

CODEPENDENCY (COUNSELING, 3 OF 4)

<https://fiercemarriage.com/codependency-counseling-3-of-4>

[00:00:00]

Ryan: All right. Today's episode is all about codependency. This is something that we've been wanting to talk about for quite a while. And being that we're in the middle of this series, we're talking about counseling, it felt appropriate.

Selena: Well, a lot of people are writing in about it. It was one of the bigger topics that was expressed was codependency. And it's probably been augmented, you know, the day and time that we're living in.

Ryan: It's true.

Selena: We've just been with each other all the time. And so perhaps some codependency habits have been beginning to form.

Ryan: This is the 2020. I'm going to call it 2020 is the year of speed wobbles, right? Whatever was already wobbly in your relationship just got more amplified and way more wobbly. And if you're already prone to codependency, which we'll define, if you're really prone to codependency, then it's probably been amplified. So we're going to tackle that, as usual, through a gospel lens. And I think you'll enjoy it. See you on the other side.

[00:01:00] <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.

[00:01:34] <podcast begins>

Selena: This is kind of monumental. We had our very first counseling session ever in our whole 17 years of marriage and four years dating.

Ryan: I would say formal counseling sessions.

Selena: Formal, yeah. [inaudible] with transaction? Yes, yes.

Ryan: There was a transaction. [Selena chuckles] Give me the monies.

Selena: Pay the monies. [Both chuckles] No. But overall I would say it was a pretty good experience. I walked away with some tools and some thoughts. It's amazing how someone else speaking into your situation can be so clear and not know. [chuckles] But they know humans, they know human behavior. So I was encouraged.

Ryan: I don't know what I was expecting. But having never gone through a formal counseling before, I was like, okay, "We're going to come in and she's just going to read our mail." Like she's going to look us in the eye and be able to read our minds basically...

Selena: You expected it to be like an Oracle or something, right? [laughing]

Ryan: ...and tell us the secrets. No, I truly thought that they'd have all these deep insights. Honestly, it was kind of looking behind the veil moment for me in the sense of, oh, you know what? The counselors are just people who are trained with a set of tools and diagnostic tools and treatment tools for mental health, mental wellness. It's like you go to a doctor, right? Doctors can't just see through your body to know the bones broken, right? They have a tool to look at, oh, this bone is broken, and here's a tool to fix the bone. So in the same way, she just has these processes that she's starting to walk us through—

Selena: Which are very clarifying and they're very illuminating for my heart and mind to see that, yes, these are the things that I'm mulling around and can't bring words to.

Ryan: I think she was surprised at our level of unity I think in talking about stuff.

- Selena:** Yeah. But at the same time, sitting there, like, "What is she thinking?"
[chuckles]
- Ryan:** Yeah. Does she think that we're interrupting each other or whatnot?
- Selena:** What is she reading and seeing that we're not?
- Ryan:** What flaws is she picking out? What are you reading down? *[Both chuckles]*
One of the things that she said that I think we're actually starting to work through is connecting our minds with our emotions. Because a lot of times you'll feel something and you don't cognitively. And that's our word, not hers. That we don't...consciously I'll stop and say, "Oh, I'm feeling these feelings. How can I deal with them in a healthy way as opposed just reacting to those feelings?"
- One of the things that she said that I felt like really resonated with you was that we have these bad feelings, and then we have bad feelings about our bad feelings. *[Selena chuckles]* And so you beat yourself up because I shouldn't be yelling at my kids because I'm angry. Or I shouldn't be angry. So now I'm a terrible person.
- Selena:** I don't know. I'm a perfect parent, first of all.
- Ryan:** Theoretically. I mean, if ever, ever you raised your voice above my calm children. *[Selena laughs]* Please obey.
- Selena:** Vipers and diapers.
- Ryan:** *[laughing]* They're vipers and diapers. *[Both chuckles]*
- Selena:** Anyways. No, that was. It was very helpful. Again, I'm super encouraged and I'm looking forward to our next session. She kind of laid out the pathway of what we're going to be doing and gave us some tools already. It's been very encouraging. There's nothing major that we're dealing with between each other, but there's some things on the peripheral that we've wanted to talk about extended family and how to love and how that affects our marriage. [00:05:00] And then, yeah, just being individuals dealing with individual things as human beings.
- Ryan:** In case you're wondering, this is actually part three of a four-part series on counseling specifically. We're actually doing this. We've been meaning to do a thing on counseling for a while because we've never gone. We've known we've wanted to go because we've heard so many testimonies of people who have

been helped and how it helps men kind of break through different emotional issues. The same with wives.

Anyway, this is a unique series in that we're actually partnered with faithfulcounseling.com. We will tell you more at the end of this, but if this is something that piques your interest, you can actually go to the monthly thing and you can go to faithfulcounseling.com/FMP. That's for fierce marriage podcast. And that will give you 10% off your first month. But anyway, just know that that's why we're tackling these topics is because we've been wanting to do that for a while. There's this really unique kind of marriage of having this resource that we've been looking for in Faithful Counseling. So codependency.

Selena: I love that. I love just providing an actual tangible [inaudible] resource because we're not selling like a coffee cup, which I love coffee cups. I'm the first person to buy them from anybody that I know that makes sense.

Ryan: Selena comes home with coffee cups periodically. And I look at her and say, "Okay, which one are you getting rid of now?" [Selena laughs] One in, one out, baby. [both laughs] Because we have no room.

Selena: Stop. Can you stop? [chuckles] I'm the first to say that we're not selling something here. We are, again, partnering with faithfulcounseling.com because we see a huge need. And I'm just so grateful that we can provide some sort of resource in that way.

Ryan: And that's what we're using for our counseling recently.

