

REBUILDING TRUST AFTER A BETRAYAL

<https://fiercemarriage.com/rebuilding-trust-after-a-betrayal>

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Selena: I think building trust within a marriage is always a difficult task, let alone after a betrayal. I think we're constantly in this mode of building trust. But after bombs are dropped, and there's metaphorical carnage everywhere, how do we begin picking up those pieces? Or how do we, if we're coming alongside believers that are walking through this, how do we love them correctly and remain advocates for their marriage?

Ryan: Betrayal is a uniquely hurtful place to be in feeling betrayed. It's one thing to be sinned against, betrayal is truly like somebody you've entrusted your heart with. So I've entrusted my heart into your hands. 1 Corinthians love, biblical love would tell us that love hopes all things, desires basically good for the other. Betrayal is a complete opposite of that. Is that I'm choosing my good over your good. I'm breaking that trust, that friendship. So much brokenness is to be had in this area.

So anyway, this conversation that we're hoping to have today is, hopefully, will be nuanced enough, filled with hope, but also connected to reality. The reality of how hard betrayal can be and how visceral it feels, but knowing that we have a faithful God, who Himself knows betrayal, and can show us, by His grace and through the power of the Holy Spirit, the path out of the bondage of betrayal, or feeling betrayed. It doesn't mean that you gloss over things, but there is a path to healing. And at least, we hope to set your foot on that path today. So thanks for joining us. We'll see you on the other side.

[00:01:40] <Intro>

Selena: Welcome to the Fierce Marriage podcast where we believe that marriage takes a fierce tenacity that never gives up and refuses to give in.

Ryan: Here, we'll share openly and honestly about all things marriage—

Selena: Sex—

Ryan: Communication—

Selena: Finances—

Ryan: Priorities—

Selena: Purpose—

Ryan: And everything in between.

Selena: Laugh, ponder, and join in our candid, gospel-centered conversations. This is Fierce Marriage.

Ryan: Whenever we talk about, think about, or address betrayal, especially in the marriage space, I think about standing on the side of the road after our particularly violent crash. If you've ever been in a car crash, you know there's this moment, whether it's a small one or a catastrophic wreck, there's this moment, by God's grace, if you're conscious, you're in shock. You're wondering what, do we even do? There's no authorities there, the ambulance hasn't arrived, the fire truck has not arrived, the police haven't arrived to help navigate traffic. It's complete chaos.

Betrayal feels that way in marriage, especially after you feel the initial effects of the betrayal. It's as if you're standing on the side of the road, and you're bleeding and there's death, and there's injury, and it's terrifying. So what we hope today to do is to shine the light on, how do we progress out of that place? How do we get...?

Selena: Begin progressing.

Ryan: How do we begin progressing? What we don't mean by that is, how do you just get over it? Because there is a progression. And we see it in the Bible. There's a progression for handling betrayal. And it doesn't mean dismissing pain. It doesn't mean dismissing the hurt or the sin. That's how we begin the process. That's how we...

Selena: Begin there is recognizing it and acknowledging it.

Ryan: Yeah, yeah. So that's the first step is recognizing, "Wow, this tragic event has happened. I've been betrayed. And kind of snapping out of that shock." Again, not to gloss over it, but out of that moment of shock saying, "This bad thing has happened. I'm bleeding. I need to get to a place of safety. I need to start getting help. So I need to call for help." I hope you see the merit of that analogy as we go through this. What does that help look like in betrayal in marriage? Who do we call? What does a place of safety look like? What does healing look like as we recover from this? Anyway.

By the way, this Thursday this week, we're going to be releasing an episode that's all about recovering from an affair. It's an author, a woman, her name is Tina Konkin. We're going to release that episode. It's a wonderful testimony

of God's grace. So if that's where you're at, just know there's another resource coming later this week.

In that vein, those types of interviews and the transcripts that are coming along with it are possible because of our amazing patrons that have chosen to lock arms with us to support this podcast, to support the Fierce Marriage, Frederick's Fierce Parenting which is ramping up, to support all that. So if you want to be a part of that, we would love to lock arms with you. Two things: that you pray about it. If you pray and God leads you and your spouse to engage in that way, then we just ask that you act on it. You can go to patreon.com/fiercemarriage. There are books, and rings, and other goodies to be had...

Selena: Good things.

Ryan: Books, rings, and good things to be had. So just pray about that. If you have any questions, you can go to fiercemarriage.com/podcast and you can ask your questions there. You can call or text this number 971-333-1120. Finally, if you haven't, please do leave a review on iTunes and a rating. That means the world to us. It helps us help get the word out. Leave a rating and review on iTunes.

Selena: Whooo. So the roadmap for today, Ryan, touched on it just a bit. Last week we talked about manipulation: what it is in marriage, how it damages our covenantal relationship, lying, deceitfulness in order to gain some control or further selfish agenda. We talked about how we can respond and should respond as believers. Matthew 10:16 talks about being shrewd as snakes, not being taken advantage of, and innocent as doves. So not manipulating others or speaking falsely to your neighbor.

So out of that conversation, we wanted to talk about how to rebuild trust. Because often manipulation and deceit goes hand in hand or undergirds this whole idea of betrayal, right?

Ryan: Yeah.

Selena: That is obvious manipulation is happening if betrayal is happening. So they kind of go hand in hand.

So we are going to talk about how to rebuild trust after betrayal. That could be infidelity or an affair or secret addiction, which is lying, and there's a lot of deceit, again there. Some causes of betrayal, walk through scripture, some scholarly articles that we found from people who are smarter and more experienced than us. And through all of that, we're probably going to

interweave some of our own experience walking alongside others, and supporting friends as they were picking up the pieces and walking through this whole process of a car wreck—the betrayal. So where do we begin?

Again, our caveat here is that we're not counselors or pastors yet. As always, we would encourage and advise you to seek out your pastors and counselors, Christian Bible-believing people. If you're experiencing betrayal or infidelity or adultery, if you know someone who is, and you don't know how to support them, encourage them to go to those people in spiritual authority and can offer instruction in that area and counsel. So then we'll give you some tangible resources, some places to start, supplemental resources. Again, keyword: supplemental. But you know where we'd like to point you to is always the Bible.

