

SEX: SEE-THROUGH MARRIAGE (PART 1/4)

<https://fiercemarriage.com/sex-see-through-marriage-part-1-4>

[00:00:00] **Selena:** All right! If kids are around, this is not the episode they should be listening to.

Ryan: [*Laughs*] Yep.

Selena: So, just your fair warning, we are going to be talking about sex. So, if you do want to have those conversations yet with your kid [*Both laugh*], I highly recommend making sure your ear pods are in. [*Laughs*]

Ryan: [*Laughing*] Yeah! Yeah.

Selena: And the Bluetooth speaker is not [*Quickly laughs*], or you're not in the car.

Ryan: Yeah. So, we're talking about sex, Selena, like you were saying. But specifically, a see-through sex life—

Selena: Mm.

Ryan: And cultivating a sex life that is *truly* transparent, but also around intimacy in general.

Selena: Mm-hm!

Ryan: So, sexual intimacy, yes! But how that informs our emotional intimacy, our spiritual intimacy and how all the intimacy's [*Selena chuckles*] are really communication mediums!

Selena: Yeah!

Ryan: Right? And they're God-ordained, and they're gifts from God! *But* sin has marred them, and we can easily get them wrong. And today, but specifically, we're talking about the sex part of that. And this is part of a four-part mini-series, actually, that's going to be releasing over the coming two weeks. So, more information on that on the other side!

[00:00:58] <Intro Sequence>

[00:01:30] **Selena:** [*Mimics sound of someone jumping*] Ohhh, I jumped onto the other side! [*Both laughing*] Nope!

Ryan: You're such a... nerd. [*Both continue laughing*] But I love you—

Selena: I just thought it'd be funny to be like, "Woo hoo! Here we gooo!"

Ryan: I love your nerdiness. It's great!

Selena: And just do a voice that's like, "Whoaaaa!" like we're jumping to the other side.

Ryan: Wow! Dad joke. I'd give that a... C. [*Both chuckle*] I'm just— You know?

Selena: I'm not a dad! So, I don't know how these things work!

Ryan: Well, just stay in your lane, Freddie.

Selena: [*Giggles*] "Stay in your lane, Freddie."

Ryan: Alright. [*Both chuckle*] So, like we mention—

Selena: Mm.

Ryan: This is a first part of a *four-part mini-series*. Now I say part because they're not releasing weekly. They're releasing... Is it bi-weekly or semi-weekly?

Selena: No. So, you—

Ryan: I think it's semi-week—

Selena: So, usually they drop Tuesdays. So, one is releasing Tuesday of our book release.

Ryan: Yeah, it's more than once a week! It's Tuesday—

Selena: Tuesday and Thursday.

Ryan: And Thursday, yes!

Selena: And then the following Tuesday and then the Thursday. So, it's like a *bonus*!

Ryan: So today, if you're listening to this on the day it releases, this podcast episode, the book releases a *week* from today!

Selena: Okay!

Ryan: So, we are really excited! It's kind of a last push, and so, we want to make sure that you know exactly what's in the book! And that's what we're talking through for the next four little episodes.

Selena: Yes!

Ryan: They're going to be shorter episodes, too. So, hopefully they're really easy for you to digest and we'll be building on each episode as we go about it.

Selena: Yeah! Yeah, so the first one today, just to give you a brief outline and then we'll kind of get into our housekeeping. [*Quietly*] I know you hate that!

- Ryan:** Or we can skip it!
- Selena:** Skip?
- Ryan:** We'll skip it 'cause these are shorter episodes. So, we'll try to...
- Selena:** Skip the housekeeping?
- Ryan:** Yeah.
- Selena:** [*Selena snickers*] It just makes a messy life [*Ryan laughs*], but okay! Just kidding. [*Selena laughs*]
- Ryan:** [*Laughing*] I'm just...
- Selena:** [*Laughs*] That's fine! No, the next four weeks, so, today we're going to talk about sex and cultivating kind of a see-through sex life in light of knowing each other, knowing God, being able to communicate through some stuff. The next week is going to be talking about see-through communication, so how we can connect more transparently with each other.
- Ryan:** Really have hard talks in a productive way.
- Selena:** Yeah! Yes.
- Ryan:** Yes.
- Selena:** And kind of how to bring those walls down in order to kind of have the groundwork done so we can talk. The third week is going to be talking about why we need to know ourselves, like why knowing ourselves matters. So, having a see-through *self*, I guess? Seeing through yourself.
- Ryan:** Yeah, you know what? This part of writing the book was really hard for me because I tend to think that's the self-help genre of—
- Selena:** Yeah.
- Ryan:** Pop-culture is generally just idolizing yourself!
- Selena:** Yes.
- Ryan:** *But* we looked into scripture.
- Selena:** You know that's not us, people.
- Ryan:** We looked into scripture and we're like, "Okay, what does God's word say about self-knowledge?"

