

DECISION DRIVERS IN MARRIAGE

<https://fiercemarriage.com/decision-drivers-in-marriage>

[00:00:00]

Selena: So why do we make certain decisions as a couple? Are we spinning our wheels or are we learning how to actually live intentionally in the values of God? I ask these questions because I feel like this is the water that I swim in in my own head, is just I need to make all these decisions. Why am I making these decisions? Oh, now they're being called can not know into question, do I remember why we made...? What were the big reasons and the drivers, the values that are driving these decisions on a day to day basis?

Ryan: That's true. We make far more decisions than we realize on a daily basis. Some are very mundane. Even the decision to open a door, to grab a doorknob and a twist it...

Selena: Can't even think about it.

Ryan: Well, we would be paralyzed if we were cognizant of all those decisions. But yeah, you're absolutely right in that our values are always going to be the behaviors that fuel the decisions we make. So we're going to talk about some of the values of a Christian marriage just to put a name to them. So often we can think in general terms or more theoretical kind of values.

Selena: We gloss over stuff too.

Ryan: Now we're going to put some names to them, and contrast them with some of maybe the mistaken values that we act as if those are our values.

Selena: We slip into acting I think, sometimes.

Ryan: Yes.

Selena: God is so good to bring us back, and then we slip away just like the Israelites. And then we come back and we're good, and then we slip away. So repent and believe, people. Here it is. We'll see you on the other side.

[00:01:28] <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:** Repent and believe bomb there, right?
- Selena:** I'm just trying to come in hot. Just started off. Don't want to bury the lead like we do, I feel like all the time. But...
- Ryan:** It was Calvin who said that the whole of the Christian life is one of repentance and belief. That's what Jesus called us to do is repent and believe. And why is that a cycle? Because we are saved, but we are still being sanctified. So an attitude and a heart orientation of repentance is so important.
- What does repentance? Just quickly. It's just recognizing and acknowledging and asking God's forgiveness for diverging from His way, and diverging from faith, diverging from what I mean leaving that understanding of faith. So it does keep our hearts in kind of a humble orientation to be in the attitude of repentance, which is huge in these times when we question our assumptions, we question our values. That's what we're hoping to do today is to really look at, what are we operating out of?
- Selena:** Right. And these decisions that we're making, are we taking them too lightly, and we're not putting enough weight in some of the things that we think are fine and we can get through? And we know the truth, so it's okay like to wait in this water. But really, should we even be in that water? Right?
- Ryan:** Yeah.
- Selena:** So, here we go. But you go ahead and do your...
- Ryan:** Yeah, yeah. Man, we've had an influx of patrons. Holy smokes. It's been so great.

Selena: Faithful Lord.

Ryan: Thank you.

Selena: Thank you. Thank you.

Ryan: I think there's 25 or 27 or so new patrons this month.

Selena: Wow.

Ryan: Which is a huge increase. About 10% increase. So thank you for doing that. That means a ton. If you've been on the fence, we would just love for you to pray more about becoming a Patreon. What that is, is somebody who partners with us monthly, financially. Starts \$2 a month on up. There are benefits like exclusive content, there's free eBooks. I think we just released a free family vision eBook, which actually is right in line with this discussion today.

Selena: But don't do that for the perks, people. That's what they're called. Perks.

Ryan: Do it for the purpose.

Selena: Purpose, yeah. *[both chuckles]*

Ryan: Go to patreon.com/fiercemarriage. If you haven't left a comment and a review, we would appreciate if you do that for the Fierce Marriage podcast on iTunes. Go there and just hit a star rating and leave a review if you feel so compelled.

On this whole family values conversation, one of the illustrations that came to mind is the difference between wisdom and foolishness. I love how in Proverbs it talks about "look at the ant." Look at the wisdom of the ant and how they are storing up in season for those times out of season, how, by daily diligence, they are choosing wisdom. They're doing what God designed ants to do, and they're doing what their instincts would dictate they do.

And we are different in that we have this thing called consciousness. This self-awareness. We have a sin nature, so our instincts are oftentimes in contrast to God's plan. So living foolishly is to kind of follow our base instinct, where we do the easy, simple thing, we do the easy, fast thing and the thing in terms of diet.

Selena: Or things that gives us more pleasure or we enjoy more.

- Ryan:** Right now in the short term.
- Selena:** Our default is to indulge, yes.
- Ryan:** We indulge. Versus having the wisdom to say, hey, if I do this better, harder thing, it'll take longer, but the net outcome will be a better outcome either for me, for our family, for our kids, for society, for our church, for business, for my body in terms of diet. *[both chuckles]* I can't just go and eat junk food all day, every day. It tastes good, and it's cheap, but I will probably die early.
- Selena:** It not going to nourish your body.
- Ryan:** Yeah. Anyway, all of the decisions we make are a function of our values and are functions of our wisdom, and foolishness. And our wisdom and foolishness is a function of how highly we regard the authority of Scripture and what the scripture says itself. So it really does come down to God's authority. It comes down to how well we know it, how well we believe it. And that's what we're going to talk about today. That was an intro you weren't prepared for. *[both laughs]*
- Selena:** I write the rundowns, buddy. Just piped down over here, okay?
- Ryan:** She does all the hard work, and I just come in and do whatever I want. *[both laughs]* Story of your life now.
- Selena:** No, no, I was going to...Yeah, that's funny. You're fine.
- Ryan:** So I'm fine?
- Selena:** You're fine.
- Ryan:** Okay. Read your Bible, people. *[Selena laughs]* There it is. This episode is—
[both laughs]
- Selena:** The shortest episode in Fierce Marriage podcast history. But just a little recap. Last week we did talk about rebuilding trust after betrayal, specifically after a bomb has been dropped. I think that was a pretty good episode. We talked about if you are the person dealing with that or if you are an outsider or co-traveler looking in, how you can be a support to the couple that might be walking through that storm right now.
- We also released...I don't know if you saw it, but we released an interview with Tina Konkin that I think you should share just a little smidge bit about *[both laughs]*... A little smidge and a bit about...we just got a little pushback

online and we wanted to just bring some clarity to the situation in 30 seconds or less.