Selena: Yeah. Did you want to talk about any...?

Ryan: I just want to remind everyone, make sure you leave a rating and a review on this podcast if you can.

Selena: After you listen to the whole episode.

Ryan: Yeah, yeah, go ahead. Or do a midstream. It's your call.

Selena: No, I don't think so.

Ryan: You hear that when Selena drops that truth bomb later, when she just drops the truth, and you're like...

Selena: Because if you only listen for the first five minutes of something and then you try to rate it, I don't think that's very accurate.

- Ryan:** So people that listen probably have heard one or more episodes.
- Selena:** Hopefully. I don't know.
- Ryan:** Go to iTunes, leave a rating, review. We hope we've earned a good rating and review from you so it helps others get to know what they can expect by giving us their ears. So yeah, with that we're going to dive right in. Okay. So what do you got for us?
- Selena:** We're talking about codependency versus interdependency. First of all, there is a healthy God designed level of dependency between a husband and wife. There's this dependency that we should and can have with each other the whole leave, cleave, and unite kind of idea.
- Ryan:** Interdependency.
- Selena:** Interdependency, which we will define soon. But we wanted to kind of walk through some questions that maybe described a codependent relationship just to help us get a better picture and idea of what that might look like. We're also going to define some codependency even clear, and then walk through what biblical interdependency looks like and what that term even means.
- So you may be getting some ideas already about what it is. And that's great. It's good. Smart people. Let's have some questions out there to you about how to know if you're in a codependent relationship or not. You may hear us joke, and it's never a joke at you. It's always a joke between us. And if we're joking, it's usually because there's a truth to it [*Both chuckles*] that we're exposing or not. He was reading through some of these questions, and we were just laughing about how some of the—
- Ryan:** Selena was being hilarious while I was trying to read these questions to her.
- Selena:** Yeah, because I was being sarcastic. But we just never want that to be put out on anybody. So first question. Are you unable to find satisfaction in your life outside of a specific person? I think in this marriage space would probably be namely your spouse.
- Ryan:** Or your kids.
- Selena:** Okay. True.
- Ryan:** In the family arena, I think a lot of...especially if your marriage hasn't been healthy for a period of time—

- Selena:** It's easy to hide behind kids and find your identity.
- Ryan:** Yeah, you tend to kind of divest your interest in your spouse and invest it into your kids, like you thought.
- Selena:** It's a hard type of fight.
- Ryan:** This is not a salvageable thing with my spouse so I'm just going to pour myself into my kids. Yeah, that would be codependency. Next question.
- Selena:** Do you recognize unhealthy behaviors in your partner but stay with him or her in spite of them?
- Ryan:** Hmm. I'll use a classic textbook example. This is like an alcoholic husband and his enabling wife, where you see the unhealthy behavior but you can't survive either dealing with that or leaving...Not that we condone [00:10:00] leaving a marriage over something like that necessarily. It's a pastoral issue. So talk to your pastors about that. But the point we're trying to make is that you can't deal with it because you're so dependent on their approval. You can't deal with the issue.
- Selena:** Yeah, dependent on them financially or obviously, very emotionally. I think when we say leaving, we say that with the idea of reconciliation back. So it's like a season of stepping away, having pastors walk through these hard times with you. And reconciliation is ultimately and always the goal. The third question is, are you giving support to your partner at the cost of your own mental, emotional, and physical health?
- Ryan:** What do you mean by that?
- Selena:** I was going to ask you. *[Both chuckles]* So are you...?
- Ryan:** I mean, I think about, sorry, another version of addiction is drug addiction, or even sex addiction, pornography addiction, or even sex addiction. And what I mean by that is you've got kind of deviant sexual behaviors that are prevalent and repetitive in your life.
- Selena:** Right. And you're wanting maybe that feeling of love and intimacy, so you're willing to compromise? Is that what you're saying?
- Ryan:** Yeah, yeah. So I mean, with the drug addiction thing, it's a little bit different because you've got somebody who maybe is unable to work because they're addicted and it's completely ruining their ability to function in society. So now

you are propping them up somehow. So you're giving support at the cost of your own mental, emotional, physical health.

The sex side is, there's a spiritual aspect of it where you know...that's a very deep kind of topic to cover. But if someone's addicted to pornography and you know it, and you're allowing them to continue whether or not...you don't have to approve of it, but you can still, in a way, give support by allowing it to continue.

Selena: Ignoring it and allowing it to continue. Yeah.

Ryan: Yeah. And that will definitely cause you some mental and emotional problems.

Selena: I want to bring up a question here that maybe you can answer. Because I think we've seen many couples deal with this. Like a job or career. So someone in the relationship wants to pursue something that, in my opinion, might seem a little bit more whimsical and less providing for your family. So the other one is then forced to kind of carry the burden of financial, also parenting, also emotional because one of them is following something that they can find somewhat of a fulfillment in and—

Ryan: So I come to you and say, "Selena, I want to be a screenwriter. I'm going to go to Starbucks and spend all day writing scripts."

Selena: That's very gratuitous.

Ryan: I don't know. Maybe.

Selena: I'm saying something that is if it's emotionally like trapping your spouse, right? Sort of like, "I'm going to do this. I want to do this," and the other ones just left kind of like, "Well, okay, I don't want our family to fall apart financially or emotionally. So okay, I'm going to do this so that we can make all of this work so that you can be good." So there's just this...

Ryan: Symmetrical.

Selena: Yes.

Ryan: Okay.

Selena: Yes. I feel like I've seen that more often than not. Because it's a deep desire...

Ryan: If it's not providing that, I would then put it or if it's not providing enough to justify its existence alone as an activity, right? If you're doing an activity that

doesn't bring income, it's not a job. It's a hobby. Or it's a volunteer thing. So I would put this in the same category as hobbies, right?

