” And they're like, “Why? Why would I want to know Jesus?” And so, that confronted me in all in a lot of ways, of why *would* I want them to follow Jesus? What does that mean for them right now?
- Ryan:** Yeah.
- Selena:** And it was a really good struggle from my own heart. Thankfully, I had leaders around me, people around me, that *loved* me well and showed me what it means to have relationship with those young people, but also—
- Ryan:** Yeah...
- Selena:** How to know and understand and... just *be* loved by Jesus and know what it means to be truly saved.
- Ryan:** So, God had used graciously our agency and our desires to help us and guide us through this big decision that in hindsight we can see His sovereignty working in ways that we could have never engineered or manufactured—
- Selena:** Mm.
- Ryan:** Or anticipated.
- Selena:** Mm-hm.
- Ryan:** In that, I believe this, and I'm not trying to throw anybody under the bus, but I believe that I think we heard the gospel for the first time down there!
- Selena:** Mm-hm.
- Ryan:** We learned what it meant to actually live in Christian community down there.
- Selena:** Yeah!
- Ryan:** We learned what it meant to be transparent.
- Selena:** Yeah!

Ryan: We learned what it meant to be a married couple relying on God. As I remember those nights when I would agonize over our finances when we were starting a business and no money in the bank, rents due, and God said, “I’m your provider, not you.”

Selena: Right.

Ryan: “Relax.”

Selena: Right! We learned how to make some decisions about our life—

Ryan: Right!

Selena: And our marriage through the community that God had put us in. They showed us how to...

Ryan: But all that, yeah. And so, we could have never seen His sovereignty—

Selena: Yes!

Ryan: Working in those *big* ways in our lives.

[00:20:01] **Selena:** Yes.

Ryan: We weren't sitting up here where we live in Washington, where we're from, saying, “Let's go to California so that we can learn how to be in Christian community. Let's go down there so we can hear about and love Jesus more!”

Selena: Right...

Ryan: “For the first time.”

Selena: Right!

Ryan: Let's do—Then we get—

Selena: It speaks to the sovereignty and glory of God.

Ryan: Yes!

Selena: Entirely. I mean, by all definitions, we went there and failed, right?

Ryan: Mm.

Selena: We basically went down there and failed. We lived in an apartment, and...

Ryan: By worldly definitions.

Selena: By worldly definitions. But by God's definitions, I'm like, this was our desert season! We were the Israelites. We were— God— [Ryan chuckles] We had this mass exodus. [Selena laughs] Okay. It's not that dramatic, but we did! [Ryan chuckles] We left for a time and God was saying, "Let me be like the water in your desert. Let me be your provider."

Ryan: Mm-hm.

Selena: Right?

Ryan: Psalm 93. Yeah.

Selena: And we were *literally* in the desert. [Chuckles] But figuratively, literally, God brought us in there to change us, and brought us out!

Ryan: Beautiful!

Selena: For the better.

Ryan: [Inhales] It's beautiful! So, we're sharing that story to kind of illustrate one big decision that we've made. And hopefully as we talk, it'll make sense when we talk about agency versus God's sovereignty. So, let's, before we go into maybe... Let's define what big decisions are!

Selena: Right. And we kind of said it at the beginning.

Ryan: Right.

Selena: It's kind of like a move, like you're moving from a different home maybe to a different part of your state or out-of-state or out of your community. Right?

Ryan: Mm-hm!

Selena: Or a big purchase, something that's going to affect your ongoing financial or—

Ryan: Yeah.

Selena: Day-to-day financials...

Ryan: Yeah!

Selena: Ways, as I guess? [Snickers] A career change, how you're going to educate your kids.

Ryan: Oh! Whether or not to have kids.

Selena: Yeah!

Ryan: A lot of couples write in about that.

Selena: Yeah, yeah!

Ryan: To say when is the right time to start a family?

Selena: Yep!

Ryan: I recently started going to seminary.

Selena: Yeah! [*Chuckles*] That was a big—

Ryan: That was a big decision.

Selena: Yeah, higher education, for sure.

Ryan: It means that means that we're having to spend... the money, which it's not cheap.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: And there's no discounts here! [*Both laugh*] And then there's also the... time that I'm reading—

Selena: Yes!

Ryan: When instead of helping the family. [*Inhales deeply*] So, any type of decision that's going to affect the trajectory of your day-to-day life.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: Did you mention? You said big financial, so like a car—

Selena: Yeah!

Ryan: Or things like that?

Selena: Yeah.

Ryan: Okay! So, what is our tendency then? So, culturally, how do we...

Selena: Or "Selena-ly." [*Chuckles*]

Ryan: If we're staring down the barrel of a big decision, and we're saying—

Selena: Let me just give you an example of a bad decision that [*Chuckling*] Selena tried to make when we moved to California.

Ryan: All right. What are we—?

Selena: So, well, not when we moved there. But we were in an apartment for about a year or so, and then I took Young Life kids to camp and I came back, and I was like, “Ryan, we have to buy a house! I'm not going to have enough space for these Young Life girls! We've got 12 of them, and some of them, they have *three* houses around the country!” [Selena snickers and Ryan chuckles] “They're so rich!”

Ryan: [Chuckling] Oh, my word.

Selena: You know? And so, I'm like, “Okay. This is the next thing we've got to do! We've got to move fast! We've got to start looking at houses.” And you were just like, “Uhhh... What?” [Laughs]

Ryan: First off, no. [Both laugh] Secondly, no. We can't afford a house.