Ryan: All right. Well, challenge accepted. There was...we'll call it pushback. I do think it was more of just a misunderstanding. So if you didn't listen to the episode, what happened is Tina Konkin, her whole story is...just go back and listen to it. But it's essentially her husband had an affair with her best friend. And her whole ministry—and she wrote a book about—it's called *How God Used the Other Woman*. What an inflammatory title.

Selena: I know. *[chuckles]*

Ryan: She's got a lot of pushback for that. So we wanted to interview her because she's a Bible-believing, God-fearing woman. Her husband passed away. They actually spent years after the affair ministering to other marriages as a couple. So God reconciled them. Well, the pushback came when people started saying, "You should never excuse an affair, never take responsibility as the wife or as the person who was hurt, who's betrayed." I just want to say unequivocally that she was not excusing the behavior of her husband.

Selena: She says that I think multiple times in the interview.

Ryan: There's kind of two levels of what needs to be discussed in terms of that interview. The first level is you were betrayed. That's a terrible thing, a hurtful thing, a damaging thing, and oftentimes, a marriage ending thing. We even see in Scripture a provision for a divorce in light of an adulterous affair. Granted, that's not the ideal, but there is a provision there that Jesus talks about.

One of the things that Tina was talking about is, please, don't just go right to that. Know that there is this beautiful reconciliation that can happen if the adulterous person has a repentant heart and you are willing to both stay at the table and work through it. There is possibility for healing and reconciliation that will strengthen you. That was the second piece of what she was talking about how God had used this horrible circumstance that there's no excuse for. And she's not saying, "My husband cheated because I did X, Y, and Z."

Selena: Or because "I didn't do X, Y, and Z."

Ryan: Right. But she said God graciously used that moment to give her an introspective perspective on her own heart, and she realized that she had been withholding affection not just from her husband, but from her own kids. And she was missing out on large swaths of life because of that. So there's two different conversations happening there.

- Selena:** Definitely go back and listen to it. I think it's very helpful. Again, if you know someone who's walking through this and you're wondering how can I be supportive, how can I understand more deeply and be more empathetic, or if you are walking through reconciliation or if you've just had a bomb drops, it definitely brings some perspective from someone who's walked through that.
- Ryan:** But the last thing we want to do is excuse sinful behavior, or excuse any level of betrayal on adultery. Those are not excusable offenses.
- Selena:** Fierce marriage, people. Stand for marriage.
- Ryan:** So we don't want to shame victims in that sense...
- Selena:** Right.
- Ryan:** ...where you enabled it somehow. That's not the case.
- Selena:** Not at all.
- Ryan:** Okay. I just want to make that really clear. Anyway. Listen to the episode if you want that.
- Selena:** Yes. This week, we are going to talk about values. What do they reflect? Or who do they reflect? Do our values reflect our Savior? Do they reflect ourselves our own selfish desires? And how do we know? Because Sometimes we might be thinking we're doing the right thing, we're living the right way, but then our motivation somehow gets skewed. We start living a little bit more selfishly and indulgently like it's okay, like it's really a good thing.
- I mean, a lot of times we see this probably happening in like church ministry and volunteering, and leadership. We can easily just kind of slip into becoming the governments of our family time, of our marriage. Everything just kind of bows down to this value of church involvement, right?
- Ryan:** Sure.
- Selena:** Because of whatever reason, which we'll get into. Anything you want to say?
- Ryan:** Well, I'm thinking of examples of how our beliefs and our values evolve unwittingly. Just a quick tangible example. If I eat chocolate...Like I want chocolate... *[both laughs]*
- Selena:** Diet, chocolate. You can see where we're at, people.

- Ryan:** I want more of it. We're counting calories right now because of the COVID 15 [both chuckles] going on over here. [both laughs] I'm down a few pounds by the way. Hooray!
- Selena:** Good for you.
- Ryan:** They say you can't outrun a bad diet. And boy, can I attest to that! Anyway.
- Selena:** Not run in a bit. It's too hot. [laughs]
- Ryan:** So the point I'm trying to make is if you make a little exception, what happens you start to crave the same thing. Before you know it, you're eating that thing regularly. Chocolate is an extreme example, but you could [inaudible] your food.
- Selena:** Extreme example. [laughs]
- Ryan:** Well, it's not like someone's like, "I'm going to have chocolate breakfast, lunch, and dinner now."
- Selena:** But you start craving the sweetness of it.
- Ryan:** And the way that looks in your life is you maybe you have a certain lifestyle or you have a certain level of ease and comfort, or you have a certain level of coexisting with your spouse and you've somehow strayed into maybe an easier coexistence that you're not thriving, you're just kind of existing. And that becomes your value is more ease because you don't want to rock the boat by addressing maybe some behavior, something needs to change in your marriage for your health and for the glory of God.
- Selena:** It maybe one of these just kind of feeling a little bit lonely or you're feeling the disconnect. If you just start asking the questions, "Why am I feeling disconnected?" Maybe we don't spend a lot of time together. Why don't we spend a lot of time together? Well, because we're going from Lake to ocean to beach to whatever.
- Ryan:** We're just busy, busy all the time.
- Selena:** Busy, busy, busy. Well, why do we feel the need to be busy? We want our kids to have all these experiences, we want to do all these things. Well, why do we need all these things? Well, because it's summer This is what we do. And it's like, "Well, okay, why?"