Anyways, getting on with our conversation here, we wanted to recognize the fact that betrayal and the pain that betrayal causes is deep. I mean, when we were doing research, there are entire online courses, face to face courses, books, counselors who make their living dealing with this specific area. So we can't underestimate the damage of it. As believers, though, we can place our hope in Jesus in this process, remembering that He is the author and finisher of our faith and that we can trust Him.

We're going to get to in just a minute [*chuckles*] of how God is the betrayed in the whole overarching themes of Scripture. So we don't want to underestimate it. We want to walk through what hope looks like, what pain looks like. We want to give you just some hook on points where you're like, "Yes, I understand this," or "Oh, wow, I never thought about this and how people are dealing with it." When we were talking, you were talking about distinguishing betrayal. So there's intentional versus just being a sinner. So I'm interested in that.

Ryan: As we look at some of the causes of betrayal or feelings of betrayal, what causes a spouse to feel betrayed or to be betrayed? Obviously, the first thing that comes to mind is there is an affair. Whether it's a physical affair, an emotional affair, or both, obviously, the broken covenant will lead you to feeling a sense of betrayal because you've been betrayed.

Now, one of the things that we read as we were studying for this is there is a difference between intentional betrayal. And we see biblical examples. Judas is a very clear example of intentional betrayal. David, I think in - was it Psalm 55 where—we'll talk about this further—where he's been betrayed by a close friend and he's felt pain as a result. That was intentional betrayal.

Then there's the sense of betrayal in that you're just kind of a sinner. So someone has betrayed my trust because of their sin.

Selena: Kind of a sinner. *[chuckles]*

Ryan: Sorry.

Selena: Because you're a sinner.

Ryan: Yeah. I mean, the example that comes to mind is some sort of addiction or habit that is sinful that would cause a spouse to feel betrayed. Now, pornography is a very clear version of that in that you haven't gone and committed adultery. Now Jesus says, "If you have lust in your heart, then you're committing adultery." So I don't mean to mince words there. But things like if you have an alcohol addiction, or I feel betrayed because of your alcohol addiction in that we've talked about this and you have fallen back off the wagon type of thing. Or drugs or gambling is another big one. So you can feel betrayed, not necessarily directly betrayed. Right?

Selena: Okay.

Ryan: So there's that intentional, unintentional direct and indirect versions of betrayal. Now they're all betrayal. And I think we can look at them through a similar lens. As we talk through the various points in Scripture, then that will become more clear. You do have a list here that I don't want to gloss over.

Selena: Yeah. We've mentioned a few of the causes, you know, trying to define this broken trust or betrayal. We talked about affair and infidelity, confession of a secret addiction, lying. We discovered that there's some quote-unquote, "financial infidelity" that people deal with—spending without sharing. Another, I think lying deceit is not being clear or pure in your motivations or honest with your spouse of why you're doing something or why you want your family to do something.

Just from our own experience, I think family of origin can play a role for betrayal happening. We're not saying that because of your family of origin, you will experience these things. We are saying that it does have a role that it plays I guess. There's a little bit of just brokenness there that we can't overlook, I guess. But we also can't give it too much power in a sense of saying, "Well, because I experienced this as a child, or this as a young person, then these things will probably happen." No. We trust in the Lord. We walk in wisdom.

Ryan: We believe in the redemptive power of the gospel to break those sins cycles, right?

Selena: Mm hmm.

Ryan: It doesn't mean the consequences magically go away. It just means that we are not bound to recommitting the same generational sin. I like this word picture. As we talked through betrayal, again, we use the car wreck analogy. I think another maybe less violent version of betrayal is I picture a chair. When you sit in a chair, you say, "This is a chair. It's got four legs. I'm going to trust it. I'm going to sit in it."

This happens in marriages where the spouse changes or there's something they just kind of over the years, they become a different person in a sense, in that you marry one version of this person and now you're five years in, you're realizing maybe they didn't disclose everything, maybe they've dealt far more with things like depression or addiction and never realized that before you married them. So you're sitting in this chair and all sudden the chair is no longer supporting you. In other words, you fall to the ground. So that chair has betrayed your trust, in that that you thought was a chair you signed up for as sitting on a chair now is no longer a suitable object.

So to break away from the analogy, that the spouse that you married, you signed up to be married to, a certain person, now that you're in this covenant, you're realizing that maybe you baited and switched on.

Selena: You feel like you baited and switched on.

Ryan: You feel that way.

Selena: And that's not the truth. The truth is that we are too broken sinners coming together. And by God's grace and design for covenant, we are walking out what it means to extend and experience forgiveness and grace, learning what it means to love each other no matter what the emotions that might be at play. So, yes, I think that is very prevalent [*chuckles*] to what we're talking about.

Ryan: Let's talk specifically about adultery.

Selena: Yes. I was, of course, reading about questions [*inaudible*]. He found another new resource that we'll talk about in a sec from them. But we want to just be clear that and we use this quote that adultery is wrong. Hebrews 13:4 says, "God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral. The injured party should rest in the truth that God is the avenger. The wronged individual does

not need to fret over getting even. God will do a much better job of avenging us. When we are betrayed, we need to commit the pain to the one who knows every detail and we'll deal with it appropriately."

So talking about knowing the detail of betrayal, and when you were talking about intentional versus sort of unintentional, I guess, we don't always understand why our spouse does something, but the Lord does. The hope that we have in that, and I'm not trying to give the lead away, though, is that Romans 8:28 of in all things, God works for the good of those who love Him. In all things. In brokenness, in sin, God can work. I think He's most at work. In my weakness, God is strong. That's the theme of the Bible.

So when we see brokenness, when we experience brokenness, and betrayal, yes, we should experience the hurt and the pain and those feelings and emotions that go with it, but we also can live and cling to the hope that Christ has given. There was a whole podcast I was listening to. Lifeways come out with it. What is it called? Jackie Hill Perry, Krueger, and someone else. Let's Talk. I think it's called Let's Talk. I'm sorry. I'm blanking out. They were talking about: how do we deal with pain now but also rejoicing in the hope that we have? I mean, Jesus was sad when Lazarus died, but He also rejoiced when people were healed. It's just how do you experience those two things at one time.

