

MARRIAGE IS WARFARE

<https://fiercemarriage.com/marriage-is-warfare>

[00:00:00]

Selena: Marriage is warfare.

Ryan: It's warfare.

Selena: It's clear. But you have to be sure you're fighting alongside each other, not just fighting against each other.

Ryan: Yeah, I don't know. When you say that I think...you know, we put out a headline: marriage is warfare, right? People...

Selena: What does that mean?

Ryan: It depends on where you're at. *[both laughs]* You're going to be like, "Yeah, it's warfare. It's warfare every day." But I think what you're trying to say is it's not warfare against each other but it's warfare in a much grander, more cosmic sense. It has to do with heaven and it has to do with eternity and it has to do with our culture, it has to do with our families, it has to do with the church. It has to do with so much. *[Selena chuckles]*

Selena: No longer can we sit here and be distracted away. No longer can we just live our faith out in our homes. That's actually the central place that we're talking about today, but it needs to permeate outside of it as well.

Ryan: And there's a huge context I think that's what we're trying to get at today is that the battle that you're fighting in your home is actually one that is much larger than just your home, just your marriage, just your immediate context. So this is going to be a power-packed episode. I'm really looking forward to it. So we'll see you on the other side.

[00:01:13] <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.
- [00:01:45] <podcast begins>**
- Ryan:** So I've been reading this book. I can't remember if I've mentioned it here on the podcast.
- Selena:** Yeah, we've been talking about a lot to a lot of people. So who knows?
[chuckles]
- Ryan:** Yeah, it's hard to remember. It's by an author named C. R. Wiley. I would love to have him on the show as a guest.
- Selena:** Maybe we can.
- Ryan:** Maybe we'll reach out to him and see if he's available. But the book is called "The Household and the War for the Cosmos." Right?
- Selena:** Yeah.
- Ryan:** Again, C. R. Wiley. That book, honestly, has been so good in lifting my perspective. You read it first, and you were just like, "Ryan, if you wrote a book, I feel like it would be like this guy's book." And then I read it and I was like, "Oh, great. This is awesome." He's articulating the things that I couldn't articulate. He was awesome.
- Selena:** Yeah, I was just affirming and echoing I think the truths that are already in our hearts and on our minds. The themes are being brought more to the surface and it's exciting, and it's new, and it's clarifying. So we're excited to share that, I think, with you guys and what that means.
- Ryan:** Right. And we're not necessarily talking about the book in this episode, but really, that is been sparking in us a lot of conversations around this idea that marriage is warfare. Honestly, I'm so enlivened by it because that idea just

contextualizes is honestly because of we've been in this ministry for so many years, but just our day to day. Like when I'm fighting for you, I know that it's not just, "Okay, I got to make my wife happy," or "I got to just keep the kids quiet." It's actually we're fighting for so much more.

Selena: One, we know what that vision is and it's clear, and the purpose is clear. It's honestly more of a joy and more of a... there's more drive there to fight. Because again, the purpose is bigger than just my feelings, my emotions, the battle that we're facing.

Ryan: Let's do our quick housekeeping here. I just want to thank all of our amazing patrons. If you're on Patreon, you know what's going on right now. We are doing a very exciting beta test of an upcoming release that we're doing in January. And we already had our first kind of...what is it? A primer session. It was amazing. It was a very small group of people. Anyway, so thank you patrons for already jumping on board with that, not only supporting in Patreon and supporting our efforts tangibly, financially there but also supporting with your time in this beta test that we're doing.

So if you want to be a part of that kind of...I hate this phrase but insider community. It's so gratuitous. If you want to lock arms with us and be on mission with us, it's important now, as we'll talk about today, it's now more important than ever, in that I feel like our days of being able to freely proclaim the unfiltered truths of God through a biblical worldview, those days are numbered. I do believe that. That doesn't mean we're going to stop it. It just means that we need to be very strategic about it. And Patreon is one way we're trying to be strategic about it, in that we're not beholden to these big tech companies that might say, "Oh, you talked about Jesus too much" or "You said that traditional marriage is the best way. Therefore, we're going to sensor you." [00:05:00] This gives us a little bit more autonomy from them.