Selena: And I was very adamant about it! But then you were like, “Selena. They're not coming for the house, right? They're coming for us, for the relationship especially.”

Ryan: Yeah.

Selena: And that was a hard lesson for me! Because *before* we had been operating in this...

Ryan: Yeah.

Selena: We just got to get more and get bigger because this is just how the church grows, right? This is how—

Ryan: It's like if I don't buy this thing or have this thing, then—

Selena: It's all dependent, yeah.

Ryan: I can't do the thing that I'm supposed to be doing.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: The funny thing is that there's always some other thing that you need to have to do the thing.

Selena: Well, the other funny thing is that *God's at work* [Ryan laughs], no matter what you have, right?

Ryan: [Chuckling] Yes!

Selena: [Snickers] That was my, “Oh, yes Lord.”

Ryan: Well and that's big. That's a big one if you're thinking of having kids! Because—

Selena: Yeah!

Ryan: You oftentimes think, “Oh, I have to have a year's worth of salary in the bank. Plus, we need to have a house. Plus, the crib and everything has to be perfectly...”

Selena: We were a two-bedroom apartment, barely two bathrooms. It was super nice! It worked. Little kids don't need much, friends. Until you have more! *[Laughs]*

Ryan: And we didn't live in L.A. We lived in Palm Desert, which is very... Apartments were really cheap.

Selena: Yes. *[Sound of a microphone being bumped]* Oops!

Ryan: So, but regardless, people will say you're never ready. But so, that's a tendency.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: Or... Yeah. You name it, with whatever the decision is. Now, there's some wisdom in some of those decisions!

Selena: Right.

Ryan: Right? So, if you're going to buy a car, it's probably better not to overextend yourself. You need to make sure that you have money to actually pay for it!

Selena: Right.

Ryan: So, you're going to wait!

Selena: Right!

Ryan: But there's always weighing, buying a car in the Bible? Not there! *[Both laugh]* But having kids in the Bible is a blessing! Buying a car is not even mentioned, but it's... So, we have to use wisdom! We have to apply wisdom to how we make these decisions.

Selena: Right. Because typically we have this—

Ryan: Yeah.

Selena: We have this tendency to just take the path of least resistance. I'm like, “Let's just buy another house!” Right? That's the simple thing.

Ryan: Yeah. Three tendencies!

Selena: Get the shiny new object.

Ryan: Yeah.

Selena: The next thing, you know? And we also try to be too aggressive, I think, with those decisions, because they're driven by fear.

Ryan: Yeah. You've ever had a time when you've had buyer's remorse? [*Softly snickers*]

Selena: ... Almost every large purchase. [*Both laugh*] There's always a moment of, like [*Gasps*]

Ryan: Yeah!

Selena: Take your breath away! [*Laughs*]

Ryan: Well, yeah! So, let's talk about this. So, again, you mentioned three tendencies. I real briefly want to cover them, so they make a lot of clarity.

Selena: I feel like they all intertwine. Yeah.

Ryan: Path of least resistance. An example of this is... I don't have an example of this! But say, so, marketing! All of the marketing that we get is geared toward pitching us on a product we never thought we needed.

[00:25:10] **Selena:** Mm.

Ryan: But now all of the sudden, we *have* to have it. Right?

Selena: Right.

Ryan: And so, the path of—

Selena: This is your quick way to get it!

Ryan: Yeah!

Ryan: The path of least resistance is—

Selena: Credit card!

Ryan: Yeah! Oh, it's like zero money down, zero whatever percent financing for the first six months, and on this \$20,000 mattress, or not mattress [*Both laugh*]. That's a nice mattress!

Selena: [*Laughing*] Good lordy! Goodness!

Ryan: I'm thinking a furniture set or something.

Selena: Yeah.

Ryan: Or a car or whatever. And you're saying, "Well, that's easy. It's much easier than saving! It's *way* easier than..."

Selena: Yeah...

Ryan: "Trying to have half the money down or whatever." So, that would be like a path of least resistance. You're kind of just doing the thing that you want to do most, regardless of wisdom.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: The second one, the shiniest object. That's kind of in a similar thing, but it's in the moment desires.

Selena: Yeah.

Ryan: So, we see something that we want, and we take it.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: Whether that's getting a promotion at work! Okay. So, husbands or wives, if you're working and you're the breadwinner for your family, you get offered a promotion. Now, with that promotion comes the \$10,000 a year pay increase. But you know you're going to be travelling...

Selena: Mm.

Ryan: Twice as much. You're going to be gone half the month.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: You're going to be gone traveling for work. Or you're going to have to commute to a place that you know is going to take another two hours a day—

Selena: Right.

Ryan: From your family. So, that can be a shiniest object.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: And then the final one we talked about is aggressive and just being too quick or fear driven. So, you, like what Selena was saying, "We have to get a house now!" So, you just don't let it marinate to take the time...

Selena: Right.

Ryan: To *become* a wise decision.

Selena: Which I think is an indicator—

Ryan: Yeah.

Selena: Of a not so wise decision, right? Whenever we're being pushed to make a quick, fast, aggressive decision, it's never, in our experience, it's never been very fruitful. So, what does the Bible say about making decisions? How do we make wise decisions? I think you touched on it briefly, of how we can apply wisdom! And how...

Ryan: Mm.

Selena: We believe in the Bible, right? We know that it's God's word and authority. But do we hear some sort of... something, other message in the world, saying, "Oh, but there's another good way to make this decision."

Ryan: Mm.

Selena: But we, and I mean, we said we're going to talk about kind of overlying these two ways. But ultimately, is the Bible your authority on decision making? If we're making a decision out of fear, why are we afraid? What is causing it? Is our identity wrapped up in something that we're trying to make happen?