- Ryan:** Just a real-time example.
- Selena:** Just keep digging into that why. *[chuckles]*
- Ryan:** Or we don't spend quality time together because my spouse is always at work. Why is he or she always at work? Well to provide for our standard of living? Well, what is our standard of living? And you realize that your standard of living is the thing that's determining...
- Selena:** The value.
- Ryan:** ...every other aspect of your life.
- Selena:** It's governing the value.
- Ryan:** How much time you spend at home, the career you pursue, the house you buy...
- Selena:** And I think this gets us into trouble.
- Ryan:** Sorry, I just want to nuance that. Not to say like...some people have to work to make ends meet. I get that. We're just saying that some of these things they happen they kind of encroach on our day to day existence. And it's healthy and right to look at them with a biblical lens to say, "Am I valuing what culture values? Or am I valuing what scripture values, what God values? So we're trying to do that to ourselves.
- Selena:** Or overstepping. Like, "Am I valuing these things in the order and at the level of what God would ask of me I guess, or what God has purposed these things? He is a God of order, and this is the order that I'm supposed to live in. And I've got to trust that when I don't feel it in those moments that God is right and I am wrong, and I'm going to live and walk in that discomfort until I learn and my will is bent and my desires are meant to Him and His purposes. And then my desires will be in matching that. The joy and the fulfillment will begin to happen and evolve and grow. But we can't do that unless...
- Ryan:** Unless you have an outside perspective and you...
- Selena:** ...you're asking those questions and digging into it.
- Ryan:** We had a really I think eye-opening conversation with a friend of ours yesterday, Jennifer Murphy. Her and her husband Justin do millennials for marriage. They do more statistical type research. She's a doctor of...I forget what her doctorates in. Brilliant. Brilliant people, both of them. Anyway, she

runs a nonprofit. Her and her husband both are running this nonprofit that basically fills in gaps in the church in the MENA region, which is Middle East and Northern Africa region.

And our perspectives are like, man, we are seeing things through such a Western American lens and asking questions that are completely often left field many times, when we could see what God is doing in the globe Church, how it gives us context. And our values tend to kind of like shift in those moments, right? We start to value more the global work of God and less the local comforts of our own lives and our existence. It's so challenging.

Selena: Let's define values quickly. I think we've said it a few times, but let's just be clear about what we're saying values are. Values are beliefs that drive the decisions we make. So what are those beliefs that we are holding on to? I'm not saying we question this every day, but I think there needs to be almost a monthly evaluation of the big decisions in our lives, the daily rhythms that we are submitting to, I guess, for lack of a better term. I think in our marriage we are very quick to say like A plus B equals C.

We don't get quality time like you said because I or my husband works because we have to provide for our life. But these are big assumptions on some levels, right? How does this always have to be the case? Are there other areas that we could pull back on in order to make create that margin? Because we value our marriage we value time together, so how do we get that margin? A plus B doesn't always equal C. It's not always that simple. Because if that's the case, then we're assuming too much.

We also might be assuming or overlooking the fact that what if our spouse is overworking and why are they doing that? Are they finding value in an identity in their career? Has that over...

Ryan: The key there is overworking.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: We are not saying working. You have to provide. But "overworking", that word implies that there is an imbalance there.

Selena: I guess I want to stress just how easily we can slip into that I think as Christians. At least I tend to take a good thing and sometimes can run it into the ground and then it's no longer a God thing, but it's a Selena thing. Right?

Ryan: Right. We take a biblical concept, we weaponize it. When we weaponize it, a lot of times it's unintentional.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: For example, hard work, diligence, wisdom, being - what is it? Prudent business owner or employee or whatever that role is and stewarding that to the glory of God, that's a biblical idea. Now how we weaponize it is when we say that and we say, "It's biblical. I'm a hard worker. I am doing this." This happens so often in the church, you mentioned earlier, with church involvement. Early on in our marriage, I was very involved in our church as a worship leader.

Selena: We both were, yeah.

Ryan: You were very involved as a youth leader.

Selena: On top of working 40-hour a week jobs, we had 20 hours at church easily between the two of us if not more.

Ryan: Easily. Easily. I was leading worship up to five or six services a week. It was a part-time job and with no pay, which I get that. That's fine.

Selena: It wasn't about the money. It was about time.

Ryan: It wasn't about the money. But at one point God was gracious. He pricked my heart and said, "This is out of balance. This is not okay." And basically, that led to a sweeping change. But I would often weaponize that and say, "How dare you question that I'm gone these number of nights at rehearsal? Because I'm serving the Lord." That's good to serve the Lord, right? It's good to serve in a local church. That is necessary. But we weaponize it when it becomes part of our identity.

In my case, I was wanting the approval of others. I was wanting the attention of it, because that was the stage of life I was in. I was really wanting to be like a musician and all that kind of stuff.

Selena: I don't mean to gale. *[both laughs]*

Ryan: It was another life ago.

Selena: It was. It was.

Ryan: So I had weaponized that good thing for a selfish gain. So I think that's what you're getting at is we can oftentimes weaponize these good biblical values

unintentionally or intentionally, and then our values actually are shifting. We're no longer valuing biblical Christian thing.

Selena: No, we start doing things out of fear or selfish desire and pride, right?

Ryan: Yeah.

Selena: I mean, just personally, this pandemic has caused us to evaluate everything from a 50,000-foot view of what are the next couple months or years look like that the Lord has given us that we can plan for by God's grace? What about the day to day? Are these areas really reflecting our values or are they just telling the world that we're selfish or we're insecure or we're fear-based or prideful?

Ryan: This moment we're in historically and politically, what's happening with the two-party system and the polarization...

Selena: Oh, are you sure you're going to go there?

Ryan: No, I'm just going comment on. I'm making observations.

Selena: Whooo. *[chuckles]*

Ryan: The polarization of evangelical America has been stunning to say the least, and how you see people on both sides of this extremely already polarized situation, in terms of right, left and liberal, conservative, presidential elections...

Selena: All the things.

Ryan: ...who is God's man. All this sort of stuff. It's just a polarizing on both sides of it. It really causes us to look and say, "Okay, what are we valuing? What we value, is it biblical? Is it under the authority of God or is it under some other authority, namely, my own? Or even under the authority of any other sort of governance or whatever?"