Selena: Mm-hm.

Ryan: “And self-discovery and knowing how you're wired?” And you know what? It has a lot to say! And the bottom line is we're called to know ourselves *accurately*, not just for the sake of knowing ourselves, but to glorify God even better, to love each other better.

Selena: Mmm.

Ryan: And so, anyway! That's week three!

Selena: Yep!

Ryan: Week four is being seen and seeing others in true Christian community, and each word there means something.

Selena: Mm-hm.

Ryan: True. Christian. Community. We'll talk about that in... detail!

Selena: The fourth week, yep!

Ryan: In the fourth week!

Selena: So again, these are all under the umbrella of our book that is about to release called See-Through Marriage. We hope you guys have gotten your copies or are getting them.

Ryan: Yeah!

Selena: Or pre-ordering them, 'cause they're still— Is there time?

Ryan: Oh, ye— Well, you'll have a week.

Selena: There's going to be *one* week!

Ryan: You'll have a week from the release of this episode!

Selena: To get some...

Ryan: You need to go to SeeThrough—

Selena: Goody-goodies!

Ryan: Get some nifty gifties!

Selena: [*Laughing*] Nifty gifties!

Ryan: Go to SeeThroughBook.com. If you do that and you pre-order the book, good job! Make sure you go *back* there and fill out— There's a redemption link. Look around. You'll find it. There's a redemption link to make sure that you get the free audio book—

[00:05:02] **Selena:** Mm-hm!

Ryan: And the free discussion guide, which we just finished editing. I love how it turned out! It's going to make you have some really good conversations. [Chuckles] A lot of questions—

Selena: Mmm.

Ryan: Around the material in the book, around transparency. But make sure you fill out the redeem form. You'll get that as soon as the book releases, so you can go through it with your spouse, you can go through it with other couples or with your community group. SeeThroughBook.com.

Selena: Mm!

Ryan: So, there you go!

Selena: All right!

Ryan: All right.

Selena: So, talking about see-through sex, right? Talking about transparency in sex. It's like, "Hey, aren't'cha already naked? I mean, come on."

Ryan: Ideally.

Selena: Right?!

Ryan: Well, maybe, maybe not!

Selena: Right? Well! I mean, being physically naked with someone doesn't necessarily mean that you are *emotionally* naked with them, or...

Ryan: Very true.

Selena: Spiritually, right? You may not be being seen or you may not be seeing your spouse fully if sex might be feeling [Clicks tongue] a little empty, maybe. It might be feeling... functional versus actual connection!

Ryan: So, I want to make a really stark contrast at this point—

Selena: Okay.

Ryan: 'Cause it popped into my mind, the world's view of sex. The reason why sex is such a hot topic is because it is an *extraordinary* area of dysfunction and...

Selena: Mm. Brokenness.

Ryan: Brokenness.

Selena: Yeah.

Ryan: In our culture. And here's an example: It was a couple years ago. I was sitting in a Starbucks doing some work and it was up in the Seattle area. And I watched a young man walk in. Right? Probably... college age, you know, 20, 22, 24, something like that. Walked in, went into the bathroom. Two minutes later, a young lady walked in, went into the bathroom.

Selena: Same bathroom?

Ryan: Same bathroom.

Selena: Oh dear.

Ryan: Five minutes later, they both walked out and had sheepish looks on their face, and clearly, they were hooking up!

Selena: Right.

Ryan: Right. And so, that hook-up culture is the stark contrast I want to make.

Selena: Man...

Ryan: Hook-up culture, right? *Completely* carnal. Completely... You could be naked, whatever the physicality of it, but you're completely and utterly obscured to this person emotionally, spiritually, intellectually...

Selena: Mm-hm...

Ryan: Relationally.

Selena: So, can you really be *loved* in that instance?

Ryan: No, absolutely not!

Selena: Right?!

Ryan: It's not love!

Selena: Right!

Ryan: It's complete lust, carnality in its worst form.

Selena: Right! I'm just asking the question for people to process. *[Laughs]*

Mm.

Selena: *[Laughing]* I'm sorry.

Ryan: You know, just crank that one out of the park. *[Selena laughs harder]* No! So, yeah, it's complete contrast to what God's vision is!

Selena: Yeah.