Selena: Yeah, because I think it just creates this codependency is what I'm saying, I guess. And maybe that's more true statement.

Ryan: And not maybe manipulatively control. There might be some manipulation happening there because I'm saying, "Well, this is what I'm called to do. You're keeping me from fulfilling my call."

Selena: Or "it keeps me out of my whole anxiety and depression" or "it keeps me out of these things." And it's like, okay, but what about like...there's no other option for the spouse on the other side of that.

Selena: So my options now are to make it basically be responsible for your depression or enable this behavior?

Selena: Right. Right.

Ryan: That is manipulation tactic, but it's kind of coupled with codependency.

Selena: Yes. Yes. So we need to just step in and define clearly what codependency is. We can also define interdependency if we wanted to define the terms. But then we're going to walk through codependency to get a clear picture about it.

Ryan: Our hope is that as you're listening to this, you'll get a clearer understanding of it, and you can start to recognize maybe harmful patterns in your own life and marriage. We don't want you to feel hopeless in that. We want you to have a direction, a way to step forward in that. Whether that's talking to a biblical counselor like we've talked about, or talking to your spouse depending on what you're dealing with. So our hope is by going through codependency [00:15:00] and then contrasting that with interdependency, afterward you will see kind of harmful habits, harmful tendencies and then say, "Oh, there is a better biblical way and a hopeful way." And then at the end, we'll give you even more of a hope-filled pathway forward. Does that make sense?

Selena: Yes. Good job. Go you.

Ryan: Definitions.

Selena: So codependency. It is a mental health kind of designation for relationships where people use one another to kind of get their own emotional needs met, but it's in a selfish and more destructive manner.

- Ryan:** So that's in contrast to a marriage, where you do meet my emotional needs, but you're saying there's a selfishness and a destructiveness.
- Selena:** Right. And it's not—
- Ryan:** Codependency.
- Selena:** It is not really diagnosed. It says in our research it's not a mental health diagnosis, but it's a symptom associated with psychological disorders.
- Ryan:** So like depression? Like if I'm depressed, the codependency might be a symptom of my depression or anxiety. Name any disorder.
- Selena:** Yes.
- Ryan:** Okay.
- Selena:** So interdependency is defined as the state of being mutually responsible to others while sharing a common set of principles. So we will see this in Scripture, we're going to lay this out a little bit more, but first, we want to talk about codependency and what it looks like. It comes in a lot of different forms, but they all kind of stem from our selfish human nature and this taking. It really is more of a taking rather than a giving. I mean, I think there is a giving but it's a manipulative tactic. So codependent people are like parasite host. They each use the other to get something for themselves.
- Ryan:** I want to step back a little bit because it has been traditionally defined as chemical dependency or some sort of relationship with an abusive person through that dependency. But today it's more broadened. It's not necessarily just that or it's not necessarily just between a husband and a wife. It could be between a friend and you. Or even a mom or a father and their kids. And so there's this unhealthy codependence that can develop there. So at the core level, like you were saying, there's a focus on using the other person.
- Selena:** For the sake of the marriage and family podcast, we're going to kind of stick to the spouse and touch on possibly the kid area as well.
- Ryan:** I'm thinking of I love my mom. *[Selena chuckles]* I'm thinking of how she will just give our daughters just sugar to no end. And that to me embodies a codependent relationship because she wants to see them smile and love her, and they just want sugar. *[both laughs]*

- Selena:** It doesn't really matter how come? *[both laughs]* That's a bummer. No, they do. Your mom's so sweet to them.
- Ryan:** Sweet is the word. *[both laughs]*
- Selena:** Pun intended, I suppose. There we go. I know. But a parasite host? That sounds so harsh.
- Ryan:** It's little parasites.
- Selena:** Your mom is those? Oh my goodness. *[both chuckles]* Okay.
- Ryan:** So they use each other to get something for themselves.
- Selena:** They to each other. One of the patterns that you see in a codependent relationship is that God takes second place to person. So codependents rely on each other for emotional needs. I think that's kind of the first tier. And then some physical needs rather than take care of themselves. So we need each other. I need you more emotionally than is healthy. And what does that look like? Because isn't it right?
- Ryan:** Wow.
- Selena:** We talked about this. Isn't it right for a husband and woman to become one flesh? I mean, they say complete each other. I've always kind of had to tilt my head, I don't know, scratch my head. Is that really a good phrase to identify?
- Ryan:** Yes, and no. Yes, it's good, and no, it's bad at the same time. It just depends on your heart orientation in saying like, "You complete me."
- Selena:** Is that a codependency way of saying it or is there...?
- Ryan:** It can be.
- Selena:** Yeah, right. There's this interdependency that's like, "Well, God did call us to leave, cleave and unite. So yes, you do."
- Ryan:** I was feeling convicted as you're reading...Sorry.
- Selena:** You're good.
- Ryan:** ...this God takes second place to people. I remember when we just started dating, we were in high school. We were at a Christian camp. I remember—

- Selena:** And you were playing guitar.
- Ryan:** No, that was later. This is the reason I started playing worship because I wanted your attention I think.
- Selena:** It's good. You got it. And I was like, "These other girls better not like him because I like him."
- Ryan:** There were no other girls. You were the only girl...
- Selena:** That's a lie.
- Ryan:** ...ever around. Everyone else we're just beasties when you were around. *[both laughs]* Anyway. The point I'm trying to make is I remember watching you just and seeing...not just in worship but in other aspects of life. You just love God so much. And I remember thinking, "She'll never love me more than she loves God." I was so insecure. *[both laughs]*
- Selena:** Codependency begins.
- Ryan:** Yes. And God is gracious and He captured [00:20:00] my heart and actually I started loving God more than...Then I got the girl.
- Selena:** Then I was like, "Who is this guy? He loves Jesus almost as much as I do." *[both laughs]*
- Ryan:** The saga continues.
- Selena:** I loved Jesus more. *[chuckles]*
- Ryan:** As you said, the lack of faith and trust in God to care for their needs. That is the state of the human heart in a sinful fallen state is that we will do anything. Adam and Eve in the garden, it's like, we will question God at His Word, we will question Him that He is sufficient and good and His work is worthy of our complete...
- Selena:** Worthy. It's beyond. We're not worthy of His Works. We are His work though. Okay, I take that back. *[chuckles]*
- Ryan:** But you hear what I'm saying?
- Selena:** Yeah.