So if you feel a burden for that as we move into a very tender time in our country, a tender time in our world, this might be one way that God is leading you. So I guess we would just ask that you pray about that. If He has put on your heart to be a part of Fierce Marriage, Fierce Families, Fierce Parenting, which is another ministry that we just launched, then you can be a part of the marriage side by going to patreon.com/fiercemarriage. Just go there, pray about it, and then join with us. I think the \$25 a month and up levels, get free access to this beta thing that we're talking about. Just FYI, check that out.

Selena: I think you said there was limited space for the beta?

Ryan: Yeah, it's very limited.

- Selena:** So if you're hearing this and you're saying, "Yes, I want to do that..."
- Ryan:** Don't delay.
- Selena:** Don't delay because there are limited spots. We can't wrangle 40,000 people. *[chuckles]* No, I'm kidding.
- Ryan:** Yeah, it's very limited. We're keeping it to I think 100 couples or less. So don't delay if that's something that's on your heart to do. Next ask. Sorry, we haven't done this in a while, but please do take time, if you've gotten anything out of this podcast, if you've heard any wisdom, it has likely come from Selena. And so on Selena's behalf, leave a rating and a review on iTunes. But we know who the real star is. Nobody...
- Selena:** Jesus. It's Jesus.
- Ryan:** Okay. Okay. Yes. Nobody's like sitting here wondering, "Hmm." *[Selena chuckles]* No, they know that Selena is the star of the show. All right. Just so you know, Selena, my job is to set the stage to extract the wisdom from your brain. That's my job.
- Selena:** Whatever is left after three kids and no sleep and just a crazy, awesome, full, and good life.
- Ryan:** Speaking of which, you didn't get any sleep last night.
- Selena:** Got some. I don't know. It's just kind of one of those nights that you're trying to sleep and you just can't.
- Ryan:** So our youngest just turned one.
- Selena:** She did.
- Ryan:** And still waking you up at the middle of the night. That's just life people. It's life. We've done...
- Selena:** We're working on some things. All right. Back off. Back off all the *[inaudible]* *[both laughs]*
- Ryan:** No comment.
- Selena:** No, I'm kidding. I got to save that for the Fierce Parenting. Just kidding. *[chuckles]*

- Ryan:** Here's the deal. All right. We'll talk about this more on the parenting side when that podcast goes live sometime in the near future. Moms don't need any more like shoulds and shaming and like, "Hey, you should be doing this. You need to try this essential bath salt oil thing."
- Selena:** Stop. *[both laughs]*
- Ryan:** I get it. Sometimes that's good. But anyway, you're doing great. You're a great mom.
- Selena:** It's exactly what every husband need to say to their wife and their kids.
- Ryan:** No, you're a great mom. You're the greatest mom of all the moms. *[both laughs]*
- Selena:** You're funny.
- Ryan:** All right.
- Selena:** All right. Well, jumping into our topic here I think it's important to discuss war and the war for marriage. You don't like my title. So now I'm all kind of baffled about it. What are you calling it? War for marriage?
- Ryan:** No, marriage is warfare.
- Selena:** Marriage is warfare. Okay, let me just change that real quick.
- Ryan:** Yeah, because you're going to keep bundling.
- Selena:** Well, here. Write the rundown, Selena. Write the rundown.
- Ryan:** No, no, no, no, we worked together on this.
- Selena:** The first thing he says, "I don't like that title." I was like, "Okay, well, you know, I just got over here trying my best, but it's fine." *[both laughs]*
- Ryan:** I'm sorry.
- Selena:** All right, listener, if you are listening to this, we're talking about how marriage is warfare. And what are we worrying for? I'm going to go through a few questions. But I just want you to kind of think about and ruminate on as we unload this idea of marriage being warfare. So questions to ask ourselves. What do we mean by war? What is a war or battle? What is the war or battle

that we are talking about? Who and or what are we fighting? So who is the true enemy here?

Ryan: It's good.