Ryan: Hm! Yeah.

Selena: There's some questions around this, so...

Ryan: Yeah. So, what I'd like to do for this is I'd like to kind of overlay. We mentioned earlier, but there's a, in business, they call it the "Seven Steps of Decision Making." [*Selena chuckles*] Okay? It's super dry! But I do think it's helpful! And we go through these steps almost every time we make a decision. It just depends on how...

Selena: Right.

Ryan: Methodical you are in going through them. And I'd like to overlay that simultaneously with an article from Got Questions, or basically the author. I don't know who wrote the article. It's a great resource, this site. But it's, "What Does the Bible Say About Decision-Making?" And so, I kind of want to... Let's go through the Got Questions article first.

Selena: Okay!

Ryan: And it gives us seven steps.

Selena: Mm-hm.

Ryan: And then we'll go through the Seven Steps of Decision Making from the business textbooks.

Selena: Sure!

Ryan: And from Dartmouth and all these different colleges and stuff. So, basically the big answer as we think about God's word around decision making is the Bible offers many principles to aid— This is what it says, “To aid the process of making decisions that honor God.” Now, “the following list is not *exhaustive*, but it does represent many teachings of Scripture.” So, again, there's no passage in scripture. This is why we have, systematic theology. There's no passage in scripture that says, “Here thou shalt make decisions in thus manner.” [*Laughs*]

Selena: Right, right.

Ryan: That was terrible Bible speak. [*Laughing*] But there's nothing that's that clear!

Selena: In King James version?

Ryan: But we do have so much on wisdom, so much on—

Selena: Prayer.

Ryan: Prayer, so much on trusting God.

Selena: Godly counsel. Yeah.

Ryan: Godly counsel, yes! And so, the first step is always begin with prayer! A Christian, somebody who values God over all, who follows Christ as our one and only King, who Christ is on the throne, we're going to go to our King and say, “King, Jesus, what do You think of this?”

Selena: Right, right.

Ryan: “What should I do as Your servant, as Your disciple? What should I do?”

Selena: And we've kind of coined this term of calling it, “bringing it to the table.”

Ryan: Hm.

Selena: We are going to bring this to the table, and this is where this decision is going to live for a bit. And that's what we're talking about. So, we're bringing it to God, right? And we're praying. We're talking to Him. And not just when a big decision hits us, but in between all of those times.

Ryan: Mm. Yeah!

Selena: In our day-to-day! That's why we talk about being in the word, spending time in prayer communing with God. Because when these big decisions come, we don't want to be scrambling, reading our Bible, right? "Okay. What's God say? What does He say about..." It's like, no, no, no, no. Our life should be full and rich and acknowledging who God is on a day-to-day basis, so that when something comes, like a big decision, our desires are already being formed in Him!

[00:30:10] **Ryan:** Mm!

Selena: And they're already following *after* Him.

Ryan: Yeah, yeah.

Selena: And lining up with a great the Great Commission.

Ryan: Yeah!

Selena: God—

Ryan: No. [*Selena laughs*] No, you did good! It sounded like you wanted me to start talking, so.

Selena: Oh, I thought you had something to say. [*Laughs*]

Ryan: Well, prayer is us going to God and basically saying, "Your God, I'm not."

Selena: Mm.

Ryan: "I need you." And so, when we pray, we are acknowledging that there might be something I don't know about this!

Selena: Yeah.

Ryan: There's an aspect of this decision—

Selena: Absolutely!

Ryan: That I'm not seeing. God give me wisdom. That's James 1:5.

Selena: Yeah.

Ryan: "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach."

Selena: Mm!

- Ryan:** “And it will be given to him.”
- Selena:** Mm.
- Ryan:** So, and then 1 Thessalonians 5:17, “Pray continually,” among other things.
- Selena:** Mm.
- Ryan:** It says, “Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” So, praying, it's an irreplaceable part of the Christian life! We tend to gloss over that. So, what if you headed into this decision, instead of looking at the market valuation of homes going up...
- Selena:** Hm!
- Ryan:** Or whatever, looking at this car that you think is going to be off the lot if you don't get it and you're going to have to pay more than you want to pay, or whatever that urgency that's driv— What if you said, “Table that,” like Selena's saying, or you're not meaning that, but we'll say we'll table it. And what if you committed to praying for it every day for seven days?
- Selena:** Praying *about* it, not praying for it. [*Ryan snickers*] I just want to change that word.
- Ryan:** Praying about. Not saying, “God, help us get this house!” [*Selena laughs*] But, “God help us have *wisdom*.”
- Selena:** In these, yes.
- Ryan:** In this, and as we walk through this decision.
- Selena:** Right! Yes. Help my heart to not be—
- Ryan:** M-kay.
- Selena:** Drawn to this out of the wrong priority.
- Ryan:** Mm!
- Selena:** And the wrong perspective.
- Ryan:** Yeah, yeah. ‘Cause so often it's easy to just want it because you just want it.
- Selena:** Right. And it doesn't require—
- Ryan:** Yeah.

Selena: Is it requiring trust?

Ryan: Yeah.

Selena: Is this requiring us trusting the Lord? And I think going to Him in prayer about these decisions is—

Ryan: Mm.

Selena: A huge acknowledgement of trust.

Ryan: Yeah! So, that's the first one: begin with prayer. The second one is you have to be clear about what you're actually deciding about. [*Both chuckle*] You have to define it, define the decision.