Ryan: What God's *design* is, and what will really allow us to flourish, not just for sex itself, all right? People, sex is not an end in itself! It's a means to a *greater* end.

Selena: Mmm.

Ryan: What is the greater end? A, the glory of God! Boom!

Selena: Mm-hm.

Ryan: Absolutely! We talked about that last week. We exist for the glory of God, *no* other purpose! If we don't glorify God, then we're sinning! *[Chuckles]* Okay. B, what is the purpose of sex?

Selena: Also, to glorify God.

Ryan: To experience love and intimacy.

Selena: Yeah!

Ryan: And to *give* to each other.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: Obviously, we get something out of it, too. Then there's the functional C version of sex, or purpose of sex, which is just family, procreation.

Selena: Mm!

Ryan: God's purposes throughout the generations, the flourishing of *humanity*.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: All right. And so, we talked about the purposes of sex in our other book, *Fierce Marriage*, more in depth, but I just want to make that really quick contrast.

Selena: Yeah!

Ryan: Okay. So, we are talking about God's vision for, plan for, design for sex in light of us being designed for His glory and for human flourishing for His glory! [Chuckles] So, as opposed to *any* other caricature of that—

Selena: Mm.

Ryan: Distortion of that and twisting of that...

Selena: Right!

Ryan: And I gave the example of what I said before. So...

Selena: We're coming in hot there!

Ryan: Coming in hot!

Selena: Wasn't expecting that; it's all right!

Ryan: Yeah.

Selena: That's all right!

Ryan: Yeah.

Selena: We can do this! So...

Ryan: We can do this. So, you look like you were going to read a verse there?

Selena: Yeah! I was [Selena giggles] just kind of ringing it back in. [Ryan laughs] I'm like, "How does this all go together now?" [Both laugh]

Ryan: [Laughing] Sorry.

Selena: [Laughing] It's all right, it's all right. So, I think one of the big ways that marriages can become muddled and not so transparent in terms of sex is when we allow what Song of Solomon 2:15 calls "little foxes" to come in.

Ryan: Mm.

Selena: It says, and I'm sure many of you have heard this and even read—

Ryan: It's such a good passage.

Selena: Matt Chandler's book about that, Matt and Laura Chandler's book. "Catch the foxes for us, the little foxes that spoil the vineyards, for our vineyards are in blossom."

Ryan: Hm.

Selena: So, if you look in our study Bible, it talks ab—

Ryan: You got to keep going, I'm sorry.

Selena: Okay!

Ryan: "My beloved is mine," [Ryan chuckles quietly].

Selena: There you go!

Ryan: "And I am his."

Selena: I know!

Ryan: "He grazes among the lilies," [Both chuckle] "Until the day breathes and the shadows flee. Turn my beloved. Be like a gazelle or a young stag on cleft mountains." [Snickers] Whew!

Selena: I don't know—

Ryan: Steamy!

Selena: Yeah. [Both laugh]

Ryan: It's real stea—

Selena: I mean...

Ryan: Okay. The first part of Song of Solomon 2 is... borderline offensive. I'm just going to say that. [Both chuckle] The innuendo there is so thick.

Selena: Yes, yes. [Giggles] M'kay.

Ryan: [Laughing] I'm sorry! So, it's talking about little foxes coming in and basically spoiling what's in bloom.

Selena: Mm-hm.

Ryan: And what is in bloom? It's love! It's—

[00:10:00] **Selena:** Right.

- Ryan:** It's obvious, and it's the physicality of it.
- Selena:** Yeah, this study Bible in ESV says the foxes represent some hindrances that are threatening to spoil their relationship.
- Ryan:** Hm.
- Selena:** So, some hindrances... I mean, just think about ways that you're hiding, I guess, maybe in marriage, in your sex-life [*Giggles*], in your sex-marriage. I can't talk!
- Ryan:** [*Laughs*] Sexy marriage for everyone!
- Selena:** [*Selena laughs*] Just a fun, sexy time. [*Ryan laughs*] So, the area of sex within your marriage—
- Ryan:** Yeah.
- Selena:** What are ways that you're hiding, or what are ways that make sex feel like it's being hindered, right?
- Ryan:** Hmm.
- Selena:** So, just an example of us. You know, we don't share a lot, but go ahead.
- Ryan:** We're going to share an example. I want to interject one thing.
- Selena:** Go ahead.
- Ryan:** There's different categories where we can think about these foxes. Okay, and there's externalities and there's internalities. And the externalities would be the foxes coming in from outside. Right? I'm thinking of things like past trauma.
- Selena:** Right.
- Ryan:** Abuses you've experienced or—
- Selena:** Right.
- Ryan:** If you've been molested or anything like that, that's going to cause *issues*.
- Selena:** A hindrance.
- Ryan:** A hindrance, yes.
- Selena:** Yeah.
- Ryan:** And by God's grace, you can be healed and that those things can—

Selena: He can lead you through that. Yeah.