Selena: I think we've brought to light some of the examples in marriage. You and I were talking in the car about intimacy: how it can be an example of what we value. Why do I want to have sex with my husband? *[both chuckles]*

Ryan: Sorry. That just right there.

Selena: Intimacy. Why do you want to be with your spouse in that way? Is there...

- Ryan:** Is it to check a box like you've often said, and just say, "Okay, now he can't be upset with me."
- Selena:** We're good for few days. *[chuckles]* I'm just kidding.
- Ryan:** Or is it to get closer to each other and to love each other?
- Selena:** Or is there some selfish reason or is there some sort of fantasy that you want fulfilled or there's some sort of addiction there or there's some unhealthy motivation? So, what is governing those beliefs around intimacy? I mean, we're going to talk about selfishness and how obviously selfishness is a major conflict area, especially in marriage. Selfishness is always accomplished. It's always a bad thing. *[chuckles]*
- Ryan:** Yeah. That's whole repent and believe thing.
- Selena:** Yes, yes. But we tend to be selfish for a few reasons. It might be like a self-preservation tactic, right? We don't want to get hurt. It might be like a pride thing. Like we're not willing to sacrifice ourselves or admit we're wrong when we are wrong. There's a pride and humility.
- Ryan:** Sorry to jump in. What you're saying selfishness is somehow rooted in the value.
- Selena:** It's an indicator. Yes.
- Ryan:** It's rooted in a base level of value. And I think...
- Selena:** Of trusting in ourselves, I think, and grabbing on to like, I believe these things an I should...
- Ryan:** Or trusting in the experience I have here on earth is ultimate. In that, justice, if I'm going to have it is going to be here now.
- Selena:** Right.
- Ryan:** And that's trusting in myself.
- Selena:** And if we align that with the Bible, that's not the truth.
- Ryan:** Yeah.
- Selena:** Right.

Ryan: God loves justice. It's part of His nature. But it's not guaranteed on every level here in this life. And that's a lot of times we have a hard time valuing that truth. And instead, we would take it into our own hands, which would often cause us, again, to weaponize things in certain ways, and become selfish in that.

Selena: Right. So are we upholding God's Word in our lives through our values? Are we serving Him or are we serving ourselves? How does the Bible call us into living...I hate to say out of His values, because it's how the Holy Spirit is at work in us, how we are being sanctified. How are we allowing that to govern and be the value that determines our actions and words and decision making from the very foundational level.

Ryan: I just want to reword that in a way that helps me understand it is...

Selena: Okay.

Ryan: ...how accurately are we seeing God's creation in the way that He sees it? In other words, how much do we trust that it is His, He has made it, He has designed it to work the way He's designed it to work, He will have His will, His decree is irrefutable, His call is irrevocable, what He decides is unchangeable in many ways? Are we seeing the world and valuing the world the same way that He sees and values the world? One of the things that we talked about is getting to know God. So the only way we can really know that is if we get to know Him. We're going to talk about that later. I don't want to jump the gun here.

Selena: No. Yeah, I mean, yes and no. But kind of thematic I think through it all.

Ryan: As we align...I don't want to say it here because I feel like it fits.

Selena: Say it.

Ryan: As we align our view of things with God's view of things, we align our values with His. It's helpful to know how we know God. Theologically speaking, these aren't complicated concepts. And I'm not a pro at them. But essentially there's two revelations so to speak in terms of just theology—the doctrine of God. There is general revelation, which is in Romans. I think we see it in Psalm 19 where David says, "The heavens are telling the glory of God and the firmament proclaims His handiwork."

Selena: So general revelation is?

Ryan: Its knowledge of God that's not from creation—from how we're made, from how he has made the earth. No one looks at...I love Matt Chandler. *[laughs]* He has a good illustration. He's like, "No one stands next to the Grand Canyon and says, 'Look how amazing I am.'" Right?

Selena: Right.

Ryan: Something to that effect.

Selena: Right, right.

Ryan: They stand next to the Grand Canyon and they marvel. Who has made this thing? Whose majesty am I witnessing in this place? That's general revelation. There's also kind of an internal general revelation where you could ask anybody, even if they say they don't believe in God, or even if they're agnostic and they say it can't be known if God exists or if they're atheistic, and they say God does not exist unequivocally. You ask that person, okay, is it okay to...and name some moral line that you could cross. To kill somebody, or to X, Y, or Z. Whatever that insidious moral thing is, is it okay to do that?

And they would probably tell you, well, no, it's not okay. I'm not a sick person. And you say, "Well, why? Because it's just not. They would probably make some argument out of evolution or something like that. But the bottom line is that moral code is imprinted on us. It didn't come from anywhere else; it's in us. That is a general revelation. And it's in Romans 1 where he talks about what can be known about God is plain to them— talking about the unbelievers— because God has shown it to them ever since the creation of the world. His invisible nature, namely His eternal power and deity has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made. So they—this is Paul talking again to the Romans—so they are without excuse. For although they knew God, they did not honor Him. In other words, they did not value Him as God or give thanks to Him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their senseless minds were darkened. That's general revelation.

Then there is special revelation, which is we have the personal work of Christ, we have the word of God in Scripture, we have the gospel preached, we have the Holy Spirit illuminating God's Word in our hearts. And that would be more of a special revelation. It's basically the general revelation is enough to condemn us. Special revelation is how we are saved. It's through personal work of Christ. It's the gospel proclaimed.