Selena: Is it our spouse who doesn't believe the same thing as us? Or is it something else or someone else? How do we fight in unity? Maybe we're not in unity in how we're fighting because we don't know how to fight or to armor up or what that means. Or maybe how are we already fighting? It's always good. I like when I'm reading a book and it's telling me what I'm doing right? It's always so encouraging. Because we're always challenged on every front and there's always a lot of guilt, shame, pressure, all kinds of outside messaging.

So when I'm looking at, okay, how can I be a better parent or teacher or wife, or a better spouse? How can we identify and see what God is already doing in [00:10:00] what we're already arm and arm with Him doing together? And be affirmed in that. I think that's important.

Ryan: I think that's stirring affections, right? I feel like when you get those moments in a text...in Scripture, happens obviously if we're trying to let scripture—

Selena: You said text and I thought text message. *[chuckles]* I was like, "Wait, you get a text in Scripture?" *[both chuckles]* That's awesome.

Ryan: No, no. In that text of Scripture or the text of a book that you're reading. It feels like a William Wallace moment. You know that speech in Braveheart which was just unbelievable.

Selena: I only watched that movie like once because it's just too much for my heart.

Ryan: It's so much emotion. I mean, obviously, it's Hollywood's, it's Mel Gibson. Everything is wrapped up in like Scottish...that whole saga that that is. But it feels like that type of moment when you read a book. So what book did you read recently? So you're reading a lot of like Nancy Pearcey, right? You've been reading Nancy Pearcey.

Selena: Whole truth. Oh, Rachel Jankovic's Fit to Burst. It's a great motherhood book. She really ties in some strong messages with the gospel and kind of daily work.

Ryan: So there's that one. I just started a new book. I can't remember the author or the title of it. It's "Live not by Lies" is what it's called. It's more of a cultural commentary. The point I'm trying to make is that we have these different works of literature that we kind of put in front of our faces, and we read it. And when we have the one where you read it, and it's like, "This is a brother

in arms. This is a sister in arms. These people care about this. I've never met this person, but we are going the same way and it is informed and under the authority of Scripture," that feels like a braveyard...ah, Braveheart moment. Braveyard. Whatever that is. It feels like a Braveheart moment.

So that's what we're trying to convey here is like, you are a fierce couple, you're a husband or wife, you're listening to this, you've probably listened to more than one episode, you probably got the sense through hearing us talk, but right now we'll be very overt and just say, this is a call to arms. Marriage is warfare and you are in the battle right now, whether you recognize it or not. That doesn't mean you're fighting with your spouse. It doesn't mean like we've already said. And so we're going to walk through and talk through exactly how marriage is warfare—

Selena: And how we can seek unity in our home as we gather around God's truth. How do we fight this battle faithfully knowing that the greatest war was won on the cross? It's there already but not yet. And how are we fighting the battles of today? Because yes, marriage is under attack. The traditional biblical design of marriage...

Ryan: Yes, and more.

Selena: ...and more.

Ryan: I'll say yes and more. The very ideas that undergird marriage have been...there have been debates—

Selena: And it's not just like secondary or tertiary attack. I feel like it's on the chopping block, people. Like it is the thing. So we're talking about how marriage is warfare and how we must fight in unity. So breaking those things down again.

Ryan: Sorry, I want to add. We're going to do also three battlefields of where this kind of unfolds, where the war is actually happening. I want to say that upfront because I feel like it's like, Ooh, battlefields? What are they? There's three of them. I want to know. That's what I'm thinking.

Selena: Yeah, good. Well, that's great.

Ryan: I wish you would titrate me.

Selena: I'm in my own head. I'm in my own head.

Ryan: I like being titrated.

Selena: Oh, my goodness. Oh, goodness. So marriage is warfare. That phrase. So we're not warring against each other. We are warring, fighting, battling together as a couple against what we will tell you about in our scripture.

Ryan: All right.

Selena: As a couple in a marriage covenant, again, we're fighting for God's kingdom to come on earth as it is in heaven. We're fighting for the things of God, for the purpose, the design, for marriage that God has ordained. We are also fighting for future generations. We're fighting for the gospel to be not only the epicenter and the authority and governing of unbelievers' life today, but also into the future.