Ryan: Sorry to jump in. We tend to think when someone says like, "Look to Christ, stand on the hope you haven't Him" that's not a mutually exclusive thing to feeling the pain that you are in.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: Right. I mean, it's a call from within that place of pain to say look at your hope. Look at the future hope you have in Christ. Stand where you are, feel the pain, but know, but know that your hope is greater, know that Christ will get through it, either in this life for the next." That's clinging to hope. So we don't want you to hear this and say, "Oh, here they go again with just the gospel magic bullet for everything."

It is, in a sense, a magic bullet because it doesn't forsake the reality you're living. But it gives you a greater hope outside of that reality. That is the Christian life. That's the Christian worldview, that our hope is not here and now. It's there and then. It's already but not yet. That the price has been paid, but I have yet to fully live in that freedom because I live in a sinful state, we live in a sinful nature, we live in a sinful society. We don't live in that time when Christ is yet back and reigning—the promise. We don't live in the fruition of the full promise yet. So I just want to be clear that they're not mutually

exclusive. That you can feel pain. We see an example of that. I mean, we just should read it now.

Selena: Yeah, go on to Scripture

Ryan: It is Psalm 50. Do you have that pulled up?

Selena: Well, before we go into that because that's just running over the whole rundown here... *[laughs]*

Ryan: I know. But I feel like that sets a stage for us to begin the rest of this conversation. But we can continue on that.

Selena: Well, I think it helps bring some con...

Ryan: Context?

Selena: Context. Thank you.

Ryan: Boom.

Selena: Con, con, con. Some context and images to understand in Scripture, there is tons of betrayal, beginning in Genesis 3. But will not start there. Well, actually, Joseph, when he was betrayed by his brothers, there was a betrayal driven by jealousy. We see Jesus and Judas that you mentioned.

Ryan: What happened with Joseph, real quick? He was the favorite of his father. His father gave him this color coat, and all the brothers looked on him and thought, "Whoo, look at him; he's the favorite." So they basically sold him into slavery and told the father that he'd been eaten by a lion. That's obviously betrayal. I just don't want to assume listeners know that story.

Selena: Sorry, yeah.

Ryan: Jesus and Judas. I want to read from Matthew 26. It's heartbreaking. Imagine this. Jesus is spending his later years in ministry—three years-ish—and He's got these disciples. He's spent day and night with these men. This is toward the end of His ministry when getting crucified. Matthew 26:1, says, "Jesus, when he had finished all these things, he said to his disciples, "you know that after two days the Passover is coming, and the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified. And the chief priests and the elders of people gathered in the Palace of the high priests whose name was Caiaphas and plotted together in order to arrest Jesus by stealth and kill him."

Okay by stealth, that's a sneakiness. Then you go down a few verses and "Judas to betray Jesus" is the headline. I mean, Judas was a disciple a brother, a close...Think of your closest friend. You're the only person I spend a night with but think of our closest friends. Now that person is completely 180'd on you. And where you thought that friend was for you, that friend was...

Selena: Ready to die for you.

Ryan: Ready to die for you. But now they are not only betraying you but betraying you for money.

Selena: Well, but I think that speaks to the person of Judas too and the desires that...Because wasn't he like the accountant of the disciple?

Ryan: Yeah. Here's the verses. And that's a good point. Matthew 26:14. "Then one of the twelve, whose name was Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, "What will you give me if I deliver him over to you?" And they paid him thirty pieces of silver. And from that moment he sought an opportunity to betray him." "Him" being Christ.

So now it's this premeditated thing. Can you imagine if you found out that your best friend—I want that to sink in because we can gloss over that—premeditated this opportunity to betray you for a sum of money. So Jesus Himself...

Selena: One of the bigger desires of your heart. Something that is hard to resist, is hard to ignore, is hard to put away, is hard to quote-unquote, "get over" maybe. And you have this chance to...I guess it's just part of it speaks to not understanding and really knowing. Did he really know? We shouldn't talk about Judas. That's a whole can of worms.

Ryan: Right. In terms of the sovereignty of God?

Selena: Right, right, right.

Ryan: But this whole chapter of Matthew is almost like a betrayal chapter.

Selena: Oh, yeah. There's Peter's denial.

Ryan: There's Judas in the garden, when Judas gives him the kiss of death, so to speak, and he identifies Him. "Betrayed with the kisses" is the phrase. So he was betrayed there. So it was very up in your face, literally, identifying you through this act of affection so that you can be crucified. All right.

Selena: Wow.

Ryan: So there's a lot of that. I mean, think about the parallels in marriage. I'm going to lie to your face, I'm going to sleep in the same bed as you, all the while having. An affair and emotional affair, physical affair, all the while entertaining complete lust online, thinking pornography or all the while living this lie. I'm still going to kiss you goodnight. I love you. I'm going to say, "I love you," and I'm going to kiss you goodnight, and we're going to act like everything's okay. So then, all sudden, the script shifts. It completely flips. And now you're betrayed.

And then you mentioned Peter, who had been betrayed...

Selena: Also in Matthew 26.

Ryan: Also in Matthew 26. And that betrayal was different. Sorry, Peter hadn't been betrayed. Peter betrayed Christ. Jesus foretold it. He said, "You're going to deny me three times. Peter said, "There's no way I'm going to do that."

Selena: Denial and betrayal. I think we need to unpack the difference there.

Ryan: Well, denial is a form of betrayal.

Selena: Okay.

Ryan: I have said that I will die basically for you.

Selena: He did say I think a few verses ahead.

Ryan: Yeah.

Selena: Or before.

Ryan: Then, of course, later on in verse 69, "Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. And a servant girl came up to him and said, "You also were with Jesus the Galilean." This is after Jesus had been taken away and now He was a hot topic I'll say, in that everybody was kind of watching how this unfolded. And then Peter, verse 70, "But he denied it before them all, saying, "I do not know what you mean." And when he went out to the entrance, another servant girl saw him..."

Three times he betrays Christ in this way. Now, that's the distinction for what it's worth. Judas' betrayal was premeditated. Peter's betrayal was more out of fear and a sinful nature. It was not as nefarious, but it was still a betrayal.