Selena: It all these values. *[chuckles]*

- Ryan:** Thank you. We know those things, we know God, and that helps us align our values with His. And that's the challenge here.
- Selena:** In Matthew 6, when Jesus...this is talking about alignment. This was actually a good interjection that you had here.
- Ryan:** Thank you. *[Selena chuckles]*
- Selena:** In Matthew 6, I've been reading through the Gospels again just to know the person of Jesus as much as I can. Because I feel like I can have a lot of head knowledge, but I feel like there's more heart knowledge to be experienced and to know. Anyways.
- Ryan:** That's where stuff really changes.
- Selena:** Right. Right. So in Matthew 6, we see Jesus talking about giving to the needy. He's instructing the people on how to pray with the Lord's Prayer, talking about fasting. So he's giving these ways of living. Here's what we should align to. Here's how you should pray when you talk to God. Here's how we forgive and why we forgive. When we fast, this is how we should do it. Because this is how the Lord works. Like, wash your face so that you know the Father can...only the Father can see what is done in secret and reward you.
- He also talks about laying up treasures in heaven. He's telling us what to value right here. Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal..." This is Matthew 6:19. "...but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." That is a verse that gets misused way too many times. *[both chuckles]* I did some work on that one.
- Ryan:** Wow.
- Selena:** That wasn't even what I wanted to bring to light here. But that just God's Word. It's just so good like that.
- Ryan:** I want to clarify one thing before you move on. I love hearing you go through this because your brain is amazing. But it's possible. So I always feel convicted like, okay, do not lay up treasure in heaven. Okay, well, then should I not have a savings account? I asked myself that. Should I sell everything and just do whatever the other thing is. I don't even know what that is.
- Selena:** Right.

- Ryan:** I think it is possible to be a wise steward and have treasures so to speak in heaven without verb "treasuring" those things.
- Selena:** Those treasures.
- Ryan:** So our treasure is the ultimate thing for us. If you think about a pirate who hides their treasure, it's so precious to them, they go and hide it. And I feel like when we value God's Word and His kingdom in that way, everything is just held in open hand. It's just a means to a greater end, which is God Himself. Obedience to Him.
- Selena:** Right. It comes into question like the rich young ruler. What was Jesus actually asking him? He was asking him to give up the thing that was keeping him from Him. Whether that be riches, whether that be the nicest camel in the area, *[chuckles]* I don't know. Whatever it is.
- Ryan:** I've heard theologians speculate that had the rich young ruler said, "So be it. I'll sell everything," they've speculated that perhaps Jesus would have said, "Never mind then. You're good."
- Selena:** Right.
- Ryan:** Obviously that's speculating. *[Selena laughs]* But it's I would liken it to Abraham and Isaac where goes up to sacrifices his own son, has the knife in hand, God says, "Stop. I've given you another sacrifice."
- Selena:** God is only asking us to give what He's already given in Jesus.
- Ryan:** And He wants our total hearts.
- Selena:** So getting it Matthew 6, talking about not being anxious. So after he's instructing how to pray, how to fast, what to value, and what to lay up in heaven and not just toil here on earth, he's talking about not being anxious. Sorry, I'm reading through my Bible and I was like, "Should I talk about the eyes lamp of the body? There's value there because if your eyes healthy, your whole body will be full of light." I mean, that's a whole value system in itself.
- Ryan:** Basically saying, "What's your value filter?"
- Selena:** Yeah. If your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness? Well, no one can serve two masters. You either hate one or love the other. You can't be devoted to both. You have to love one and despise the other, and that is an ace. You cannot serve God and money. So serving God and the currency of this world.

Then we get into in verse 25 about not being anxious. I feel like right here that this is where Jesus is saying again, "Here's how to live. These are the big stones. These are the big values. "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them."

Right before that, though, remember he was saying, "Don't store things up here but store in heaven." So he's saying, when you look at the things on earth, don't sow and reap. Your value is not in that. Your value is because I love you. It's because I died for you. That is where your value in terms of worth value, not belief value. Does that make sense?

Ryan: Wow.

Selena: Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble."

So again, we see the value saying, "seek first God's kingdom, seek first His righteousness." Understand that food is important, yes, clothes are important, yes, but they're not important when you look at the body and you look at the purposes, and you look at the order of things. And God's perspective put down on us. God's word governing us and His authority being lived out through our marriage...when He says...Sorry, too many thoughts right now.

Ryan: It's all right.

Selena: "...for the Gentiles seek after all these things." The Gentile, it feels like they have a short term value system. They see what they want, they need it. It's

the hedonistic part of ourselves. We see it in our 4-year-old. *[laughs]* We see in our kids so obviously but we're better at hiding as adults. *[Ryan chuckles]* So the Gentiles seek after these things. And culture would have us seek after these things. What are marketers and people being paid thousands of dollars for? To create this need and value. To prime you, to groom you, to get... We're not going conspiracy theory. Let's just get down to the truth.

Ryan: It's true though.

Selena: What does Jesus in His words right here telling us to value? How do we value these things? By seeking God first, by allowing His word to bear weight as we say every week, allow His authority to come into our lives and to govern us. Even when we don't feel like it, we don't like it, and it feels uncomfortable, we're going to trust. And that is what He's inviting us into is this don't worry about the anxious. Remember who God is, remember who your creator is.

None of this is outside of His control. It may feel out of your control, but this is all under His governing authority. Trust His values. Trust what He's saying and the order and the systems that He saying here. Life is more than just food and clothing. It's more than just having experiences, going out on the water or driving a nice car. Again, not saying those things are bad. I'm saying...

Ryan: They're not worth valuing.

Selena: We don't need to work to have the nice car. We don't need to work to have those things are a byproduct of... That sounds terrible now too. I'm saying good thing can be...

Ryan: They're incidental. They're kind of like in the periphery. If it happens, it happens. It's the grace of God. But it's not worth pursuing.

Selena: It's not the priority of what I value.

Ryan: It's not the priority.

Selena: Okay, off the soapbox. Talk about Christian values!

Ryan: Wow. That was fire. That was fire. Well, okay, you made some really... I mean, scriptures is fire there. It is convicting, and it is challenging. Jesus does not pull any punches. So we have to remember, okay, this is the book of Matthew. Matthew was written for a Jewish audience. That's why it opens with the genealogy because they would then understand because the genealogy they're a tribal nation. Therefore genealogies are so important and they're seeing the lineage of Christ. He is in fact the Messiah. That's Matthew 1.