- Ryan:** That there's nothing better than knowing and being known and loving and being loved by the God of the universe. There's nothing better. But our sin nature will say, "There is something better."
- Selena:** Will question it. "Are you sure there's something better?"
- Ryan:** "Are you sure? Are you he's not holding that on you?" If you just did what you wanted, you'd see that God is not holding out on you. Well, what happened in the garden was Eve said, "Oh, yeah, yeah." And then what happened, it was like complete bait and switch. That not only did you lose out on what God already blessed you with, it's not only you cut off the blessing of God, but you've actually brought on the curse of sin.
- Selena:** Right.
- Ryan:** I think there's wisdom in saying, "Okay, if I am valuing my spouse more than I'm valuing the God of the universe," that's more than just a pest flying around at a picnic. It is a poison in your heart that needs to be surrendered to the God of the universe. And honestly, people, this is a call to repentance. If you're feeling that way, repent, believe, and turn to Christ. Only He can satisfy.
- Selena:** Yes. They did write about this, which I thought was so interesting that you're saying this because it says, "Obviously people who avoid telling the truth and love have trouble recognizing their own sinful habits or need for repentance." So it's like we both—
- Ryan:** Avoid telling the truth in love.
- Selena:** Yes. Because typically they say that codependent people are attracted to each other because they tell each other what they want to hear so that they both can feel okay.
- Ryan:** Perfect example is Ryan and Kelly in the office. Right?
- Selena:** Yes.
- Ryan:** Just everybody look is like, "Oh, you're the worst relationship. Clearly unhealthy and they just cannot stay away from each other."
- Selena:** Right. And it's just creating chaos in their lives and they're just like, "That's fine. It's fine." Anyway.
- Ryan:** We'll just try and name their baby.

- Selena:** No, it's not their baby. *[both chuckles]* It's his baby.
- Ryan:** Oh, it's Drake. *[both chuckles]*
- Selena:** Drake.
- Ryan:** Yes, it's *[inaudible]* baby.
- Selena:** Oh, my goodness. You named your kid Drake. Obviously, I shouldn't say goodness. But we don't say that here. Let's get some scripture involved in this conversation. So related to codependency, there are other issues. Fear of man being one of those and boundaries. So Proverbs 29:25 says, "The fear of man lays a snare but whoever trust in the Lord is safe." So we always want people to think highly of us, right? That's kind of just a human desire.
- Ryan:** That's a human desire.
- Selena:** Many times it results in a lot of people-pleasing behaviors. For codependent people, they create a facade to kind of hide their...I'm reading this thinking like, "This is just me I feel like." Because we hide. We have this facade that we create and we can hide behind it on social media, we can hide our flawed selves. And it just weirds out actual human interaction. If all we do is kind of build up these facades and we live behind them, we become so dysfunctional and dead inside I feel in how we can really like love each other and interact with each other as not just friends. I'm not just talking about spouses but I'm also talking about like friendships and the body of Christ. Anyways, I'm just reading this feeling like it's reading my mail. And talking about it is...
- Ryan:** So within this issue, codependency is usually underlying a fear of man, fear of consequence. Also fear of opinion. Like fear of what would that person think of me or what will they do because of this truth if I expose that to them? That does present itself in very various ways in our modern culture. Here's the thing. It's scary. In the church, we've gotten really good at acting like we're speaking truth in love or acting like we're being honest, but we're pulling punches. And it's not that we need to be punching each other. [00:25:00] That makes a bad analogy. But we need to be completely honest. Not half-heartedly honest. Don't blunt the edges of the truth. Let the truth do what truth does, but do it with love. So, a lot of times we mistake blunting the edges with doing it with love. Right?
- Selena:** Yeah.

Ryan: I'm being sarcastic right now. But love would never make anyone feel bad. Love would never make anyone have bad feelings, right? How could I ever disagree with you? Because that's not loving.

Selena: The loving aspect and this is just an epiphany to me right now, the loving part of it, it's like discipline, right? You don't want to discipline your kids, but like the Lord...it shows that you love them. Any parenting book I've read is like, when you discipline your child, it's the afterwards that really is showing the love. Yeah, I'm showing love and action. It doesn't seem like, it doesn't seem very loving that I'm calling you out on your behavior or that you're dealing with a consequence. What I am doing afterwards, though, is coming alongside you hugging you, loving you, saying, "This is not something you're going to deal with on your own. We're going to walk through this together."

Ryan: Let's talk about the marriage example because you brought the kids. But we'll talk about the marriage version of that.

Selena: I think that can apply in marriage.

Ryan: It does. A long time ago...and I'll make this really fast. We talk about this a lot. It's in our book "See Through Marriage." That whole book about transparency. So this is a hot topic. It has been around the Frederick household for the last year and a half.