Selena: It's interesting. Honestly, it's really interesting to look at the motivations behind betrayal because I think that when we talked last week about manipulation and how that is lying and deceit, and how we can so easily just slip into that. And nobody can even really see it sometimes or calls on it except the Lord.

Ryan: And our sin nature is driving that ship, so to speak. Because I just want to be right, I just want to whatever, get what I want, so I'm going to manipulate you. Which is lying as we talked about.

Selena: Absolutely.

Ryan: There's no mincing words there. So I'm lying to you trying to get what I want, but it's not necessarily the same.

Selena: Well, and it's interesting. It is interesting though. In Matthew 27, when Judas hanged himself, I was just reading ahead a little bit about how he changed his mind, once he knew Jesus was condemned. It's like we want the fulfillment, but we don't want to deal with the condemnation afterwards. We don't want to deal with the fallout, the brokenness afterwards. Like I want to have an emotional affair but I don't want my spouse to find out because I don't want to hurt them or I don't want to deal with them.

He obviously when into it believing a lie, that he could have his cake and eat it too, in some ways. That fallout is something that I think obviously you underestimate if you are betraying someone. I think the enemy highlights obviously the cake and not...The fruit. He highlights the fruit like in Genesis 3.

Ryan: Well, this is Matthew 27:3. He does speak a little bit to Judas' perspective of Christ, right?

Selena: Mm hmm.

Ryan: Because if he knew Jesus, he would have known that he would go back.

Selena: Yeah. That's what I was saying. Yeah.

Ryan: He said he felt bad basically because he had betrayed innocent blood. "I've sinned by betraying innocent blood." Really? Is that all?

Selena: Did he not know that before?

Ryan: You've sinned by betraying the Son of God. So by making that whatever...

Selena: They fixed him.

Ryan: ...so they looked at him, and they said...This is what you were talking about how the enemy kind of once you buy the lie, there's the bait and switch on that. "What is that to us? See to it yourself. And throwing down the pieces of silver into the temple, he departed." And instead of going and repenting of his sin, and seeking solace in Christ, visiting him wherever he was being held if he could, I don't know, instead of that he goes and hanged himself. So there's this larger, I don't know...we can't really go down that rabbit hole, but I'm just interested in that person of Judas. So betrayal.

Selena: Because that's the most, I think, outright betrayal that we see with Jesus as when He walked the earth.

Ryan: Yeah.

Selena: I wanted you to talk about...let me rephrase this, if that's okay. I would like you to talk about before we talk about David in Psalm 55, because that really lays out the next section that we're going to talk about. Lots of talking. Talking about how God is the betrayed. Because this is where I think it can elicit empathy. Empathy can be elicited in our hearts if we're the one that is suffering from the betrayal. You might feel like you need to avenge this, you need to make this right, or you need to get yours because they got theirs or something. So can you talk about how God is the betrayed throughout Scripture?

Ryan: Yeah, yeah. So I mean...

Selena: And maybe this is talking with David in Psalm 55. This is where we kind of talked about that, right?

Ryan: Yeah. So we like to talk about when it comes to forgiveness. We talked through Matthew 18, the parable of the unforgiving servant. And the power in that parable for me anyway, and I think it's what for all of us to be had in Scripture, is that the identification that we are in debt, and that we need forgiveness. The bigness of the gospel is directly proportionate to the sense that we have that we are in need of it. So the more holy we see God, it's a high unreachable bar. His perfection is unreachable by us. The more clearly we see our own sin, meaning that we have fallen short, not just by a little bit, but by a lot, we've fallen short of...

Selena: In ways that we can never attain.

Ryan: Both in attitude, nature, and act we have sinned against the God of creation. So if we see God for who He is, we see ourselves for who we are, this creates this massive disparity, this massive gap that is insurmountable. People always say like, "If you tried to jump across the Grand Canyon, the best world-class Olympic gold medalist long jumper could get, you know, I don't know what the long jump record is these days. But we'll say 20 feet. And get 20 feet across the Grand Canyon, like you're the best in the world. The Grand Canyon is miles and miles across. So no matter how good you are, you're going to fall away.

Now, the reason I say that is because if we look back into the garden, we see, okay, again, God has created this perfect place. This creation is complete holiness, complete perfection. He looks at its order and He says it is good on multiple occasions. And then He looks at man and says, "It's not good you're alone, so then He creates a female to accompany the man. And it's this beautiful picture. It's not good. So that's the only imperfect part so far, so He fixes it.

He says, "Now it's perfect. Now it's good in that you have husband and wife and you're together and you'll become one flesh." That beautiful union that happens in the first marriage in the garden. And then Genesis 3, the fall happens. So they betrayed Him. He says, "Do everything you want, do anything you want. I love you. You are my creation, you are good, you reflect my own image and that is good. Now do anything but don't eat from this tree of the knowledge of good and evil." And they go and they eat.

So the betrayal there, we tend to go into the garden and say, "What's the dynamic happening between husband and wife? What's the dynamic happening between the man and the woman and the serpent?" But really in the garden, we can't really call God...I don't think God's a victim in a sense, but He was betrayed. So when we have that...

Selena: We betrayed Him.

Ryan: We betray God. So when we have this view that God is the betrayed and that when I receive forgiveness from Him and His forgiveness for my sin, and His forgiveness from my active, complicit betrayal and complete refusal and rejection of His Holiness, when I accept that big hard pill to swallow, then I can receive grace. And I realized that I have grace in Christ. That God has paid the price for my sin. That is the foundation of the gospel. So when we see God as the betrayed and we are the betrayers, then this kind of puts everything on a moral, even ground.

So now, once we see ourselves rightly before God, again, this is Matthew 18, the parable of the unforgiving servant, that we are the servant who has been

forgiven our debt, how can we hold each other's debt against them? It doesn't mean we don't feel pain. It doesn't mean we don't want reconciliation of that wrong that has happened. The debt still needs to be paid in a sense, but in a moral sense, I can't look at you with disgust, with disdain, with unforgiveness as the unforgiving servant did. I can't go to you and hold it over your head. Again, it doesn't mean that I just gloss over it.