Matthew is framing everything through the lens of speaking to a Jewish audience. So to make these points, Jesus is not pulling any punches, but then he's comparing them to the Gentiles. He is saying, "You were the people of God. You are the Jewish people. You're the ones who have been waiting for this Messiah. He's here; embrace Him and embrace his truth." Jesus is saying these things Matthew's writing it down. He's saying, "Don't do it, the way the Gentiles do it."

In early part of Matthew 6, the Lord's Prayer, he says, "And when you pray you must not be like the hypocrites, for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues, at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others." That's a perfect example. Because they're not praying to talk to God, to commune with God, to worship God, to honor God. They're praying to be seen by others. And He says, "When you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words."

Selena: So what's the value there?

Ryan: It's my own effort. That if I heap up enough of these empty phrases, then I will say enough for God to hear me.

Selena: And for people to see me and hear me.

Ryan: Right. Right. And you had mentioned the Gentiles in the passage you were reading as well, a few verses down. The contrast there I think is really timely because we didn't anticipate this. But I'd love to go through and look at a list of Christian values that we actually just totally stole from compassion.com.

Selena: Stole. There will be a link, people. It's information from the internet.

Ryan: I googled "Christian values" and this thing that came up. But it's useful. It's not a comprehensive list. It's just useful. I want to contrast it to maybe the...I don't want to say Gentile because Jews and Gentiles both are part of God's family, even though we are not part of the Jewish people. But I think believers, nonbelievers. I want to contrast culture with what Christ would have us value in that sense. So the first one...

Selena: I think it's really interesting too. They say Christian values don't change over time. They're consistent from generation to generation since their foundation is found in God's word in the Bible."

Ryan: Yeah, exactly. The very first thing, and that is the very first Christian value is God's word. Now, I can't emphasize that enough. Because in our culture

there...I am starting to not like saying in our culture because it feels like it's so...

Selena: In the water that we swim. Where are we at, where we are at in the world today.

Ryan: But the world does not value the Bible. They just think it's just another...

Selena: Not only do they not value it, but they would devalue it by saying it is full of hate and things.

Ryan: Which they do that because they don't understand it. They don't read it. They don't read it in context. They get snippets and proof texts that affirm their view. Anyway. A lot of Christians do that as well. They start to devalue God's Word. We have our Facebook pages that we just post to various thoughts that you and I have. I posted on mine something to the effect of I'm really discouraged by the number of authors that I've enjoyed in the past who eventually turn from orthodoxy, and they turned from intellectual integrity. Then I went on and said, "If you want to be a hero, if you want to do something bold, you want to do something countercultural, stick to orthodoxy your whole life. What I mean by orthodoxy is not the orthodox faith, per se.

Orthodoxy is a term for tried and true Christian doctrines. Values that haven't changed probably since the reformation, which had been 500 years ago. So over hundreds of years, they haven't changed. And they're not new. They're just orthodox. They're solid.

Selena: Right. Right. Stick to intellectual intelligence or integrity. The reason I say that is because so many authors are just seeing God's word is just another kind of book on their shelf.

Selena: Supplemental, yeah.

Ryan: It's not the book. It's a book. It's not God's Word. It's God's suggestions or some words that maybe resemble the character of this teacher named Jesus. And we're saying that, no as Christians, okay, I'm using that word intentionally, Christians, people who follow the Christ, people who follow Jesus, we have to trust that His words are inherent. He valued the Old Testament, the New Testament, there's epistemic authority, it's all passed. We have to value the inerrancy and the sufficiency and the authority of God's Word. If we don't, none of this makes sense. Somebody we...sorry, I'm on a tirade right now.

Selena: It's okay.

- Ryan:** But somebody who was...I kind of got talking to them about the Tina Konkin thing...
- Selena:** Oh, yeah.
- Ryan:** ...and the response was, "I don't need you to throw verses at me. I don't need you to quote scripture to me." And I'm thinking, "I don't really know what else to do. Because these ideas are not things that we're just suggesting. They're things that they come from..."
- Selena:** The Bible.
- Ryan:** So we have to value that first is what I'm trying to say. Sorry.
- Selena:** Okay.
- Ryan:** Fire here.
- Selena:** The next value...*[chuckles]* I know.
- Ryan:** Generosity.
- Selena:** Generosity. So compassion.com is saying, "This is the core Christian value of being kind and unselfish, especially with our money and time.
- Ryan:** I'm just I'm laughing because they're a nonprofit and clearly they want us to give them their money. *[laughing]*
- Selena:** Start with generosity.
- Ryan:** By the way...
- Selena:** So the first list of Christian values.
- Ryan:** ...we give to Compassion now for years.
- Selena:** For sure.
- Ryan:** They're a solid number. I just think it's funny.
- Selena:** That was like one of our...
- Ryan:** It's still on the knows. Whoever wrote this was just like, "Put that first."

- Selena:** "Oh, just be strategic." The next one...
- Ryan:** I want to contrast it.
- Selena:** Okay. Oh, sorry. Sorry.
- Ryan:** Generosity as a Christian value is rooted in an abundance that's outside of ourselves. We're saying that all the good that I could ever need is in Christ, all the good that I could ever be promised has been promised to me in Christ by God in His Word. Therefore, I can give now here now. I don't have to hold and be selfish and be fearful with my finances.
- Selena:** My question comes though when you say...when does it cross over from a value to a selfish way?
- Ryan:** What do you mean? Like if I give to God He'll give back to me type of thing?
- Selena:** Ah, yeah. Or with our time. It says money and time. So we talked about the church example, right? So what is that foggy area of how do you know when it's becoming the value and not just a value I guess? It becomes the thing.
- Ryan:** When I weaponize it?
- Selena:** Yes.
- Ryan:** Well, I think in that case, I was being very stingy with my time and affection toward you. So I wasn't being generous to you. I was being generous to God's bride while neglecting my own bride.
- Selena:** Hmm.
- Ryan:** Scripture, I don't think it gives us a strong case for that. I know it doesn't.
- Selena:** Right. And church leaders would not recommend that. There are some. This is a thought, people. This is a thought.
- Ryan:** Part of our church leaders at the time we're saying, "So? You're not spending time with your wife?" And I'm thinking, "Well, more than I have now." And he said, "Well, how much do you need then?" And I said, "Well, that's not helpful. I don't know the number of hours. I just need you to pastor me through this." And that didn't happen. So the contrast there is, is generosity comes from a heart of God's abundance. And stinginess or fear around finances comes from a heart or a belief that God is not abundant? What He's promised is not true.