Ryan: He can lead you through a healing of that. Then another one would be an externality of like pornography or—

Selena: Mm.

Ryan: Or a lust, or maybe an unchecked sexuality, maybe prior to...

Selena: Yeah.

Ryan: Meeting your spouse or prior to knowing God—

Selena: Mm.

Ryan: Knowing His plan for it. There's fallout to that sin.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: And so, that's an externality. There are other things like your co-workers, temptations. If a co-worker comes to you and is coming on to you, male or female, right?

Selena: Mm-hm!

Ryan: They come on to you and they could threaten the health of what's growing in your garden, so to speak.

Selena: Mm.

Ryan: Then there's internalities. I think maybe the trauma could be an internality, but then just internal lust. Internality is also in terms of our own relationship. So...

Selena: Mm-hm.

Ryan: Bitterness toward each other, being closed off toward each other because of maybe past hurts that have gone unforgiven.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: Or...

Selena: Or you're just not able to communicate really well—

Ryan: Yeah.

Selena: With each other.

Ryan: Or your life circumstance. Maybe your finances are really stressful.

Selena: Yeah.

Ryan: And you're working a lot, or your kids are really unruly because they're all locked inside right now. [*Selena laughs*] And there's a thousand reasons; I just want to think through those categories.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: Or at least mention those right now.

Selena: Yeah! Absolutely.

Ryan: There's externalities and internalities, little foxes that will come in and threaten to kind of uproot or eat—

Selena: *Hinder*. [*Chuckles*]

Ryan: *Hinder*! Thank you.

Selena: Yeah!

Ryan: Use that word again. [*Selena chuckles*] So, there's a story from our own recent past that— And when I say past, I mean the last week [*Both laugh*], that I think is really relevant here.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: Yeah.

Selena: Right. It was the kids were in bed. It was kind of that time of the week!

Ryan: I was putting out the vibe!

Selena: He was putting out the vibe. I was—

Ryan: Put on the Barry White!

Selena: Yes. [*Both chuckle*]

Ryan: [*Mimics Barry White's voice*] "Let's get it on." [*Laughs and resumes normal voice*]

Selena: And we... [*Quickly chuckles*]

Ryan: I wish I could sing like him. [*Laughs*]

Selena: So—

Ryan: We'd never get out of bed. Anyway! Go ahead.

Selena: Okay. *[Both laugh]*

Ryan: So, we were feeling it.

Selena: I was having— Yes! It was that time, and I was just having a difficult time wanting to have sex! And I think that people can relate. So, I just didn't feel like we were connecting. You had been awesome during the day. Like, extraordinarily serving me, and not with an agenda. And you made that known, like you're just loving me to love me, right? I hate that I question that, but there's a part of me—

Ryan: Oh, for sure.

Selena: I think that questions, *[In an accented voice of concern]* “Why are you doing all these nice things for me?” “You’re going to have to put out.” *[Both laugh and she resumes her normal voice]* Just— *[Still laughing]* Sorry! Anyways! So, we were in that moment of, “I'm not feeling this.” You had the expectations, I think, of it being a little bit more functional because it had been a few days. I was telling you, it's really hard for me to be with you emotionally and physically because I just don't feel connected!

Ryan: Mm-hm.

Selena: I feel like there's an obstacle between us. I don't feel brave and I don't want to *be* intimate in that moment because it just felt more carnal, I guess, in some ways? And it didn't, and my heart—

Ryan: Yeah.

Selena: Needed *more* out of that moment.

Ryan: So, here's— Okay. I want to share my perspective, right?

Selena: Yes, that was what I'm saying. Now you can share yours.

Ryan: So—

Selena: You may.

Ryan: I want to be clear. Okay. Remember, we had a warning upfront. We're talking about “sexy time,” so if you have kids, get them out of the room or whatever. *[Selena snickers]* Put your headphones in. We were actually going about “our business.”

Selena: Okay.

Ryan: Wow, okay.

Ryan: Okay, and because I feel like it's helpful for people!

Selena: Okay!

Ryan: And we were realizing, something feels off. Something felt really off, like we weren't connecting.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: And so, I looked at you and I was like, "Why aren't you here with me? What's going on?"

Selena: Yeah.

Ryan: And granted, we knew, like you had said, it was going to be more of a functional thing.