Selena: Sounds obvious, people!

Ryan: It sounds obvious—

Selena: But it's not.

Ryan: Yeah. And so, you have to, in order to make a wise and informed decisions, and to act in a way that's actually going to bear fruit, you have to know clearly what you're actually aiming for. So, we're going to talk about a tool to know clearly better. We'll talk about that later.

Selena: Yeah.

Ryan: But if you're not clear, if you just say, "We need a second car." [*Selena scoffs*] Um, okay. For why? [*Ryan scoffs*] For why? [*Ryan laughs*]

Selena: 'Cause *everyone* has a second car!

Ryan: Well, because I'm tired of picking you up on the way home from work. [*Selena laughs*] Okay.

Selena: [*Laughing*] I'm tired of—

Ryan: Well, okay. What do we really need here? Do we *need* this? Is the decision really to buy a car or not, or is it to evaluate how we handle our...

Selena: Right, yeah!

Ryan: Our needs?

Selena: Yeah.

Ryan: Or if you— Anyway. We can go on and on about that. Just define clearly what you're deciding on.

Selena: Yep.

Ryan: The third one is to seek biblical wisdom. And again, these are the biblical priorities. So, seek biblical wisdom. In other words, look at what God's word says. Trying to think of an example that'd be really clear. I think, in general, debt is against biblical wisdom, like incurring debt that you can't afford.

Selena: Mm, yeah!

Ryan: And so, if we're wanting to be radical, God forbid, we actually look at God's word [*Snickers*] and let it bear weight on our lives. And we say, "All right! Well, God must have said that for my own good."

Selena: Mm-hm.

Ryan: And He's not trying to hold out something that I want. He's not trying to hold out on me. He's trying to give me a richer, deeper, more sustainable joy!

Selena: Yeah.

Ryan: And not just a fleeting happiness.

Selena: Yep.

Ryan: So, maybe I *should* listen to that, and maybe I *shouldn't* let—

Selena: Yeah.

Ryan: Let the 0 down, 0% financing—[*Chuckles*]

Selena: Right!

Ryan: [*Chuckling*] Allure me.

Selena: Maybe I can't see the end of this, but God can, and He knows. And so, I'm going to trust that because I can't see and that He can, I'm going to trust His authority on this.

Ryan: Hm.

Selena: And His governance in this decision making.

Ryan: And I'm using the 0 down, 0%, and I know that some people, you'll use that and pay it early and get free money—

Selena: Get miles and stuff.

Ryan: And all that. [*Inhales*] So, just know there's wisdom around how to use that mechanism.

Selena: Yeah!

Ryan: But in general, debt-financing is going to be unwise.

Selena: Mm-hm.

Ryan: So, that's a—

Selena: It's a safe statement.

Ryan: So, that's the fourth one. Or so that's the third one. The fourth one is to seek Godly council. So, you've gone to God's word. You've read it. You've consulted. You've let it bear weight on you. Now you need to make sure you're not missing anything.

Selena: Yeah. And is this the point where you would—? I feel like we would bring it to each other in prayer together, as spouse to spouse. When we're bringing it to the table or we're praying about it, God's at the table, right? We're bringing it to God. Our spouse is there, right? We are bringing it to our spouse. And then you're saying seek Godly counsel of a community of having people around us and saying, that *know* us, right? That we've given them kind of the trump card of saying, “Yes, this is a good decision. Greenlight, go. Or no, this is not wise, and these are our reasons.”

Ryan: Mm.

Selena: Because they know us! We've done life alongside them for a number of years. They know us. They understand and they love us!

[00:35:01] **Ryan:** Yeah.

Selena: And they want to speak truth into that. So, I think the key is there is what you said, Godly counsel. Proverbs 15:22, “Without counsel plans fail, but with many advisers they succeed.”

Ryan: Yeah. I would say that we are on the same page from the first step on.

Selena: Yeah, yeah.

Ryan: Not that I'm praying about it by myself. I'm defining the issues by myself.

Selena: Well, but sometimes though, I have things that maybe come up in my mind or I'm like, “Man, should I go do this or not?” And maybe that's more of a day to

day decision. Or should we be praying about this? I haven't thought about this in months! And is this a time that we should— Like a house? Should we be praying about a house? Is that something that God wants us—? And then I'll usually bring it to you... almost before or while I'm praying about should I pray it. [*Laughs*] If that makes sense?

Ryan: Well, it's amazing how when it comes to big decisions, God almost always will allow us our hearts to be aligned.

Selena: Mm-hm.

Ryan: When it comes to us, and they just haven't been. And so—

Selena: Yeah.

Ryan: We're like our initial litmus test. I'll have this harebrained idea, and you're like, "That is *nope!*" [*Selena laughs and Ryan chuckles*] "That's a no-go! Roger that. I'll see you tomorrow."

Selena: Yeah.

Ryan: And you've had those instances as well.

Selena: Well, we've learned how to do it in a loving way as well. [*Ryan laughs*] I'm not just like...

Ryan: Yeah. But [*Selena snickers*] I've learned to trust your intuition, because I'm like, "Well, if Selena's not on board, then there's a good chance unless I feel *really* strongly..."

Selena: Well, and the same for me, yeah! 'Cause I trust you have not led us astray, and you've trusted me and the intuition.

Ryan: Mm.

Selena: And usually there's a good reason. And the reasons are typically beyond our own desires. But it's going to affect our family in a *humungous* way.

Ryan: Yeah.

Selena: So... And sometimes those decisions are necessary and good, but they're not without—

Ryan: Yeah.

Selena: What we're saying.