Selena: The Lord is like, "Selena, live in the light." And I'm like, "Okay, Lord, I'm trying."
[both chuckles]

Ryan: And so in the book, I explained how there was a point in the recent years where I was feeling convicted and ashamed, very ashamed about something that happened probably in my early...not even teenager yet. I just felt like if I just kept avoiding it and pushing it down, it would go away and stop nagging me. Finally, at communion on a Sunday morning, God said, "You need to be known. You need to share this with your wife and you need to trust me in that." And I was like, "There's no way I'm doing that." *[laughs]*

Anyway, of course, the Holy Spirit prevailed, as he often does, always does, unless we quench the spirit, of course. Anyway, actually at communion, I leaned over and said, "This is really heavy. I need to talk to you about something. Not here, but at some point today. I just need you to know that there's something I need to talk to you about." And Selena was like, "What is this?" Anyway, we went got lunch with the kids in Subway or something like that. They fell asleep in the car by the grace of God, because they don't always do that and we had a moment, and I just said, "This is the thing."

And I danced around trying to figure out the words to say. Finally, I just came out with it. And what was your response? It was threefold. It was, "Thank you. Thank you for being honest with me. Thank you for sharing this deep, shameful thing that you were afraid to share with me." The second response was, "I love you. And I even love you more than I did just five minutes ago." And then the third response was, "Here's some stuff I need to share with you."

What happened is that, that submission of like, I'm not afraid of what Selena is going to say, I'm more afraid of what God is telling me to do. So instead of trying to hide that thing from her, then I'm going to reveal it to her. And what happens when we trust God, and we trust His way and we both do that as a couple? Man, it's amazing how His truth holds up. It's amazing how we flourish on the other side of it.

Selena: Well, and it creates this deeper interdependency. Right?

Ryan: Yeah. That's really good.

Selena: It creates this deeper state of how we are sharing these common set of principles and we're responsible to each other. Yeah, that's awesome.

Ryan: So, in contrast, the fear of man is one reason. It's kind of the underlying thing of codependency. Another underlying cause is pride. Pride is such an insidious thing. C. S. Lewis called pride a cancer. It eventually just eats and kills the entire person. But it keeps us from seeing ourselves rightly. We have a puffed-up view of ourselves, my righteousness, my ability to process knowledge and to accomplish things and to enact change in my own life. So I don't even look at God. I don't see God the way He is. I don't see myself rightly. I don't see God rightly. I have this distorted view. Now, because of that pride, I have to make sure and maintain whatever this facade is.

Selena: Right. I just love how they say this because it's so true.

Ryan: Who's they? I don't know if we've referenced this article. But from...

Selena: It's Got Questions. We did.

Ryan: By the way incredible article.

Selena: It really is.

Ryan: So if you want to read, we're kind of going off of a lot of the outline stuff is from there.

- Selena:** Gotquestions.org. Type in "codependency" and it'll come right up. He says that "while God loves us, regardless of our sin, he's declared that we are 100% wicked and in need of a Savior." We see this in Mark 10:8. "And Jesus said to him, 'Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone.'" Boom. [00:30:00] Mic drop. Sorry.
- Ryan:** Mic drop.
- Selena:** Jesus just has all the mic drops. That message offends our pride. Right? Our pride would tell us like you said, "We're good." "I'm a pretty good person. I make pretty good decisions. I'm not as bad as that person." But that is not inaccurate. Again, a distorted view of self does not identify our need for a savior. And that is what we need to recognize in order to even recognize and see that we are codependent, right?
- Ryan:** Yeah.
- Selena:** Because we're looking to someone else other than God to be our Savior, to be our identity, to be all of those fulfillment things that we were created to depend on and be fully in God, like under Jesus with Him.
- Ryan:** So the antidote to that piece, and we're going to get into biblical independency in a few seconds here, but the opposite of pride is humbleness or humility. I like the word humility. I like the idea. And this is going to come up...
- Selena:** Talk about idea. [inaudible] I'm like, "Ooh." *[laughs]*
- Ryan:** Let me get there. This grates on me even a little bit and probably grates on a lot of people. But the idea of being humiliated before God, it's...so obviously the idea of being humiliated as you're getting kind of dragged through the mud and your face rubbing it. But this idea of being like utterly just ruined standing before the Holy God and saying, anything that you choose to pick up off the ground right now is completely because you chose to pick it up not because I've somehow pulled it together.
- Selena:** So good.
- Ryan:** And that view—
- Selena:** Holy humiliation. *[laughs]*
- Ryan:** That orientation. But here's the thing, and this is the gospel truth, it's not just the doom on one side, but it's the promise on the other. And the promise is that...I think it's in James that says, "Humble yourself in the sight of the Lord

and - what? He will lift you up." He will lift you up. He will lift your face and wipe your tears and pull you up and call you a co-heir with Christ. Not because you're awesome. Because He's awesome.

Selena: Right. Right.

Ryan: So it becomes like this...it's so great to start afresh, that I have to admit before God that I need Him. Once you get there, actually it's easier I think that's the point being made.

Selena: Yeah, codependency is a way to keep those blinders on and to ignore our sin. It's a way just to live in denial, essentially and to keep people where I need them to be. So like, we'll say what we need to say we'll do it we need to do but I need them to be there all the time in those spots. And I need them to fill those buckets. And, people, we are created with holes in our buckets. So the only one that can truly fulfill our identity, can fulfill all of our needs, and I'm not saying this tritely, we say this with all the grace and humility and mercy extended, God is the only one that can do that. This whole idea of interdependency that we're going to now kind of unfold—

Ryan: Did you talk about this last one? Because that one to me is so potent?

Selena: Sure.

Ryan: Everyone needs healthy boundaries to maintain convictions and avoid being manipulated. But codependent people don't feel like a whole person. So they tend to copy others or attach themselves to people to gain a sense of identity. Okay. So we've talked about the—

Selena: So I kind of glossed over that in my head and now you're reading it and it's bringing new life to all the things that I—

Ryan: Okay, if you don't consider yourself a whole person, now, what would make someone feel like not a whole person? Okay. Your childhood? Maybe your dad didn't love you like he should have. Or your mother didn't love you like she should have.