Selena: Mm-hm.

Ryan: We didn't have hours, right?

Selena: Mm-hm.

Ryan: But the kids were in bed. The baby's—

Selena: She had an ear infection, so we were like— [*Snickers*]

Ryan: Kid ear infection. So, we didn't know how much time we would have before she started waking up again.

Selena: Yeah.

[00:15:01] **Ryan:** [*Inhales*] And so, I was under the assumption, "Hey, we've been connecting. We've not... fought." [*Both cackle*] "I've told you I loved you the day we got married; I'll let you know if that changes," sort of thing.

Selena: [*Giggling*] Yeah right.

Ryan: But I'm like, "Why are you having a hard time now? Why don't you just love me?"

Selena: Right.

Ryan: "And why don't you just want to be with me right now?"

Selena: And this is not an uncommon thing.

Ryan: Yeah.

Selena: This happens like, you know, I'd hate to say it, but it does happen pretty regularly, I think, within our marriage.

Ryan: I think it probably happens a couple times a month.

Selena: Yeah.

Ryan: Yeah!

Selena: And so, typically your response has been, you know, you kind of fall inward and you feel rejected as you would, right? You—

Ryan: I spiral. Yeah!

Selena: Yeah! You feel unwanted and insecure and it leads to frustration. And I'm like, "This is not the case! I don't not want you. I just don't feel brave in being with you right now because I feel like I'm not being known. I feel disconnected. I feel—"

Ryan: So... That's when a light bulb went off in my head.

Selena: Yes.

Ryan: And I thought—

Selena: By the grace of God.

Ryan: Seriously. [*Selena quietly laughs*] Because there's so many times when that light bulb has stayed unlit. [*Ryan laughs*]

Selena: Yes. [*Laughs*]

Ryan: And I, like Selena said, I'll spiral and get really frustrated. And then we spend an hour arguing until finally we reconcile.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: Which that's fine. And I mean we grow in those instances. But in this case, I heard you.

Selena: [*Quietly*] Mm-hm.

- Ryan:** And I saw you and I thought, I'm here thinking this is functional, which is something that we've agreed to in general in our marriage.
- Selena:** Yeah!
- Ryan:** That sometimes that's the case. But clearly, it's not functional for you right now.
- Selena:** Right.
- Ryan:** That will not work for you. We need to connect. You need to know that I love you. You need to know that I care about you for more than just this, what you can give to me.
- Selena:** Right.
- Ryan:** But I care about your heart, your soul, your mind.
- Selena:** Right.
- Ryan:** And so, instead of getting offended, 'cause I was! I was starting to go that route.
- Selena:** Yeah.
- Ryan:** I thought, "She loves me. She just doesn't feel loved right now." [*Selena laughs*] "So, I need to love her better at this moment."
- Selena:** Yes.
- Ryan:** And I feel like that was a breakthrough.
- Selena:** It was! It very much was. And you were just explaining your basic thoughts about me all the time. [*Brief snicker*] And I'm just like, "Oh! This is good to hear!" [*Laughs*]
- Ryan:** Basic. You were ver— [*Laughs and inhales*]
- Selena:** Well, 'cause you're just like, "I love you and I want to have sex with you because you're my wife. And I just want to be close to you all the time! And I just always want that." And I'm just like, "How do you just *want* that so purely?"
- Ryan:** And I'm like, "How do you *not* want that all the time?" [*Both laugh*]
- Selena:** *Clearly* you can see we were having a difficult time connecting, but it came through in the way that you did. You saw *me*, right? And you saw that I was

dealing with some things in my head and in my heart. And so, I mean, we've tried to outline a few things of how God led us through this.

Ryan: Mm-hm.

Selena: And so, just to be helpful to you all. We honestly, we were in the middle of it, like Ryan said, and Ryan said we had to have an honest, humble, transparent conversation. And we had to kind of say, this is where we're at. Give a current state of our minds and our hearts.

Ryan: Mm...

Selena: I said this is what I'm dealing with. I noticed, or I observed, or I am grateful for how you've served me today. However, I am feeling not connected.

Ryan: Yeah.

Selena: It's really not you.

Ryan: Yeah.

Selena: It's just kind of I'm just not feeling it right now! And there's a lot that goes into that. But you were so gracious and understanding. And you told me *your* side of things as well! And that was fine!

Ryan: There is an underlying... So, depending on how you're approaching this—

Selena: Mm-hm.

Ryan: This conversation could feel impossible!

Selena: Yeah.

Ryan: Whereas if things aren't generally okay—

Selena: Yeah!