Selena: Forgiveness is not forgetting. I mean, people write books on that. *[chuckles]*

Ryan: Yeah.

Selena: There's a whole part of it that understands the beautiful gifts that forgiveness is, in that sense.

Ryan: I want to look at Psalm 55. Let's read that together. This will give us a roadmap. I love this. This comes from an amazing resource. It's called compellingtruth.org. Actually we didn't realize they are in the ministry of got questions which we love. Those guys do are doing really good work over there. Definitely check them out. If you want to donate, I think it's well worth whatever God leads you to donate. I think we're going to donate. We need to.

There's an article there called *How can I heal from the pain of betrayal?* And of course, it walks through Judas and Peter a little bit, mention of the garden there. Psalm 55 to me was the most compelling. Let's start in verse 12. Psalms 55:12. Do you have that up, or do you want me to read it?

Selena: I can read it.

Ryan: Okay.

Selena: "For it is not an enemy who taunts me—then I could bear it; it is not an adversary who deals insolently with me—then I could hide from him. But it is you, a man, my equal, my companion, my familiar friend. We used to take sweet counsel together; within God's house we walked in the throng. Let death steal over them; let them go down to Sheol alive; for evil is in their dwelling place and in their heart.

Ryan: Let's pause there for a minute. The first thing we see is clearly David is feeling betrayed. Not just by a friend. A brother, a close brother. We have talked and we have walked in the throng...*[chuckles]*

Selena: Within God's house.

Ryan: Yes, we've walked...

Selena: We've taken sweet counsel together, my companion, my familiar friend.

Ryan: He even makes that distinction. It's not an enemy who taunts me. It's one thing to look out and be like, "I've been lied to," or "someone's been violent toward me." Well, of course, they're my enemy.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: Of course, we don't share the same conviction about God's Word or what's right and wrong. Of course, society, in a sense, rejects this truth. So that will cause damage in other ways. But instead to look inside my inner circle. And that's what happens in marriage. You have somebody who has completely damaged that trust. That chair, they pulled it out from underneath you, and now you're injured and you've fallen. So David is feeling that.

He's feeling the pain. He's feeling the sting of it. He's not trying to gloss over it. But instead, he is acknowledging it. But then he's at a decision point. What does he do at that point is I think what we want to focus on? Again, I'm going to read the first verse before this verse 15. "Let death steal over them; let them go down to Sheol alive; for evil is in their dwelling place and in their heart. So again, he's feeling it and in a sense lashing out because he feels betrayed.

Now the next verse. The pivot. "But I call to God, and the LORD will save me. Evening and morning and at noon I utter my complaint and moan, and he hears my voice. He redeems my soul in safety from the battle that I wage, for many are arrayed against me. God will give ear and humble them, he who is enthroned from of old, Selah because they do not change and do not fear God."

Just to go on even further, verse 20, "My companion stretched out his hand against his friends; he violated his covenant." That's particularly relevant to talking about marriage. "He violated his covenant or his promise or their agreement. "His speech was smooth as butter, yet war was in his heart;" That's Judas. "His words were softer than oil, yet they were drawn swords." And then he says it again, "Cast your burden on the LORD, and he will sustain you; he will never permit the righteous to be moved.

Selena: It's interesting that that passage is within the context of betrayal. Casting your cares upon the Lord, knowing He cares for you. I mean, that wasn't the only place that Scripture is used. But right there, the intentionality of that is very powerful.

- Ryan:** Again, he's not minimizing his pain. He's not overlooking it.
- Selena:** Not overlooking and glossing over it.
- Ryan:** But then he moves on to the next stage which is, but looked to God, but God will redeem the situation. God is still good. God is still sovereign. God is still loving in this. And I can cast my cares on him. That's throwing. It's almost like a reckless throwing of your cares. Now when you're in the middle of pain, you want justice so bad, you want it to be made right. You feel, "if I can somehow just reverse this, I can be done with it, I could be out of it and I can be finished with it and not feel this pain any longer...". And David's saying that's why we cast our cares upon the Lord. Just cast your burden on the Lord and He will sustain you.
- I think of - is it John Bunyan who wrote The Pilgrim's Progress? I can't remember.
- Selena:** It is John.
- Ryan:** But the main character is Christian, right?
- Selena:** Right. *[chuckles]*
- Ryan:** And he has this burden that he carries. He's like, "I can't go because of this heavy burden. Just help me." He says, "Cast your burden on the Lord and He will sustain you." He doesn't say he will fix it.
- Selena:** Hmm No, boy. *[Ryan chuckles]*
- Ryan:** It doesn't say He will take away your pain even.
- Selena:** Right. Because that's our call. When you were talking about the car wreck analogy, and you're saying you're looking at it and all these things, what are the first things? Anytime I remember some sort of painful trauma, my immediate response is I want it gone. I want it ending. I want it done. God, please take it away. Take it away. Take it away. And God in His loving kindness and His mercy and trusted sovereignty and goodness says, "We're going to walk through this together because I want to sanctify you, because I want you to be made holy, because there's reconciliation on the other side of this. There is a knowing of me that I want you to experience.
- Ryan:** So I want to read this passage from this article. It's putting the concepts together. It says, "He created us that we might glorify Him and enjoy Him. Instead of fellowshiping with Him, we sinned against Him (that's the fall), and

He had to redeem us (that's the entirety of scripture). Because God so easily relates with our pain, we can pour out our hurt to Him in prayer. When the betrayal is deep, it can be helpful to talk with a trusted friend or counselor as well." That's the going to the hospital triage we are getting to. "Be wise to refrain from gossip in doing this."

Again the article from compellingtruth.org. Sorry. Then it goes on and says, "The final step in overcoming the pain of betrayal is that of forgiveness." So, again, there's recognizing pain, going to God, and then walking through that pain again seeking to find healing in that. But then eventually we get around to forgiveness.

Selena: Because there's a long distance, a long journey between the car wreck, the bloody, just everything happening, to getting to recovery and learning how to forgive and how to move on. Just a quick recap here. We're talking here about betrayal. We can't underestimate it. We have to understand what it is and define it, what the causes are, that it's wrong. As believers, we're not called to betray others, especially our spouse. We have walked through a few examples, Christ being the primary one, and how and also how God was betrayed.