Ryan: We are—

Selena: Prayer—

Ryan: Yeah.

Selena: Counsel, seeking Godly wisdom.

Ryan: So, that's, yeah. Okay. So, we're flying through this episode. We're 37 minutes in. So, I want to make sure that we are getting to the rest of these. So, that was the fourth one.

Selena: Oh, I didn't know you were going to do them all.

Ryan: The fifth one is trust the lord for decision. We talked about this earlier.

Selena: Mm-hm.

Ryan: You have exercised agency and wisdom, now allow God to do what God does!

Selena: Yep.

Ryan: And just trust Him to guide you in ways that you don't see.

Selena: So good.

Ryan: And trust Him, that He's using wisdom in a way that, like we moved to the desert.

Selena: Yeah.

Ryan: We ultimately trusted, and He foiled our plans—

Selena: We had our own plans, yes.

Ryan: For His glory, for our good.

Selena: Yes.

Ryan: And I'm thankful for it. The fifth one— Sorry, the fourth. *[Laughs]* Can't get these straight! The sixth one, I'll recap these, be willing to admit mistakes and adjust accordingly. This article says something really cool. It says be willing to admit, in most cases there's *no* wisdom in continuing down a wrong path after you have discovered it is wrong.

Selena: Hmm!

Ryan: So, the sooner you can identify that it's the wrong path and adjust, the wiser!

Selena: Mm-hm.

- Ryan:** And then the seventh one is give praise to God *in* your success! So, even when you're just result in personal success, the temptation is to believe that it's due to your own *power*.
- Selena:** Mm-hm.
- Ryan:** I can attest! Okay. Fierce Marriage has become a thing. Anything good that's happened in Fierce Marriage is not because Ryan and Selena are genius marriage people.
- Selena:** No! [*Scoffs*]
- Ryan:** It's because God is working, and we're just like a wash in his tide. [*Laughs*]
- Selena:** Yes.
- Ryan:** [*Laughing*] And being like, "I'm a ragdoll in the waves."
- Selena:** Yes.
- Ryan:** Speaking of going surfing yesterday.
- Selena:** Yes.
- Ryan:** Just being tossed around, like knocked around, and it's going in, it's going out. [*Both laugh*] And I'm just going in and out with it! And I'm trying to, you know, and obviously I'm having a good time trying to surf and all that. But it's ultimately, we are victims of God's sovereignty in a really wonderful, beautiful way.
- Selena:** [*Quietly*]. Yes.
- Ryan:** And so, we have to give glory *to Him!*
- Selena:** Mm-hm.
- Ryan:** Anytime there is *fruit* being born.
- Selena:** Yeah!
- Ryan:** 'Cause He can only make it grow! So, quickly recap, is first, start with prayer. Second, define the issue clearly. Third, seek *biblical* wisdom, so, go to the Bible. The fourth one is now seek Godly counsel. And I want to take a little sidebar real fast. It doesn't mean that they just have the trump card automatically because you're going to them. It means that you are letting them speak into it in a way that you're actually *open* to the possibility that the decision can go either way.

Selena: Fair enough.

Ryan: Okay. *[Laughs]* The fifth one!

Selena: I will allow it.

Ryan: You will allow it. *[Selena snickers]* Trust the Lord with your decision. Once you've jumped out of the plane, trust that the parachute is going to— *[Both laugh]*

Selena: *[Laughing]* Oh, my goodness!

Ryan: *[Laughing]* No. That's a bad analogy.

Selena: Nope.

Ryan: But trust the Lord!

Selena: God is not our parachute. *[Selena laughs and Ryan snickers]* This is bad—

Ryan: Well, He kind of is.

Selena: Welllllll...

Ryan: He's also the wind beneath my wings.

Selena: Welllllll... *[Ryan laughs]* This is a slippery slope. Reel that back in!

Ryan: So, you're trusting that we've done our best and God will...

Selena: Do the re--? *[Ryan makes a noise and the both laugh]* You're not making— Just, "Trust the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight." Scripture always speaks the best.

Ryan: Okay, okay.

Selena: Six, be willing to admit mistakes and adjust accordingly. Again...

Ryan: Okay!

Selena: If you know it's the wrong path, stop and turn. And seventh, give praise to God for the success in it. Don't take all the—

Ryan: Okay.

Selena: Credit and hog it!

Ryan: That's good! So, I think that's pretty clear! There's seven kind of steps toward making decisions. *Now* let's overlay very quickly this decision-making rubric that we get from Dartmouth, okay? And other colleges. It's very common in the business world, and management and all that kind of stuff. So, basically, it's, if you picture—

[00:40:04] **Selena:** *Business!* [Chuckles]

Ryan: [Chuckles] Yeah. *Business!*

Selena: Or else. [Laughs]

Ryan: NBA, Harvard University. [Both laughing] Princeton!

Selena: Okay.

Ryan: Anyway. Okay. So, you start with identifying this vision. We talked about that. The difference is as we're overlaying as Christians our decisions are *very* different than the decisions someone else might make.

Selena: Right. So, the decisions that we're considering making might...

Ryan: Yes.

Selena: Not be the same as people who are not followers of Christ.

Ryan: Yes! So, we identify the problem and identify the decision to be made that you're trying to actually make. Our priorities are totally different.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: So, then we collect information. That's the part, and that's the second step in this rubric, and that's the part where we're looking at the Bible.

Selena: Mmm.

Ryan: And we're saying, "Okay, what does God's word say?" Well, I'm collecting information! It's not just should we get black, red or white [Both snicker] for the minivan? No, it's we are collecting what's wise! What does a wise person do?