Ryan: In your marriage, you know, if you're a wife and you're feeling the way Selena felt... it may not feel like—

Selena: Mm-hm.

Ryan: That anything your husband says would make you feel better in that moment. Or if you're a husband and it's been *weeks* since you've been intimate with your wife and you're feeling like this is just another rejection—

Selena: Hm.

Ryan: But so, I do want to address that there are harder instances and more difficult instances—

Selena: Yes.

Ryan: Where this won't just be like a conversation and you're back to a place of...

Selena: Right!

Ryan: Full reconciliation, full health, and good intimacy.

Selena: That's good, that's good.

Ryan: So, there's an underlying, I think, health that has to be in place for these conversations to be really fruitful.

Selena: Yeah.

Ryan: And that's like you're not going to talk your way into a better sex life *if* there's no other health in your marriage.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: Does that make sense?

Selena: Right!

Ryan: And so, if that's the case, then I don't want to be prescriptive, but here's something that could help. [*Brief chuckle*] Counseling, Biblical mentorship.

Selena: Mm-hm.

Ryan: Biblical counseling.

Selena: Pastors.

Ryan: *Ongoing*—

Selena: Yeah.

Ryan: Effort put into your marriage. I think if you're not building the strength and health of your marriage over time, it's unreasonable to expect that when...

Selena: Hard times come, like us—

Ryan: Hard time, yeah!

Selena: Yeah, you're going to be like, "Oh! This is how I feel. And we're working through this and go!" Right? Like—

Ryan: Yeah.

Selena: That's just not attainable. So, I think that's awesome that you highlighted that because there definitely has to be a place of... health or you're *working* towards that place of health to be able to have these conversations.

Ryan: Mm-hm.

Selena: Before or stopping in the middle [*Chuckles*] and saying, "Hey, this is not working for me."

[00:20:02] **Ryan:** 'Cause I will say, there are those times. We've had plenty of those where we've been kind of mid-process and we just go off the rails completely.

Selena: Mm-hm.

Ryan: And just go to sleep!

Selena: Mm-hm.

Ryan: And that's, I mean, 'cause we haven't been able to reconcile. And I'm being completely honest. Granted, we get up and deal with it.

Selena: Mm-hm!

Ryan: We wake up. We don't let that stuff brood and turn into an anger toward each other.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: But there's been those moments, so I just want to be very... nuanced in that. I don't want to instantiate this one part of our lives! This one instance. And turn it into a regular thing 'cause...

Selena: Yeah!

Ryan: We'll have times when we have to talk through it again.

Selena: Yeah.

Ryan: And couples will have very different views of this. So!

Selena: Absolutely, absolutely.

Ryan: And very different experiences. So.

Selena: So, one thing that I really think we underestimate again is prayer in our marriage! And I know you're like "Prayer and sex? What?" Yes! If you feel like you need to stop and pray, do that. But I think prayer is more like in ahead of time thing, and not like, "Okay! We're going to have sex, so we should pray before." But in constant communion with the Lord for your spouse, for your...

Ryan: Mm-hm.

Selena: Intimacy!

Ryan: [*Quietly*] Yeah.

Selena: Obviously, this is a *big* struggle for a lot of marriages. I think it's a constant area of sanctification, right? And so, praying for each other, praying for your spouse, praying for transparency, praying for wholeness—

Ryan: Mm-hm.

Selena: Praying for humility and having some of these hard conversations I think is one of the *main* ways that we can ask the Lord to intervene and be reminded that we need His intervention in this area.

Ryan: A big thing about prayer is we don't pray because we don't think we need God.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: And we don't think we need His help. And when we pray, we are acknowledging that we don't have... perfection.

Selena: So good.

Ryan: We don't have the solution on our own.

Selena: So good.

Ryan: And so that completely reorients our hearts.

Selena: Yeah.

Ryan: And especially our hearts toward each other, when we realize that any flourishing we experience in our marriage is by the grace of God.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: Anytime I feel loved by you, it's by the grace of God.

Selena: Yeah.

Ryan: Anytime I love you successfully [*Selena snickers*] is by the grace of God. And so, praying is a constant acknowledgment that I *need God* for this to work!

Selena: Yeah!

Ryan: And so, we're saying prayer now because it's really part of that bedrock.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: Of being able to have this see-through sex-life, see-through marriage.

Selena: Right, right. And this second part, I think we're just going to push the two together. [*Laughs*]

Ryan: Sure!

Selena: The second and the third, because they kind of overlap. So, admitting challenges, and I think one way we do that is through clarifying our expectations of each other and of the moment, right?

Ryan: Mm! That's really good.