- Selena:** I think that the whole fear and selfishness aspect is probably the biggest indicator when something is beginning to step out from a value and becoming the object or idol, right?
- Ryan:** The Holy Spirit is so faithful to give us those checks...
- Selena:** I think that is fair to say. Because why did we have so much involvement? Because we were at some level seeking the approval of others.
- Ryan:** 100%.
- Selena:** It was a manipulative thing. I don't know if it was intentional. It was just kind of the culture. So I think when we start fearing others is I think responses to us or we start getting - what was the other one said? *[chuckles]*
- Ryan:** I don't know. *[laughs]*
- Selena:** Oh, selfish. When we start becoming selfish with those things, the governing is getting skewed. I just want to highlight that because I think we can not be clear on...Well, I feel like this is a good value, but it also doesn't feel like a good value. Right?
- Ryan:** Yeah. When the Holy Spirit, as He does, will prompt you to look introspectively. That is our cue as believers who are Spirit-filled people to say, "God I repent of this. Help me believe. I repent of the sin of believing something besides your truth, because it is leading me down a path that is not going to cause flourishing around me."
- Selena:** All right. The second one is courage. The values characterized by boldness and confidence is the opposite of fear. They have a verse here. Joshua 1:9. "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go" It's interesting it's in the book of Joshua where there's a whole lot of adversity and God was calling them out to go toe to toe, to boldly go to Jericho, to all these places.
- Ryan:** And they saw their foes and saw big intimidating people and said, "Whooo!"
- Selena:** And then the theme of this is "Be strong and courageous." Anyway.
- Ryan:** So courage is a Christian value.
- Selena:** It's not pride.

Ryan: Fear would be the opposite. Again, courage is rooted in trusting God and His ultimate and my eternal security with Him. Fear place is this life as ultimate and my wellbeing in this life as ultimate.

Selena: It's based on me.

Ryan: Yeah, selfishness.

Selena: Again we're examining how these values reflect either God or they're reflecting us.

Ryan: So the prayer there would be: "Lord I repent of my fear. Help me to be courageous. Not so I can just be courageous but so I can better trust you and honor you with the things that I say and do."

Selena: Which is then model to our spouse and our children. It trickles down.

Ryan: And as a family. Love is the third one. It says, "We love because He first loved us first. 1 John 4:19, one of our favorites. It's a fundamental characteristic of who God is. The opposite of love, I would contend is apathy or just...

Selena: Not hate?

Ryan: No. Because I would rather you be mad at me than you just not care. And not that you would hate me when you're mad at me. There's a difference. But I'm saying that apathy is just like, if God's...

Selena: It's indifferent.

Ryan: When I know when God is disciplining me, I take comfort in that because I know that He loves me. A father disciplines the son he delights in. That's not hate, but it's discipline. So people will oftentimes contrast love with anger or love with hate.

Selena: I'd say love with hate is the opposite.

Ryan: I think apathy because...I don't know. Anyway.

Selena: Agree to disagree.

Ryan: Or wrath. But wrath is one of...

- Selena:** But I think that's also a sign of caring and love. Right? I think apathy and hate kind of fall into...If you hate something that's a little more active, obviously, apathy is like indifference.
- Ryan:** Indifference to me is much more terrifying. Especially in the marriage space, like when a spouse gets cold to the other, that to me is a big bright red flag. I think the prayer out of that would be: "Lord, help me to love what you love. Help me care for the things you love. I repent of my apathy either toward my wife, my husband, my kids, my community. Help me love the way you love with courage and boldness and with generosity to fold in the other values.
- Selena:** That's a good prayer. All right. We got to wrap it up here.
- Ryan:** Okay. Respect. So respect toward one another. I think respect is rooted in the idea that God has created men and women of equal value, worth, and importance in His image. I will respect my wife to the extent that I understand she is a daughter of the king, she has been designed by Him of equal value worth, and importance and is made in His image. Then if I understand and behold that truth, then I will respect you till the cows come home. I think the same goes for her husband. So I think the opposite of respect would be...
- Selena:** Disrespect?
- Ryan:** Disrespect. The opposite would be contempt, which is a mixture of anger and...
- Selena:** We have a whole episode on that, people. Go check that one out. It's a good one.
- Ryan:** It's a mixture of contempt, anger, and disgust. Okay. Hope.
- Selena:** Hope.
- Ryan:** Oh, man. I just...
- Selena:** Confident expectation. The firm assurance in God. Proverbs 23:18. "There's surely a future hope for you and your hope will not be cut off." We need hope right now, people. Especially in our marriages, I feel like we're just in a hot pot. I think we all are just boiling over with some of the big unknowns of all of our things that we could predict. School, jobs, home life, whatever. It was all predictable, we felt like we had it down, and then this scam pandemic, I don't know. I'm kidding. *[both laughs]*
- Ryan:** You had to go there. No.

Selena: I know.

Ryan: We wear masks.

Selena: We wear masks. We're being considerate. Some shook up are normal. Our values are being questioned. I think that needs to cause us to root deeper and not to run further. To just anchor our hope again in the assurance of God. Have confident expectation that God is not only going to use...He's at work already. He's been at work. He's using this time and He's going to continue using this time for His glory and for our sanctification.