Selena: Right.

Ryan: What does a foolish person do?

Selena: Right.

- Ryan:** How can I be wise and not foolish? So, you look through that. We're collecting information. We're also going to counsel.
- Selena:** Mm-hm.
- Ryan:** Our community, we're going to each other. We're weighing all the options, pros, cons, all that kind of stuff. It's all collecting information about the decision itself.
- Selena:** Yeah!
- Ryan:** Then the third step in this process is identify the alternative. So, say again, talking about the minivan. All right! So, we've decided on a white minivan, or let's pick another— Brown! Let's do a brown minivan. *[Both laugh]* Grey! Grey minivan! Selena, just don't woke me, alright? That's all I'm saying. *[Both laughing]*
- Selena:** *[Laughing]* I wasn't going there!
- Ryan:** *[Laughing]* Yeah, I feel like you were.
- Selena:** I mean, maybe. *[Both laugh]*
- Ryan:** *[Chuckling]* Please don't write in about that! Okay. So, we're going with the grey minivan. Now, identify alternatives. *[Selena laughs and Ryan chuckles]* The alternatives are either we don't get a minivan, or we get a hatchback. Or maybe we say we don't need a car. Instead, we need motorcycles for each kid. *[Selena laughs]* All right? I'm kidding! That's not—
- Selena:** I know! No, no.
- Ryan:** But we're identifying all the different alternatives.
- Selena:** Yes.
- Ryan:** Whatever. Our fourth step, weigh the evidence, pros, cons, what's going to work best for our family? What's not going to work best? How much is it going to cost? Well, how is that going to weigh on us?
- Selena:** So, how does this overlay with or seem biblical wisdom, and counsel and then be willing to make mistakes? *[Laughs]* Just kidding!
- Ryan:** Well, they're not analogous in terms of the steps.
- Selena:** Yeah!
- Ryan:** But the weighing the evidence, again, I feel like still is all about wisdom, right?

Selena: Yeah.

Ryan: So, now you have a mind, and God is giving you a mind to think through the problem that you're trying to solve. So, just weigh the evidence—

Selena: That's good.

Ryan: And what's going to be wise based on collecting information, all that kind of stuff. And then make a decision! That's step five.

Selena: Mm-hm.

Ryan: It's super obvious. You're actually making the decision. Step six is implement the action. And get this, it kind of starts to fade away from relevance at this point. So, basically, you just go and actually do the thing you set out to do. Start down that path. Now, the action might be slow. So, if you are making a decision to change jobs, move your family, then the action's going to be—

Selena: It's a whole process.

Ryan: A whole process.

Selena: Yeah.

Ryan: It's not just like a cut and dry thing. And then the seventh one is evaluate the results. In other words...

Selena: Look back!

Ryan: Look back! If it's a terrible decision and you made a mistake, reverse it! If it's a great decision, then look at God and say, "Thank You for allowing this to graciously bear fruit in our lives."

Selena: Well, and I will say, though, that sometimes, like our decision, right? It felt great. And then sometimes you have that kind of like buyer's remorse or something goes wrong and you're like, "Wait a second!" You start questioning that decision and the fact that you've already made it! I would say be patient in those situations, and give yourself some time and grace to... transition, I guess?

Ryan: Hm.

Selena: Because sometimes we... move, we start life in this new reality, and we don't give the decision enough time to actually grow and bear fruit.

Ryan: Wow.

Selena: And I think that's one of our biggest mistakes, is that we move too quickly because we're not happy or it's not what we thought or anything like that.

Ryan: Overcorrecting?

Selena: Yes! The overcorrection of it. And I would say just...

Ryan: Yeah.

Selena: Just wait it out. Allow God to work inside of what is happening. And trust that you will look back on this, and God doesn't *waste* our lives.

Ryan: That's good.

Selena: There's always an area for Him to be glorified in.

Ryan: I love that. I want to add to it in that—

Selena: You may.

Ryan: If you're walking through these steps and you're saying, "This is the wise choice," now, when you actually put the decision into work, you can sit and say, "This was wise for these reasons."

Selena: Mm.

Ryan: "And here's why it's wise to let it play out."

Selena: Yeah.

Ryan: Here's why it's wise not to— "I threw the seeds in the dirt! They're not growing! Horrible decision." [*Selena laughs*] "Pull them out!"

Selena: [*Laughing*] Right.

Ryan: Now, you know it's wise because God's word—

Selena: Yeah.

Ryan: And conventional wisdom says put the seeds in the ground and you'll bear a crop!

Selena: Mm-hm.

Ryan: You'll bear fruit from that. So, you have to exercise wisdom *all around*—

Selena: Yeah.

Ryan: This whole process. And the beauty of doing wisdom up front is knowing that you can now *rely* on that wisdom and God's promises on the back end!

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

Ryan: So, you decide to have kids, right? Once you ring that bell, you can't un-ring it. [Snickers]

Selena: Can't un-ring it.

Ryan: So, when we, Selena, we were kind of rehashing it. Down in the desert, Selena tells me the story, or she comes home and tells me that she's pregnant.

Selena: You came home. I told you I was pregnant.

Ryan: [Scoffs] I came home and told you I was pregnant.

Selena: [Scoffs] And it was all a blur! You just— [Both laugh]

Ryan: It's all a blur!

Selena: You came home and I told you.

Ryan: Well, it didn't help that it was April Fool's Day. Do you remember? [Laughs]

Selena: [Laughing] It's true!