Selena: So, what do we expect from or about sex in our marriage?

Ryan: Hm.

Selena: And there's a lot of ways [*Quick chuckle*] we can answer that! And I mean, we can say no matter how long we've been together, each moment is different! It's always loaded with different expectations because we go through different seasons of life and there's things that we're dealing with that are *different* than they were even ten years ago, right?

Ryan: Mm-hm!

Selena: Or even last month or last week. So, understanding those expectations going into that moment of intimacy I think is one way we can admit our challenges.

Ryan: Yeah.

Selena: And then you and I, I mean, I was just saying, "I don't feel connected right now," and then you're able to say, "Well, I feel rejected typically when we do this or when you say it like that. But you need to be loved right now. And I can clearly see this is what you need. It's not about me." You know?

Ryan: Yeah.

Selena: So, admitting those challenges that we're facing to each other.

Ryan: Mm-hm. [*Inhales sharply*] And we're alr—

Selena: Brings that transparency.

Ryan: And when you're able to articulate your expectations, you're able to see the dissonance there and maybe where you were missing it.

Selena: Yeah! Yeah.

Ryan: So, I was, I mean in that instance, because it was late at night, the baby was finally asleep... [*Selena giggles*] We were both tired!

Selena: Right.

Ryan: I was just expecting—

Selena: Yeah!

Ryan: Basically, cutting to the chase!

Selena: Yeah.

Ryan: And usually it's more than that. It's not, you know—

Selena: Yeah!

Ryan: But I never want to leave you in the wake of that.

Selena: Of course, of course.

Ryan: You're my wife; I love you! I want you to feel loved—

Selena: Right.

Ryan: Even if it's cutting to the chase.

Selena: Well, and we usually do feel...

Ryan: Yes!

Selena: And so, that's where it was like, yeah.

Ryan: Yeah. And so, when I articulated that, you were like, "Okay, I get that expectation. But to be honest, that's not going to cut it for me right now."

Selena: Right.

Ryan: And that's where I said, "Oh, okay. Yeah."

Selena: Right!

Ryan: Yeah.

Selena: It's an opportunity for us to be generous, to be charitable with each other, right?

Ryan: Yes.

Selena: And to give of ourselves and know that it's not a rejection thing, it's a one of us is asking for help and asking to be loved.

Ryan: Hm.

Selena: So, I think the ending hope that we want to leave you with today is just talking around this idea of learning the power and beauty of sexual selflessness.

Ryan: I was going to say... So, you wrote this part in the book. This actually is from the book. And... just to hear you talk about the power and beauty of sexual selflessness was so, I think, enlivening to me as your husband!

Selena: Mm-hm.

Ryan: But also, I feel like it's very enlivening to the church, to others, right?

Selena: Hm!

Ryan: And the passage that you referenced so well, 'cause you're so brilliant! [*Selena laughs*] I love it! So, it's I Corinthians 7:3-5. I'm just going to read it here. This passage is controversial, right, 'cause sometimes men and women will use it, and hold it over each other's heads.

[00:25:07] **Selena:** Mm!

Ryan: And it becomes the bludgeoning tool as opposed to a reminder of some gospel truth.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: So, let's try to read it without an agenda. Let's try to see what Paul is saying to the Corinthians. And here's what it says:

"The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights."

Now, there's a whole context before this. We don't have time to go through that. I encourage you to go back and read the whole chapter.

“The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband. For the wife does not have authority over her body, but the husband does. Likewise—”

Okay, before you jump to conclusions...

“Likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. Do not deprive one another, except perhaps by agreement for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.”

So, the last part of that—

Selena: Hm.

Ryan: It's talking about kind of hedging and protecting against those little foxes!

Selena: Mm-hm!

Ryan: Knowing that a healthy sex life is oftentimes the best protection against little foxes. One of the things you do—I'm going to use an example from fermenting beer. Right, so if someone's fermenting a beer, what could happen is a bad bacteria will get in there. Well, a lot of times you preempt that by putting in good bacteria. And so, as that flourishes, it chokes out the ability for the bad things to grow.

Selena: Mm.

Ryan: And the same thing goes for a garden that's thriving, trees that are thriving.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: If the good organisms are growing and thriving, the bad ones just won't have a chance to take root!

Selena: Right.

Ryan: So, Paul's talking about that. But really, what this is talking about is being *generous* toward each other.

Selena: Mm-hm.

Ryan: And selfless!

Selena: Mm-hm.