Ryan: To put a word to that, I would say despair or despondency would be kind of the indication that there's a value that's missing there. If you feel despair or despondency over any situation, really, that's not...Yeah, you can be sad about situations, you can be frustrated, you can not know the answer. But as believers, you guys, we are called to value and to hold on to hope. That is not a suggestion. It is a mandate. It is something that we have been given. Now, it is our choice to take it and to hold on to it. And hope doesn't have the answers. That's what hope is.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: Okay. The next one is peace, which I think comes from hope. The opposite of this would be anxiety. There are mental disorders around anxiety, and depression, and things like that. So medications are a good grace of God. Psychological help is a good, common grace of God. So we're not saying to avoiding that stuff, but there is a deep level peace that you might...My dad. Okay, my dad struggles with anxiety. You know this. And we've talked about him a lot.

Selena: He is a psychologist and he is in this whole field.

Ryan: He knows all the textbook answers. He even takes the medicine. And that's fine. But he will tell you also that he has a deep peace even among the anxiety.

Selena: Among the emotions, the anxiety, the inner agitation...

Ryan: He has to hold on to harder.

Selena: Yeah.

Ryan: He has to hold on harder to it in some moments. But in general, there's a theme of peace. So that's just a few. There's a lot more Christian values, of

course. I hope they got you thinking about maybe what can be driving the different decisions you make.

Selena: Which would lead us into our couples' conversation challenge. So some tangible steps to living into the values of God. In order, again, to know what God values, we have to know God. How do we know God? Ryan talked about general revelation versus special revelation. Being in God's Word consistently together, talking about it, having it be a part of your conversations daily, in front of your kids, also, when they don't interrupt, which never happens.

Ryan: Even when you tell them not to interrupt and you remind them, they're still interrupting you.

Selena: Still interrupting. The second thing would be to take time to evaluate the why behind the big whats. So, look at your day to day rhythms, week to week rhythms, month to month rhythms, year to year rhythms. Take that big step back. Why do you make certain decisions about certain things? Put everything on the table. There shouldn't be anything that is off-limits. And if it's off-limits, then that's a big one that should be on the table. Anything from family vacations to...People are asking, "How are we going to educate our kids next year?" There's just a lot of unknowns. So this is a great time to be evaluating and bringing it before the Lord and have ears that are ready to listen and a heart that is humble.

Are we spinning our wheels? I'm going to ask the question again like I did at the beginning. Are we spinning our wheels and just going through the motions trying to survive? Or are we taking a moment to regroup, to go to God, and learn how to live intentionally in the values and authority and purposes in order that He has ordained it?

Ryan: Those are great questions. We hope that conversation challenge...Please do that. Because we've done that, and we continue to do that. It's not easy, but it does always bring us to a greater level of freedom because now we know that our God is trustworthy. Otherwise, we get all bound and wrapped around the axle, right? We worry and we forget our peace, and we forget our hope, and we forget to have courage and we forget...

Selena: There's nothing that gives me more courage, more confidence, more freedom, more joy, more hope and peace than knowing that I am making a decision because God has said, "This is the decision you need to make. This is the thing you need to value and this is going to govern all of the decisions that trickle down."

Ryan: And you know what, when we're patient to see that process unfold, then the freedom that is had when the decision is made is a hope fulfilled. It's a wellspring of life. That's what the Bible calls a hope fulfilled. So good word. I'll say a prayer for us and we'll call it an episode.

Lord, I thank you so much for this time. I thank you for your Word. I thank you that it is authoritative. I pray for the husband and the wife listening to this that they may be looking inside introspectively into their own decisions and their values, and they're maybe seeing some areas where they're feeling convicted. I pray Holy Spirit that you would be sweet and gracious and continuing that conviction as you always are. I thank you for that conviction. I pray that you would convict us in areas where we are not living in a way that is in full light of the authority of your Word, the authority of who you are, God, and the authority of the work you've done on the cross.

I pray for the husband or the wife who feels hopeless right now because of their marriage, it's going through a hard time it's going through a hard season and they might feel like there's no chance for reconciliation. I pray that you would still be their hope, be their light, be their courage. Show them love. Show them how to love their spouse despite the pain. I pray, Lord, that you would feel that love. It wouldn't be them just white-knuckling it and figuring it out. But you would feel it and they would understand it, that it is otherworldly. Lord, only you can do that. I pray to soften our hearts, soften the hearts of our listeners. In Jesus' name, amen.

Selena: Amen. All right.

Ryan: All right. We have an interview going live in two days. I'm telling you right now I remember when we interviewed this gentleman, his name is Sheridan Voysey.

Selena: Oh, yeah.

Ryan: He has an incredible story, specifically around infertility. So we're going to talk about that. Him and his wife dealt with it. And you know what? I'm sending our...

Selena: He has a cool accent, people. Just take a listen.

Ryan: He's an Australian living in Oxford.

Selena: Oxford, yes.

Ryan: His wife's a professor at Oxford. He's like a radio correspond...

Selena: So awesome.

Ryan: Anyway, he took the time to talk to us.

Selena: Right, just to talk to us. I'm like, he's such a better talker. He's so good with words.

Ryan: So make sure you listen to that interview. You'll be encouraged. Particularly if you've struggled with infertility, or you know, somebody who has because he really does point us back to the hope we have in Christ and the glory and the goodness it is to even be married without children. So I think you could be encouraged by that.

Anyway, this has been a long episode. And this one is...

Selena: Just didn't feel right. Can you do that again?

Ryan: Oh, sorry. It's been a long episode. This episode is—

Selena: In the can. *[both chuckles]*

Ryan: Okay.

Selena: It's pretty good.

Ryan: Two days for the interview and five days after that for another episode. Until then—

Selena: Stay fierce.

[00:58:07] <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.

PODCAST NOTES

- **[00:27:43]**
 - Scripture references:
 - Romans 1, ESV

- **[00:28:59]**
 - Scripture references:
 - Matthew 6

- **[00:39:09]**
 - Article Recommendation:
 - [Compassion.com](https://www.compassion.com)

- **[00:47:51]**
 - Scripture references:
 - 1 John 4:19, ESV

- **[00:50:23]**
 - Scripture references:
 - Proverbs 23:18

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