Now we're going to kind of get into, how do we call for help? How do we respond in that moment, whether we are the ones sitting there bleeding or we are running to the one that is sitting there bleeding, and we're coming around and saying, "I'm going to pick you up"? So whether you're on the outside looking in with somebody...a brother, sister in Christ is going through this and you're on the outside of it. You and I have played that role because we have not experienced infidelity by God's grace in our marriage, or betrayal of large scale.

This next section, we entitled it "A Call for Help." Bringing people in. It's not good for us to be alone. Bringing people in. So if you're imagining the metaphor of the car wreck, the first thing that you think about aside from you wanting it to stop is what happened, what just happened. You're recognizing the reality. There's this shockwave, you're sitting there and you're like, "Did they just say the words that I think they said of "I've cheated on you" or "I've betrayed you in this way?"

Ryan: Or I'm leaving you for with this other person. Or I've been watching this every day for the last five years online. Or I've been wasting our savings by gambling. Whatever that bomb is that's been dropped, you're at the scene of this accident.

Selena: Right. And you need to recognize the reality that is that now—what happened or what is happening? Call for help. The first step is calling for help.

Ryan: What does that look like for a married person? You said earlier, as you reaching out to brothers and sisters in Christ, so if you're in the middle of it, get on the phone and call someone. Don't go through it. If you're in an accident, again, to use this analogy, if you're on an accident, the first thing you're doing is either using your phone or finding someone who has a phone, trying to get help. Because you realize immediately that you need help. But so often we don't see the severity of it. Especially based on your personality, you might completely internalize it and that sort of thing. "Well, it's my fault."

Selena: "How did I cause this?"

Ryan: "How did I cause this? Certainly, I can just kind of pick up the pieces myself." And we're saying no. See it for what it is.

Selena: Don't gloss over, minimize.

Ryan: And that's the whole shock piece that you talked about. Now get on the phone, call someone.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: Who do we call?

Selena: Well, this is getting to a safe place, which would be the next point of getting out of harm's way. So getting with trusted people: pastors, counselors, Christian mentors, people that you know, and trust wholeheartedly, 1,000% with every hurt pain, any part of you that you are ashamed of or whatever. You run to them. Find just a safe place for a moment. Maybe it's a physical place there, a house, or somewhere safe if it's an emotional place with others. Again, counselors, a mental or emotional safe place.

If there's physical abuse involved, taking legal action for protection out of a deep love for your spouse, knowing that legal action is pretty much the only likely way forward. Don't put yourself in harm's way by not doing so as well.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: I do want to make a quick distinction. So again, the analogy. We're in an accident. Somebody is driving the car. In other words, somebody is responsible for this accident. Both of you are going to be injured in the accident, even the one responsible for it. So as you're seeking help, I think, in

that terrible scenario, and many couples have been through this you guys. I think that's the one helpful thing is to realize that there are lots of people who have been through this and have found reconciliation on the other side of it. So many have been through this.

What I'm trying to say is that, by God's grace, you would be seeking help together, and that both of you will realize this is catastrophic. We're bleeding right now, even the one who's responsible and there would be a sense of sorrow and repentance, and a sense of "I have wronged you, I've sinned against you. I know it's going to take time to rebuild this. Please, let's get help together. Let's make those calls together. Let's go to the hospital, so to speak, together, so that we can both be healed." It's not just a unilateral thing.

Selena: Right. I think in our own experience with other couples, we had two sets of friends that we knew that there had been an affair between them. And we knew both parties, and we didn't know who to help first. Everybody is bleeding, and we're all trying to love them and take care of them. We had a pastoral friend that was like, "You need to deal with the wounded first. The wounded sheep." I'm not trying to undermine what you're saying. Any doctor will tell you the injury that needs the most attention is the one you go to first.

So going to them without abandoning. You can go to them without abandoning or condemning the other party. But you can go to them out of love and helpfulness. And helping them get out of harm's way.

Ryan: So triage piece.

Selena: And not suffering alone. This is this call for help. We're not called to suffer or hide in isolation. We need others to know what we're going through, where we're at. So calling for help, getting out of harm's way, and then getting into triage. Stopping the bleeding.

If you've ever experienced shock and some sort of traumatic physical experience, you know it's difficult to think clearly and respond in a situation. I think that, I don't know, I've fallen off horses and all these things and you think that you're aware of yourself and aware of what's happening around you, but people later tell you that you were acting really weird or eerie and you weren't yourself. And no matter how much you think that, "Oh, you know what, it's okay. I got this. My arms falling off I'm bleeding from the head, but you know what, I got this." [chuckles] People around you're like, "No, you don't. Let me help you. Let me love you. Let me help you stop this bleeding or take you to somebody who can help you stop the bleeding that is happening because of this betrayal in your marriage."

Again, bringing people in, church community that will cry with you, that will sit with you, that will bring you meals or take care of your kids, pastors, counselors. Again, that emotional and mental, spiritual health aspect of this.

Ryan: Want to pause on the triage piece just a little bit longer. So often this step is the difference between life and death. So if you're not able to stop the bleeding, if you're not able to bring attention to the wound itself and to apply the bandage, so what does that look like? It's different for every scenario. I'm using another analogy. I think we were in middle school. So I would have been 13, 14 years old, or something like that. We were behind my buddy's house. He lived on kind of this gulch. Someone had put up a rope swing.

Selena: Oh, no. Over a big...Okay.

Ryan: Well, it was not safe, but it wasn't like you're going to fall into a ravine. So you would probably fall. In fact, my buddy did fall. He was swinging and he got a little loosey-goosey with swinging and then fell off. And he had had surgery on one of his knees.

Selena: Oh, no.

Ryan: This was before swinging. He fell off and actually he had torn a hole in his knee where the surgery where the sutures hadn't completely healed. The skin had somehow wrapped inside of the wound. So he's got an exposed bone. And he's there screaming his head off, just going nuts, panicked. And we're running as hard as we can and try to find someone, screaming, Help, help, help."