- Ryan:** And what is the phrase you used? Yes, sexual selflessness.
- Selena:** Mm.
- Ryan:** Or selfless sexuality in that I am *not* my own. You are not a means to *my* end.
- Selena:** Mm-hm.
- Ryan:** I have only myself; I give myself to you, as my wife.
- Selena:** Mm, mm-hm.
- Ryan:** You have only yourself. You give yourself to me as my wife. I care for you because you've given yourself to me. You care for me because I've given myself to you.
- Selena:** Right.
- Ryan:** And that's what Paul's talking about.
- Selena:** Right. This is not an *authority* topic. This is a...
- Ryan:** No!
- Selena:** A love and covenant and selflessness topic.
- Ryan:** Mm! Very good.
- Selena:** So, definitely go check that out. Read. I think we'd end this episode with the hope of just knowing that the best sex that you can have is typically when you are able to give of yourself, right?
- Ryan:** Mm-hm.
- Selena:** When you're being selfless. It requires vulnerability on both parties, and we have to learn to deal with sexual frustration through communication. I mean, again, our example of we were having a frustrating moment. We had to stop. We had a pause. We had to work through it.
- Ryan:** Mm-hm.
- Selena:** Don't be afraid to do that! It's okay! And again, with the underlying groundwork being in place, you know, you're having a healthy sex life, other things are thriving, there's this healthy— What is it? Garden, basically, that enables you to be able to have these conversations.
- Ryan:** Yeah.

Selena: So, understand that, again, sex is mutually beneficial, but we need to both be selfless in it, I guess, would be the best way.

Ryan: I'd be remiss if I didn't connect this to the gospel before we jump off.

Selena: Mm-hm!

Ryan: So, how does sex remind us of the gospel? [*Selena chuckles*] That might sound crass. Please listen. It is not crass. Sex was designed by God for our good, for His glory. Okay? It's a beautiful thing. We get to enjoy it! It's a common grace that we get to enjoy! And here's the thing is when we are naked, fully naked and fully known, and within the covenant of marriage, the beauty of the covenant of marriage that gives us a place to experience and learn how to love each other the way Christ has loved us, when you're naked with your spouse and you're *still loved*, fully known, still loved. Right? And you're experiencing that grace within that relationship, it is a [*Ryan snickers quickly*] stark reminder of how we are even *more completely* known, more completely naked before the God of the universe, and still *more and more* completely loved in Christ.

Selena: Mm-hm.

Ryan: And so, let us reflect that kind of love in this area!

Selena: Yeah!

Ryan: As Christian married people, let us have thriving sex lives, not just for sex itself, but because it is a window, it's a *keyhole* looking into the greater truth of being fully known and fully loved in the Gospel.

Selena: That's awesome!

Ryan: Yeah. So...

Selena: So, as a couple, we encourage you to read 1 Corinthians 7:1-5. I'd probably say just read the whole chapter 7, right? That's a good—

Ryan: Or maybe six and seven?

Selena: Six and seven. Just read all of I Corinthians! Nah. [*Both laugh*] You should! You can! It's a great book! I Corinthians 6 and 7. Read that out loud together and just talk about how it can apply to your marriage. What does selfless sexuality look like in light of what Paul writes? So...

[00:30:02] **Ryan:** Yeah.

Selena: Anyways! We are going to end this mini-series and get started on the next one—

Ryan: Episode.

Selena: Episode. Mini-series, episode number one!

Ryan: So, join us next time! We're talking about see-through talks or see-through communication.

Selena: Mmm...

Ryan: It will jump off based on what we're talking about here. And if you haven't yet, we encourage you to pre-order the book, SeeThroughBook.com. The book itself is called See-Through Marriage. You can find it anywhere books are sold, pretty much!

Selena: Mm!

Ryan: And you'll get pre-order bonuses! So, if you preorder it, make sure you go back to SeeThroughBook.com. There's a link there to redeem those bonuses.

Selena: Ye-ah!

Ryan: For a free audio book that will be emailed to you and a free discussion guide, which, like I said, I love how it turned out!

Selena: So awesome. If he loves it, guys, that's saying a lot, 'cause he's got...

Ryan: I'm super picky.

Selena: *[Laughs]* High standards. He's really picky. *[Laughs again]*

Ryan: Yeah, I'm super picky! So, anyway. We hope you'll join us for the next episode. It'll be live in about two days. So, until then!

Selena: Stay fierce!

[00:31:00] <Ending Sequence>

[00:31:18] Podcast ends.

PODCAST NOTES

- **[00:05:02]**
 - Scripture reference:
 - Song of Solomon 2:15, *ESV*
- **[00:25:07]**
 - Scripture reference:
 - I Corinthians 7:3-5, paraphrase, *ESV*

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