Ryan: Very good.

Selena: We have future generations that need to know God, need to know His design, again, His purpose, His order. If we're not engaging in that actively, then we're passively going to get floated away in the river of culture and life and everything else. So who and what is our battle against. It is the enemy. It is not just against our neighbor who believes something very differently than us, right? It's the beliefs that are warring.

So we have our today's foundational scripture is Ephesians 6:10-13. It says, "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, [00:15:00] but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm."

We're going to elaborate on that into more verses because we're going to talk about the armor. So here's our battlefield, right? Verse 12, For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood. We're not in this historical BC time of tribes warring against each other.

Ryan: It's not [inaudible] or whatever the battlefield might be, physically speaking.

Selena: Right. We actually do have quite a bit of peace, I think, in the world, not a ton. I mean, there's obviously a ton of unrest. But where does this unrest come from? If you were to follow that down into the root of this going down into the source, again, it's this darkness. It's spiritual forces. It's the cosmic powers. It is the heavenly places. So our battlefield again is not necessarily each other. But our daily interactions can bring deeper unity or division depending on

whether or not we're armoring up together. And what does that mean? What am I saying put on your armor? So how can we effectively fight if we aren't armored up for battle, if we're not putting on this armor? So what is the armor? Well, good thing you asked?

So we read Ephesians 6:10-13. This is 14 through 20. "Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.

So simply put, our armor is the Bible and prayer. We cannot underestimate our armor. And if we are right now, truly, God help us to not do that. Help us, Lord, to understand the importance, the value, the life and lives and future generations that are on the chopping block if we are not engaging in putting on an armor daily as a couple.

Ryan:

Huh. Okay, I think it's fun to look through...I haven't done a big study on these. I'm just going to spitball through these but the actual pieces of armor. The first one is "stand therefore." That's a rousing kind of call from Paul to the Ephesians. Stand. This is kind of what we're trying to hear, I guess. It's like, "Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth."

So what is a belt? Is that just something that keeps your pants from falling down? No, it is the thing that really brings it all together. If you think about it in a battle context, the belt is going to be the thing that would have your sword on it. It'd be the thing that kind of keeps everything in line. The word "truth" is not arbitrary. It's not just like, "Oh, truth." In Scripture, Jesus is called the truth. Okay? So it's like, the Word of God...In the beginning was the Word, the Word was God. That's the set forth decree of God's Word. We've talked about this in the past. We have God's Word in Scripture, which is the Word of God, the Bible. We have God's Word incarnate, which is the person of Christ, the logos, the fulfillment of God's Word.

The capital T, Truth. So the belt of truth being like if we don't have that...fierce couple, if you don't have Christ as the truth in your life, none of this will make sense. Why do you think Paul starts with this? And we're in a very postmodern culture. Postmodernism, basically, it's the notion that everything can mean

anything. Anything can mean anything. So there's no truth, everything's relativistic. So it's all through the eye of the beholder.

Selena: No order. No truth. Sounds good. *[chuckles]*

Ryan: And that's where we have all these modern conflicts and unrest that we're experiencing is there is this sense that any truth claim is only for oppressive purposes, right? Based on whatever identity group you're a part of.

Selena: It's so ironic.

Ryan: And so no one can say any truth.

Selena: So no one can have truth?

Ryan: Right? No one has a monopoly on truth anymore, right? And even math is being questioned. I've told you. I've shared that with you, which is a really funny. Not funny, but it's tragic. You read about it in an Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four.

Selena: I'm not surprised though. Math is one of the ways [00:20:00] that the Lord is revealed in some really tangible...anyways.