Ryan: [Laughing] And I was like, "You're kidding me!"

Selena: I didn't think about that. I was just like, "I'm pregnant. I need to tell you." Nothing else mattered! [Snickers]

Ryan: And we were excited, 'cause we had felt led to make this decision.

Selena: Mm-hm!

Ryan: But I was still having to kind of wrap my head around a change in our entire reality. And so, I immediately went for a trial run. [Selena giggles] But as I was going, I started worshiping God, saying, "God, You've given us this blessing!"

Selena: Mmm.

Ryan: And when you look at God's word, it says children are a blessing! I said, "You have blessed us...!"

Selena: Mm-hm...

Ryan: "With this baby that is going to be here now in nine months or whatever. Thank you, God, so much!" And so, by *resting* on God's word, I could now sit in the result of that decision—

Selena: Mm.

Ryan: And give Him glory, *even though* I was legitimately scared. [*Selena scoffs*] Even though I was legitimately... I don't know how it's going to work out!

Selena: Mm-hm!

Ryan: But God, You are with me in this because I know that You've said children are a blessing.

Selena: Yeah. So good!

Ryan: So, with that said... Do you want to do some tangible tools, or do you want to talk again about the table thing?

Selena: No! I think we should definitely dive into some quick, tangible tools—

Ryan: Okay!

Selena: For making decisions. You've heard us talk about family vision, having a family vision statement. That has been instrumental in terms of whenever we're faced with big decisions or we feel a big decision that might be coming.

Ryan: Mm-hm.

Selena: We look at our family vision statement. It's kind of ground zero for us, of let's filter this through. Does this work with this, this, this and this?

Ryan: Mmm. Yeah.

Selena: And we kind of already have an idea. We're so familiar with it that when decisions come, it's kind of like a yay or nay. And if it is a yay, then that means we got to start praying. We got to start understanding God's purpose, at least for the moment, in that!

Ryan: Yeah.

Selena: Because we're very, I think, protective of what God's given us and how we should navigate and move forward, I guess.

Ryan: So, the family vision statement operates like—

Selena: Oh, yeah! For those of you that don't know. [*Chuckles*]

Ryan: It operates—

Selena: Sorry.

Ryan: Like a...

Selena: Just go through everything.

Ryan: [*Snickering*] It operates like a filter in that we have spent the time, and it took us probably months of revisiting this—

Selena: Yeah!

Ryan: And rehashing it to actually come up. It's a one-page document, and it's just a "Here's our mission statement."

Selena: Right.

Ryan: "As a family!" Here's why we exist as a family.

Selena: Yeah. Scripture.

Ryan: These are the things we value.

Selena: Mm-hm.

Ryan: Five values.

Selena: Mm-hm.

Ryan: And then we have what are called Envision Statements, which are how those values will play themselves out in various capacities of our life. So, one of the values is community!

Selena: Mm-hm!

Ryan: So, we know that we value Christian community. We don't want to live in isolation. We want to live around people that we can love and can love us! We need that! And so, we know that we're not going to go move somewhere we don't have that! And if we do move there, then it's going to be a really clear leading from every other aspect of our lives.

Selena: Yeah!

Ryan: And so, anyway. We do have a podcast devoted to this. You can go to fiercemarriage.com/ and search Family Vision. Just go to the search bar. Hit Family Vision.

Selena: Yeah!

Ryan: You can listen to that! There's *also* a download, where you can download and fill out your own family vision worksheet!

Selena: Mm-hm.

Ryan: It's just fiercemarriage.com/vision, and that will give you instant access to that. And it's just a one pager. But it'll get you started.

Selena: Yeah!

Ryan: Really, it's whatever you make it.

Selena: Absolutely.

Ryan: But it will get you started.

Selena: Absolutely.

Ryan: So, when biblical wisdom isn't clear, and the family vision statement maybe leaves room for... I don't know. Room for discretion. [*Selena scoffs*] There's some cool tools that I found. Real cool tools! [*Both laugh*] That I found that can probably help you, and here they are. There's three of them. Know your decision-making styles. I won't get into this 'cause we're running out of time, but basically, everyone has a different communication making style.

Selena: [*Laughs*] I won't get into this, but here we go.

Ryan: And they're four: analytical, conceptual, directive and behavioral, based on ambiguity or structure, or task-technical, or people and social.

Selena: Yeah.

Ryan: So, it's a matrix. So, just Google that, decision making style.

Selena: Check it out. It'll be in the show notes, for sure!

Ryan: No, it won't.

Selena: Oh, it won't?

Ryan: But just— Yeah, 'cause I don't own it. We can't put some—

Selena: [*Whispers*] Sorry!

Ryan: We don't own it. So, yeah. Just Google "decision making styles." It'll come up. And then the second one is a decision tree! That's another term. Just Google that. It's a way of weighting different decisions, if you're on the analytical side of decision making.

Selena: Hm.

Ryan: It allows you to assign values and weights to various outcomes based on probabilities of those outcomes. It's an analytical sort of business making thing.

Selena: Yeah!

Ryan: But you can use it in your personal life if you try to. You can just apply it.

Selena: Or just do the old Jimothy Halpert and make a pros and cons list there. [*Ryan snickers*]

Ryan: "Take some beans!" Put all the options around the table [*Selena laughs*] and put *beans* on each one that you like. Each bean is a vote! [*Ryan laughs*]

Selena: "Why are there *beans* on our faces?"

Ryan: No! That's the third one, actually. Just a pros and cons list. Write down everything that you love about it.

Selena: At least gets you started.

Ryan: Everything that you hate about it.