Selena: I feel like people within hobbies tend to be codependent in some ways because they find their identity and they attach themselves and they spend all kinds of money or they do whatever they need to do and buy whatever they need to buy to get that sense of identity that "I am with this. Aren't I awesome because I'm with this?"

- Ryan:** Right. So they never really fill out their own identity because I've never looked to the one who created them.
- Selena:** And gives them identity.
- Ryan:** And gives them identity. Is there a movie? I think there's a movie where—
- Selena:** I'm sure there is.
- Ryan:** It might be like 10 Things I Hate About You. I can't remember. Or How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days. One of these rom-com movies where the girl doesn't know how she likes her eggs. What movie is that?
- Selena:** Oh, it's a...
- Ryan:** You know what I'm talking about?
- Selena:** Yes.
- Ryan:** So you'll think of it.
- Selena:** Runaway Bride.
- Ryan:** Okay. And he's like, "How you like your eggs?" She's like, "I don't know." He keeps asking her and she can never make up her mind. She doesn't have her own opinion about it. She does have an opinion but she doesn't...
- Selena:** She doesn't know yet because she only likes the eggs the same way the guys that she's been with have.
- Ryan:** Yeah.
- Selena:** If they wanted scramble, she ate scrambled.
- Ryan:** Classic, classic *[Selena laughs]* codependency. Julia Roberts. Big mistake. Huge.
- Selena:** Oh, no. *[Ryan laughs]*
- Ryan:** I'm referencing The Office. That pretty woman. Okay.
- Selena:** Okay. I was like, "I don't know about that reference." *[Ryan laughs]*
- Ryan:** I've never actually seen the movie.

Selena: Okay.

Ryan: Anyway, so let's talk about biblical interdependency. Hopefully you have a clear view of [00:35:00] what codependency is. I think the big picture idea of codependency is you have needs as a person. You have physiological needs, you have emotional needs, you have spiritual needs, you have holes, and you have gaps in what you are and who you are that need to be filled. The question is, how are you going about getting those filled in an unhealthy way? And oftentimes the unhealthy way people take is through a codependent relationship. I'll give you what you need and want, you give me what I need and want We'll do this together. Nobody will talk about the elephant in the room. And who cares that we have a menagerie of elephants unfolding before us? Who cares?

Selena: I would like to have an elephant? Like real-life elephant would be awesome. I think that's a longing for heaven. I'm just going to throw it out there. *[laughing]*

Ryan: Of wanting wild animals?

Selena: Wanting to be with free with wild animals. That sounds really crazy.

Ryan: You sound like their oldest daughter right now. *[Selena laughs]*

Selena: O Lord. Anyways, that's silly. But going back to this interdependency, which again, is the state of being mutually responsible to others, while sharing a common set of principles.

Ryan: Can we read from Genesis 2?

Selena: Okay, yeah.

Ryan: Genesis 2:24.

Selena: He's excited about talking about this.

Ryan: "Then the man said, 'This, at last, is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.' Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed."

Selena: Hmm. So the Bible talks a lot about how both spouses are dependent on each other...

Ryan: They are one flesh, right?

Selena: ...in completion. Yes. There's a reason that man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh. That's Genesis 2:24. So Jesus and Paul quote this verse with those three elements that we heard is talking about leaving, cleaving, and uniting. Marriage counselors, pastors, everybody that wants you to have biblical marriage will identify these terms in that order.

Ryan: So what do we mean by leaving, cleaving, and uniting? Leaving is a sense of I was raised by my mom and dad and they've brought me to a place of maturity and I ideally have a relationship with God and I'm going to step away from their covering. And now I'm stepping into a new covering with my spouse. And caveat here. Being single is a unique calling and it's a special calling. You don't have to be married to be made whole, a whole person. It's not what we're saying.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: What we're saying is if God has called you into marriage and you find the woman or the man that He's called you in a marriage with, then this is the process for that. So leaving is stepping out from the covering of my parents and out from a covering of their household. Though, it doesn't mean you abandon your parents. It just means that you're no longer depending on them in this way. And now you're cleaving to each other in this interdependent relationship and uniting under the tenets of what it means to be a disciple of Christ.

Selena: Right, right.

Ryan: Okay.

Selena: This kind of speaks to roles of husband and wives. And that's a whole nother podcast...

Ryan: I think we're due for roles episode.

Selena: But the idea is that as each spouse fulfills his or her role, the other benefits. It's not this I'm reaching out to you to fulfill my needs. It's I am living the way God has purposed me to live and I'm resigning anything else that would say otherwise. And in doing so, I am also not only fulfilling the role that He's giving

me but you are benefiting from that as well. And then I benefit. Like we all benefit. We see this so like...go to Ephesians 5, right? Wives submit your own husbands as to the Lord, for the husband is ahead of the wife. We know that scripture. 1 Timothy 5:8. "But if anyone does not provide for his relatives..." Are you reading that?

Ryan: Nope. Sorry.

Selena: "...his relatives especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever." Yikes!

Ryan: Little cringy there.

Selena: Yes. And then we have the Proverbs 31 woman, right? That is—

Ryan: Bring up the verse.

Selena: An excellent wife. It describes a woman who fears the Lord. The heart of her husband trust in her and he will have no lack. She does good and not harm. When we think of word "submission", that is underneath this whole idea of interdependency. There's this submission and love.

Ryan: And there's this muchness

Selena: There's this muchness.