It took probably 15 minutes for the medics to get there. They came down, put them on a gurney, got him out of there. Well, before they even put them on the thing, the first thing they did is they put a tourniquet above the knee. Because they needed to stop the bleeding. If they don't stop the bleeding and then get a bandage on there. What's going to happen you're going to either bleed out and die if the wound is severe enough. You'll bleed out and you will die. Or if you don't treat the infection or treat the wound well enough, you will get infection and you will lose the limb. Because it'll just get too infected and it'll end up poisoning the rest of your body.

Selena: I have an example. Remember when you had heart surgery when you were 20 years old?

Ryan: Triage a little. That's not quite triage though. *[both chuckles]*

- Selena:** No, I know. But I'm saying if you don't get what...our whole spiel is if you feel if you don't deal with the brokenness within the heart, the sin, the underlying issues, if you're trying to put Band-Aids on heart disease...
- Ryan:** It's going to kill you.
- Selena:** It's going to kill you. *[chuckles]*
- Ryan:** So the point is that that triage saved my friend's leg. It potentially saved his life. If they thought, "You know what, we'll bandage it later," or "we're good. It'll take care of itself. We're going to leave this gaping wound, and we're not going to actually deal with it," that's going to create issues down the line. So triage is so important.
- Selena:** Which is why you need that first step of recognizing the reality of situation. Because you won't get support, you won't run to triage, you won't go to a safe place if you don't recognize the severity of the situation. Which I think the world would have us. Not the world. I'll just say the enemy. The enemy would play down everything. The enemy would say, "You know what, this really isn't a big deal. Lots of marriages go through it. Just read a couple of books. Maybe talk to a counselor for a month. You'll be good.
- Ryan:** Or hey, they said they were sorry and they said they're going to work on it, which you want to hear that. But that's not enough. You need to get triage. You need outside help. If you don't...
- Selena:** Betrayal is a huge thing in marriage.
- Ryan:** It's a big thing. Yeah, it's a big thing and it will continue to...you'll see the shock wave of it for many months and years. And hopefully, you want to minimize the shock wave. But you can't do that if you're not addressing it for what it is, I should say.
- Selena:** Absolutely
- Ryan:** Okay. After the triage?
- Selena:** After the triage, we're looking at recovery and support. We're looking at how do we begin those steps forward of healing? So typically, there's probably some discussed amount of time spent in the safe place or a quote-unquote, "hospital." I'm not just leaving my marriage because of this betrayal. But there's a lot of time that there's "we can't be together for this moment because there's just too much pain." There's too much blood metaphorically

speaking. We both need to be in safe places with people that are encouraging us towards each other and towards the things of God ultimately.

Hospitals are not homes. They serve a purpose for a specific amount of time. Recovery is going to take time. Caveat: don't rush it. Also learn how to trust recovery as well, which is a whole nother topic of getting into your recovery. But I think the first sort of subcategory, or what we would say in terms of recovery is again, get counsel around forgiving specifically. Because forgiveness is not forgetting. We hear the word forgiveness. And if you've been betrayed, that just grates on you. It's like, "How dare you say those things?" But why does God call us to forgive? Because there's a whole journey of sanctification and holiness that He wants to lovingly walk us through.

Ryan: Again, we're not forgiving in a vacuum either.

Selena: No.

Ryan: We are the ones who are complicit in your betrayal of Christ and the betrayal of God Himself. I mean, all of the Old Testament and the New is basically, God continually reaffirming His commitment despite the unfaithfulness of His people. Despite it. Again, not to gloss over it. There's a little bit of blur here, smear I will say, across the different analogy points.

So triage for someone who maybe has been sexually addicted or has had an adulterous affair, that triage in getting out the gunk, getting out the bacteria could mean going through years-long recovery course that talks about sexual addiction, and get some through those steps. So that's cleaning out the cause of this damage that's happened. So there is some blur there.

So we're talking about recovering support. Counseling. Biblical counseling specifically. Not just somebody who majors in Sigmund Freud, but somebody who looks at the Bible and looks at the mind and says, "Here's how they connect."

Selena: Recovery and support, it requires consistency. I just want to say that upfront. Because we are adopting new habits and rhythms because of the trauma that has happened, because of the betrayal. There's going to be some therapy. I mean, you break a leg, you're going to have to go through physical therapy to regain the use and regain strength. So these are new rhythms, new things that we are going to adopt and we are going to implement with discipline and vigilance by God's grace.

So counseling around forgiveness, counseling around reconciliation, counseling around understanding the motivation. Just Christian counseling,

biblical counseling in general. The body of Christ engaging again in the body of Christ pastors, community church members, people that we trust within the body of Christ.

Ryan: And your close brothers and sisters.

Selena: Yes. That's under community.

Ryan: Ideally your best friends, your best Christian friends. And hopefully, you have those. A lot of couples write and say, "We just can't find good friends who share our worldview." Then start with the organization that is the church. Hopefully, you would have a way to meet some people or just to get help, and then begin building friendships maybe on that basis. But the point is that you need someone who holds the same affection for Christ, the same sovereignty, they see God at the same level of authority, God's Word at the same level of authority to actually come alongside you. And not just fix it but just to sit with you and just be with you in the pain and to help you see the light even when you're in complete darkness.

Selena: These are not in any particular order. The third one would be consistent and daily time with the Lord. I think as a believer that goes without saying but I still want to say it. Being in the Word daily, praying and communion with God like David did in Psalm 55. I go to God. Bring your hurts to God, bring your "I don't understand this" to God. Bring your "I'm mad and angry with these things, help my heart, Lord. It is hardening. I feel it." All of the darkness and the sin and the brokenness that you're the one...again, the betrayer or the betrayed, bring it to God. Did you want anything else on that one? Because I was going to go into the supplemental resources.

Ryan: Yeah, go ahead.

Selena: To move on?

Ryan: Yeah.

Selena: Yeah, real quick. Again, key word "supplemental." Things that will bring encouragement in the middle of the struggle, books, podcasts, sermons, etc. The key here is they aren't encouraging you to do it on your own, but they're pointing you back to God, back to Scripture, giving you that bigger picture of holiness, reconciliation, healing forgiving within the framework, within the gospel lens, the biblical understanding of what God purposed our marriage for. Because it's so easy to get lost, I think in the journey and forget the destination. Right?