Selena: Yes, yes. [*Inhales*]

Ryan: Or don't like, yeah.

[00:50:00] **Selena:** So, I guess just as some ending encouragement, we usually have a Couple's Conversation Challenge. I think if you went and googled those and kind of got started on a family vision, that's a great place to start. But to just be encouraged that God has brought you together for a reason. There's a push, there's a pull. There's a gas, there's a break. Right? We are brought together for some tension points, to be able to navigate and journey through making decisions together as a couple.

Ryan: Mm.

Selena: It can be very unifying! And it can also bring God so much glory in how we decide to make decisions [*Snickers*], essentially!

Ryan: Yeah!

Selena: So, I just want to encourage you that, don't be afraid of big decisions. Don't do them out of fear, but do them confidently knowing that God is sovereign, that we are operating out of the best wisdom that we are given in His word. And to just walk confidently in that.

Ryan: That's such a good encouragement. And to echo what you said, you said brake and gas?

Selena: Yeah.

Ryan: So, there are—

Selena: You're the gas.

Ryan: Well, it depends!

Selena: In different instances!

Ryan: You're right!

Selena: Yeah.

Ryan: It totally depends!

Selena: Yeah.

Ryan: 'Cause there's times when I'm the brake and you're the gas.

Selena: Yeah!

Ryan: And, but we've learned to drive the car together! [*Laughs*]

Selena: It's really cool, and we're both the gas! [*Both laugh*]

Ryan: It makes for a hilarious... wreck!

Selena: [*Excitedly*] Weee! Woo hoo! [*Laughs*]

Ryan: [*Chuckling*] Just joy riding!

Selena: That's what I'm saying! [*Laughing*] It does not happen often!

Ryan: And sometimes we're both the brake, and we go nowhere. [*Selena cackles*]
Nothing happens, and our life is *dead*. [*Ryan laughs*]

Selena: No, it's good!

Ryan: [*Chuckling*] Okay... Anyway.

Selena: All right! You want to do pray? Why don't you pray?

Ryan: Yeah.

God, I thank You for this time. Thank You for Your Grace over the decisions that we make! God, there's nothing good that happens in our life that is not somehow attributable to You and Your goodness and Your glory.

Selena: Mm.

Ryan: So, God, I thank You that You've given us agency in some of these decisions that we make and how we live the hours and days that You've given us! How we spend the pennies and dollars You've given us!

Selena: Mm...

Ryan: How we use the energy that You allow our bodies to create from the food that You've given us! God, You've given us the ability to affect change in our lives and the lives of others. But God, You've also told us that You are sovereign, that You are sovereign over the little decisions and the big. So, God, I pray that You'd help us to be people of wisdom, to be couples that are governed by Your word!

Selena: Mm.

Ryan: And who follow Your word, and who reject folly and who reject *foolishness* in our lives. I pray for couples that are just struggling right now, and the decision is whether or not they should stay together. [*Chuckles*]

Selena: Mmm.

Ryan: And the decision's whether or not they should reconcile. I pray that You would encourage them, Holy Spirit, that You would give them a *fresh* injection of Your hope and Your peace and Your joy in their life. And let it be other worldly, something that's not from them, but something that is clearly from You, so that they can trust in You, and then make a decision out of that place of trusting and relying on You. Jesus, we love You! You're so good to us, Jesus. In your name, amen.

Selena: Amen.

Ryan: All right!

Selena: All right!

Ryan: Once again, ladies and gentlemen, if you are interested in being on the Fierce Marriage, or no, the See-Through book [*Selena snickers*] launch team—

Selena: Where are you taking us?

Ryan: You distracted me!

Selena: Where are you taking us?

Ryan: Go to seethroughbook.com, and you can learn about how to be a part of that movement!

Selena: Cool beans!

Ryan: We would be very thankful.

Selena: All right!

Ryan: Selena's ready to go get lunch. You ready?

Selena: Yep!

Ryan: We're going to go get some pokey!

Selena: Are we?

Ryan: Yeah!

Selena: Go time?

Ryan: I think so.

Selena: Okay.

Ryan: We got an hour. We can do it!

Selena: Okay!

Ryan: That's a decision I'm going to make!

Selena: Go!

Ryan: All right!

Selena: I'll follow you blindly.

Ryan: As usually, this episode is!

Selena: In the can!

Ryan: And we will see you in about seven days. Until next time.

Selena: Stay fierce!

[00:53:25] <Ending Sequence>

[00:53:43] Podcast ends.

PODCAST NOTES

- **[00:20:01]**
 - Scripture reference:
 - Psalm 93
- **[00:25:10]**
 - Got Questions, article on decision making:
 - “What does the Bible say about decision-making?” *Got Questions*, <https://www.gotquestions.org/Bible-decision-making.html>. Accessed 17 March 2020.
- **[00:30:10]**
 - Scripture reference:
 - James 1:5, paraphrase, *ESV*
 - 1 Thessalonians 5:17, *NIV*
 - 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, *ESV*
- **[00:35:01]**
 - Scripture reference:
 - Proverbs 15:22, *ESV*
 - Proverbs 3:5, paraphrase, *NIV*
- **[00:45:00]**
 - Family Vision Statement podcast:
 - Podcast URL: <https://fiercemarriage.com/crafting-family-vision-statement-need-one>
 - Worksheet URL: <https://fiercemarriage.com/vision> and <https://fiercemarriage.com/download-family-vision-worksheet>
- **[00:50:00]**
 - See-Through Marriage Movement:
 - <https://seethroughbook.com/>

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