Ryan: No, seriously, this is the problem that our culture has with it is interdependency, we don't want interdependency.

Selena: We want independence.

Ryan: We want independency.

Selena: Independency. *[both laughs]* Independence.

Ryan: Yes. Well, you had to go of the same sound anyway. We want to be independent. We want to be completely [00:40:00] self-contained, self-sustained, in that I have all I needed myself, I can actualize myself, I don't need anyone else.

Selena: Ironically, you become codependent from that, I would argue. I would argue that you would become codependent.

Ryan: Or you join into a marriage with another independent person and it becomes a very cold, contractual relationship in that you're not depending on one another in any meaningful way.

Selena: But you're codependent on each other in other ways

Ryan: Okay. So why is divorce so prevalent? Because we don't think of marriage in these terms. We think of marriage in terms that are worldly, which are, this will work as long as you do your end and I'll do my end. As soon as you stop doing your end, I'm walking. I'm leaving and I'm taking half of the house with me. Okay?

Selena: Yeah.

Ryan: That's the attitude.

Selena: I love when your [inaudible] comes out. *[both chuckles]*

Ryan: We have people in our lives, in our very close light who have gone through divorce, and this is exactly the attitude they've had toward it. Are they open to us saying, "Listen, if you want..." By that point, they just don't want the marriage anymore because the marriage is no longer expedient to them. It's no longer beneficial. The codependent has broken down, it's time to move on to another version of codependence and filling those gaps in a way that this is not submitted to God.

So I know I'm dropping a lot of those big bombs, but it's just this is the problem we have in our culture is this interdependence is a beautiful thing. This is why we have a problem with marriage, we have a problem with—

Selena: Family.

Ryan: With family, with roles, with submission and headship. I mean, if any of those things have rubbed you the wrong way, as you've listened to this...

Selena: You probably not read scripture accurately. *[chuckles]* I've interpreted it in my own heart.

Ryan: Or you've held up distorted views of these things as the standard. Instead, we need to look at God's word and say, "What is the model He's holding up for us?"

Selena: So good.

Ryan: Not my father, not my mother, not that marriage across the street, not stats on online, not anything else, but what is God saying for how a woman and how a man can flourish in their life together? That, my friends, is the source of life for us. It's that beautiful interdependence. And it's not something you can do on your own.

Selena: You can't do it on your own because the Lord's emphasis is independency is on service, not on self. Oh, man.

Ryan: But what am I a waiter? [*Selena chuckles*] I don't want to serve...You know what I'm saying? Like the attitude automatically comes up. I serve myself.

Selena: I know. My responses get into scripture. It is life-changing reading just loads of Scripture, understanding God's Word, getting books to help supplement. Because the only way to know God is to know His Word. And I am being just washed over by reading the amount of Scripture. I'm trying to do this to the Bible reading plan. I'm trying to keep up. And it's a lot of reading. But I will tell you, honestly, I've never read the Bible cover to cover. I've read many parts of the Bible, but there's always an in-between pages. And there's probably more actually that I haven't read. I'm really just soaking up Exodus right now. But it's great.

And I'm seeing God's nature in it. I'm seeing the truth. It is alive, and it is everything that you could not even imagine or hope for. And it bears weight on your soul just being in the scriptures. So that was kind of a tangent, also encouragement and a challenge. Get to know God, get to understand His purpose and design for Biblical interdependency, and value it. Submit to its authority. There's no other way to flourish.

Ryan: Guys, we harp on this quote a lot. But the Bible is not just a bunch of words strung together, okay? It is God's revelation to us. They are His words that He has placed in our lives in this world so that we can know His character, know His will, and obey Him. That's the special revelation of God's Word and namely in Christ so that we can actually be made right with Him. So we don't work to get our salvation. We have our salvation, and that bears fruit in the [inaudible]. Anyway, so we harp on that quote a lot.

I want to actually share a quick example. God is so gracious. You had a few hard nights. I think you might have been sick and didn't realize it or something. Remember how tired you were?

Selena: Yeah. Just fall asleep at 8 o'clock on a couch. Couldn't keep my eyes open.

- Ryan:** We watched the British Baking Show sometimes as a family. We actually just ran out of episodes.
- Selena:** How gained 15 pounds right there just watching that show and snacking. *[both chuckles]*
- Ryan:** Yeah, seriously. Bread season is upon us. That will happen.
- Selena:** Speak for yourself. *[both chuckles]*
- Ryan:** And you had fallen asleep on the couch. It was so cute. You fell asleep on the couch and then Clementine, our second daughter fell asleep on top of you. But it wasn't like standard sleep. It was like you both were in these really weird positions. Super cute. Took a picture. I carried Clementine off to bed and then I carried you off to bed.
- Selena:** And you didn't have to.
- Ryan:** And you woke up, you're like, "You [00:45:00] don't have to do this." And I was like, "Oh, I want to do it." *[both laughs]*
- Selena:** How dare you.
- Ryan:** Oh, my back. No, actually, you were a lot lighter...
- Selena:** It's because you're not as young as you once were.
- Ryan:** I was thinking I haven't been going to the gym. Am I going to be able to...Actually you were very light. Very easy to carry.
- Selena:** He goes, "Don't take this the wrong way, *[both laughing]* but you were lighter than I thought."
- Ryan:** I wasn't expecting like—
- Selena:** Got to go. *[inaudible]* people. I'm just kidding. *[both chuckles]*
- Ryan:** That was a sense of you were kind of you needed me to step in. So the next morning you actually woke up really early for some...
- Selena:** I cleaned, did all the things.
- Ryan:** Woke up, got all the girls out of bed. The baby started crying and she was wanting you, but instead, I came and got her and helped her.