Ryan: That's really good.

Selena: That's what I do. It comes with a lot of things. But anyways.

Ryan: And there are times in the journey when you can't see it. We always use the analogy of you're in a valley. You have no perspective when you're in a valley. You're completely surrounded by massive, insurmountable hills. There are times during a plateau when that you can kind of see the mountain in the distance, you can see the valley kind of behind you, but it's kind of mundane.

Then there's the mountain top, where you can see all the beauty and you can totally have a great perspective. The problem is you can't survive up there. You can't live up there. So if you're in a valley, then knowing that you're in the valley and that there's a pathway out but it's going to take some work, it's going to take some time to get out of there.

Selena: One last one. If you're in the support role of someone, remember that things are going to take time. Healing will take time. For the person that you are walking alongside, that they are just broken right now and believing, remember that it's going to take more time than you think. Ask lots of questions, pray with them, pray for that couple, that friend, that family member. Be patient. And speaking from my own mistakes, don't be prescriptive. Don't give them, "Oh you know what, hey, you're going to get...is going to..."

Ryan: "Have you tried having this conversation? or have you tried saying this thing," or "have you tried...?"

Selena: In those instances, I have just found that asking questions, even possibly sending encouraging Scripture that can be hard to do as well. But just being sensitive to the Holy Spirit. Praying and...

Ryan: It's kind of the slow to speak thing as friend.

Selena: Yes, slow to speak. Don't think you know all the things.

Ryan: Oftentimes they know the right answer, but they're just hurting. Someone who's had their leg broken, knows the leg shouldn't be broken, but it hurts. And it just has to heal. So you can be there.

Selena: My go to: if in doubt, ask if you can bring a meal. If in doubt, take the tangible route. Can I bring you a meal? Can I give you some of my books to read while you're healing? Or I'm just thinking of people who are...that may not apply.

But can I bring you any sort of resource? Can I take your kids? Can I get some of these tangible burdens off of you right now so that you can heal?

Ryan: That's good.

Selena: So we have other resources and podcasts as well. Like Out of the Dust. If you look up on our podcast, they have a whole...

Ryan: Go to fiercemarriage.com/podcast, search for "out of the dust." They have an incredible story of repairing their marriage after infidelity. Tina Konkin that we'll post this week. There's another one, their names are Stephen and Brooke Elliot. There's not infidelity, but they had a different type of broken trust. It was the whole bait and switch thing. Basically that Stephen had been depressed, and anxiety, and all this. And these basically caused Brooke to realize she was married to a different man. So there was a time of separation and then reconciliation, which is as a beautiful, beautiful story.

Then go to this website. If you are in the thick of it, or you're just looking for a support network, go to reengaged.org or marriagehelp.org. I think they both go to reengage.org. Go there, because they do have some resources that you will find helpful in how to kind of repair broken trust.

Selena: So kind of our encouragement is we have a savior who is more than able to bring healing, wholeness, and redemption to any marriage. He's also able to work, again, all things for the good of those who love Him. In Romans 8:28, all things even broken trust, infidelity, betrayal, all things He can work for the good of those who love Him. So trusting Him through recovery, trusting Him in the triage, in the bloodiness and the mess, trusting Him, leaning on others. Those are the few steps that you can begin to maybe see and take with hope.

Ryan: Okay. Lord, I thank you for this time. I thank you for your redemptive work in Christ. Thank you. But also thank you that you are not just leaving us to our own, to fend for ourselves, but you have given us a body of believers to lean into. You've given us your word, Holy Spirit, you've indwelt us, you've given us grace to understand to read and understand your very words. So I thank you, God for that.

I pray for the couples that are dealing with some sort of betrayal, whether it be infidelity or addiction, or, or otherwise, I pray that you would help them navigate through it in a way that is not just fast but is healing, in a way that will bring full health and reconciliation to their marriage. And I pray that on the other side of this, that they would have a stronger, more vibrant marriage, by your grace. Because it's only by your grace that anything like that is possible. So God I pray for those couples.

I pray for the couples who are helping other couples, that you would give them wisdom and discernment in how to help them navigate this wreckage and this problem or this time that they're going through. In Jesus' name, amen.

Selena: Amen.

Ryan: All right. This has been a longer episode. So thank you for hanging in there with us. But we do appreciate you, listeners. Anyway, we're praying for you. We love you guys. This is a common topic among many couples. So our prayer is that it would be less common and less and less common in the church. That people would understand and uphold the covenant, that is marriage as the way God designed it.

If you're passionate about that cause, you can join arms with us through patreon.com/fiercemarriage. There's benefits. But more than anything, we would love to lock arms with like-minded people around the country, around the world. And I think that's it.

Thanks so much for joining us for this episode of the Fierce Marriage podcast. This episode is—

Selena: In the can!

Ryan: As always. we'll see you again in about seven days for regular episode. Make sure to join us on Thursday for the interview with Tina Konkin. We'll see you then. Until next time—

Selena: Stay fierce!

[01:00:10] <outro>

Ryan: Thank you for listening to the Fierce Marriage podcast. For more resources for your marriage, please visit fiercemarriage.com, or you can find us with our handle @FierceMarriage on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Thank you so much for listening.

[01:00:35] <Podcast ends>

PODCAST NOTES

- **[00:14:40]**
 - Scripture references:
 - Hebrews 13:4, ESV

- **[00:17:56]**
 - Scripture references:
 - Psalm 50

- **[00:19:23]**
 - Scripture references:
 - Matthew 26

- **[00:25:14]**
 - Scripture references:
 - Matthew 27:3, ESV

- **[00:31:21]**
 - Scripture references:
 - Psalm 55, ESV

- **[00:37:22]**
 - Article Recommendation:
 - [Compellingtruth.org: How can I Heal from the Pain of Betrayal?](https://compellingtruth.org/)

- **[00:56:29]**
 - Podcast Recommendation:
 - [Out of the Dust](#)
 - [Tina Konkin](#)

- **[00:41:36]**
 - Website Recommendation:
 - [Reengaged.org](https://reengaged.org/)
 - marriagehelp.org

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