- Selena:** Those are just miracles and blessing [inaudible]
- Ryan:** Did the dishes, made the breakfast. You came out and I just wanted you to sleep. You just needed to sleep and rest. And then what happened a few days later is I just needed...like I had a bad migraine and you just let me take a nap like middle of the day. And didn't make me feel bad about it.
- Selena:** Do I usually make you feel bad about it?
- Ryan:** No. But you went out of your way to say, "You need this." To me it's just a beautiful version of our vision of maybe how this could work out, how it has worked out recently in our own marriage.
- Selena:** Yes, serving one another in those needs, this area of needs. So...
- Ryan:** Sorry. That's such a beautiful tangent is that we have needs. And if we have a service orientation or a generous orientation toward our spouse, it will lead us to step in and be the avenue, the vessel that He uses to meet a need in our spouse's heart, in their life.
- Another example. I woke up and I was just despondent. And I was getting dressed, I was putting my shoes on and you go, "You're right?" I was like, "No, I'm doing awesome. I mean, awful. Can you just come pray for me?" And you stop what you were doing and you came over and just stood with me and prayed with me for me. And I needed you to do that. It was a beautiful thing. So anyway, I think we're there. I think we're there. *[Selena chuckles]*
- So, hopefully, ladies and gentlemen, this codependency, you know, we hope that it's helped you understand what it is. But not only that, to show you the hope there is and God's view of it in that. And don't feel condemned. If you're in a codependent relationship, don't feel like that's it for you.
- Selena:** There's hope and there's no help.
- Ryan:** There's hope and there's help in the Gospel. And there's help to be heard. So we always say this to couples: don't walk this journey alone. I think the best thing you can do is if you feel like, "I'm facing this, how do I move forward?"
- Selena:** Feels monumental, yeah.
- Ryan:** "This feels too big for me to address by myself." We always say get biblical counsel. We say, go start with your pastors and your elders. Start with people in your life who care about God's Word, who care about your marriage, who

are going to advocate for you, and get them to speak into your marriage. If you want to go a little bit deeper and talk with somebody who's got clinical training, then I do recommend counseling. We recommend counseling a lot. And like we talked about early on in this episode—

Selena: We recommend biblical counselling.

Ryan: Yes, biblical counseling. And I do think you can use tools that are quote-unquote, "secular" that are then out considered as a common grace to address with a biblical foundation.

Selena: Yes.

Ryan: Okay. For this series, and this is the third of four parts, we're partnering with faithfulcounseling.com. They've actually been generous to us. They've given us a coupon code for 10% off. It's a monthly thing. I think you can do a video session one time per month—

Selena: It was super easy to sign up.

Ryan: Very easy to sign up.

Selena: And you go through and kind of answer all the questions. But the cool thing is that you can just schedule it online and show up. It's just...I don't know. It's been a real blessing I think for just the season that we're in.

Ryan: And this is Selena who is not for gimmicks at all. When I brought this to you, you were like, "Oh, great. Another thing that I have to do." *[chuckles]*

Selena: It was a year, people. We took a year interacting with Faithful Counseling.

Ryan: So it's not a gimmicky thing. I feel like the platform gets out of the way. So you can actually just go about your life and then have counseling when you need it. Cool thing is I think you get a weekly session with your counselor. They'll give you tools, they'll give you downloads and things and exercises to go through. But you can also text them throughout the week. And there's unlimited communication you can have via that. You can text them through the app.

Selena: It's really great in terms of licensed professionals.

Ryan: Here's the key. Here's the big caveat—and I'll give you the coupon code here—is they're going to walk you through a process of signing up and they're asked all these questions. Make sure you fill all of that out, from a biblical

perspective. Be very overt about that. And they're going to pair you with the counselor. Make sure they care about God's Word. Make sure they consider it authoritative in your life. That was the one question we asked.

Selena: Yeah, they allow you to ask questions before you have a session with the counselor. And we asked, "What's your view on the Bible?" And she said, "I believe it's God's inherent Word and all the things that we would say."

Ryan: And she goes, "Do you have any more questions?" and we go, "Nope, that's it." [00:50:00] *[both laughs]* Of course that could be said, but not actually true. So you had to make sure to discern your way through this. But anyway—

Selena: And you can switch counselors in between anytime.

Ryan: So to go sign up for faithfulcounseling.com, go to faithfulcounseling.com/FMP and you'll get 10% off your first month. We trust that it will be a useful tool for you. And we're going through it. And we can attest it's been useful for us. All right, let's pray and we will call it an episode.

Lord, thank you for your Word. I thank you for this design that you've given us to be interdependent with each other as a married couple. I pray for a healthy interdependence for the couples, the husbands and the wives listening to this, that they would see your view of it, your model of it, and they would want to fall in line with that too, to fall into form with how you've designed it, Lord.

I also thank you for the giftings you've given to us through the church, that we can be interdependent with the people of God, that we can need one another in a really healthy way. That's a beautiful thing, and it's the way you've designed it. So, Father, I pray that you would bring good counsel into the hearts and minds into the lives of the couples listening to this, the husbands and wives, wherever they're at. May they be filled with the hope they have in you, Christ, and that all the help that you provide, through your Word and through your church. In Jesus' name. Amen

Selena: Amen.

Ryan: Thanks for joining us, ladies and gentlemen. This episode is—

Selena: In the can.

Ryan: All right. As usual, we will see you in a few days. And until next time—

Selena: Stay fierce.

[00:51:35] <outro>

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PODCAST NOTES

- **[00:23:07]**
 - Scripture references:
 - Proverbs 29:25
 - Mark 10:8
 - Genesis 2:24
 - Ephesians 5
 - 1 Timothy 5:8
 - Proverbs 31

- - Counselling Partner Recommendation:
 - faithfulcounseling.com

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