Ryan: The point I'm trying to make here for this conversation is that this idea of truth is not just to be passed over. Like you could spend the rest of your life getting to the core of what truth is. That's why we have God's Word. That's what Proverbs says, "Get wisdom, get understanding. Fight for it with everything, buy it at any cost." Get truth because without it none of the other stuff makes sense.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: And so let's go down the line here. "And having put on the breastplate of righteousness." They were thinking through, okay, marriage is warfare, we're guarding ourselves up for battle, we are putting on the belt of truth. Okay, Christ is my plumb line is what I'm trying to say. God's words my plumb line. It tells me what's up, what's down, what's left, what's right. Okay, now I can actually put on the breastplate of righteousness which that is then conforming my decisions, my attitudes, my thoughts, my behaviors to this standard of not just truth but of right.

Selena: It's interesting too. I'm just thinking like the breastplate over your most...

Ryan: Heart.

Selena: Your heart, but your most vital organs and conforming those. And if you think of the function, the actual physical function of each of those organs and how they echo the design of our spirit man as well and who...I don't say spirit man like weird. I'm saying our spiritual soul, right?

Ryan: Yeah

Selena: A heart, mind.

Ryan: I mean, the symbolism is not arbitrary.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: So the breastplate of righteousness being that I am now conforming myself...Guys, this is Proverbs 2. Walk according to the ways of wisdom and it will go well with you. Because that's how God designed things to work. If you walk justly, it will go well as opposed to walking with corruption or walking in righteousness versus walking in wickedness. They protects us. It doesn't mean that you're going to have a pain free life. Jesus said you'll have trials of many kind, but when it comes to like the core of you, you will be protected. The core of you will be protected as shown in the next one is and as shoes for your feet. This is verse 15. As shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of - what?

Selena: Peace.

Ryan: Peace. Okay, you can go through any circumstance. If you are secure in the Gospel, your decisions will be absolute. You won't compromise. Because you have this gospel of peace, it will always be the underlying...I don't need your approval. I don't need to compromise. I don't need to profess something I know to be a lie. I don't need to perpetuate a lie. I don't need to fight selfishly in this because I know that Christ has fought the biggest battle and he has won. And I'm going to gird myself up with that truth, protect myself with that righteousness, and let that peace determine how I actually walk day to day.

All right. "In all circumstances take up the shield of faith." Faith in the sense of being...What is it? Faith is being sure of what you hope for, certain of things which are unseen. That will protect you from the flaming darts of the evil one. I know who Christ is. Have you ever seen Christ? No. But I have faith. I believe. I have, thank God the Holy Spirit in my heart telling me he's affirming that faith in me. He's actually I would say birthing that faith in me—the Holy Spirit is. I mean, it's profound.

"And then take the helmet of salvation, the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God." Helmet of salvation being the thing that protects your awareness. Like knowing that my...it's a foregone conclusion. I'm saved. I need not fret. I need not...think about warfare. Sorry, I'm going off on a long tangent. Okay, now we have guns, missiles, all that kind of stuff, technology. Back then you had...

Selena: Like hand to hand combat.

Ryan: Hand to hand combat. It was very psychological. We were doing home church at a friend's house a couple of weeks ago, and one of the guys is really into swords and stuff. And he was kind of nerding out. He was describing what it would be like to fight a really skilled like Katana, like Samurai or Ninja or somebody who knows how to use this type of sword. Pretty nerdy stuff. But I got terrified because he's like, yeah, in the flick of a wrist, it could basically slice you in half.

I'm thinking, mentally, that is a very different headspace to be in. I think the army and the armed services...don't quote me on this, but I think was it either 15 or 20 years ago, maybe less, they actually stopped training soldiers in how to use the bayonet. And one of the reasons was that it's a completely different emotional, psychological warfare, training versus using a gun in close combat with...Anyway, the point I'm trying to make is that having [00:25:00] the helmet of salvation to me, again, haven't done an in depth study, but it's like having this perspective informs how we now enter psychologically, spiritually into this warfare with - what? The sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.

Selena: So coming back and talking about what our armor is, it is the Bible and prayer. Daily putting on the armor through Scripture reading. Lots of scripture reading. And I am saying this because I've just been doing this plan. It's been really great. It's called to the Word if anybody's interested. And it's been incredible to read Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus...I'm in Leviticus. I'm almost done with it. But we also get to read...I can be excited about Leviticus. Come on, people. Also Hebrews.

Ryan: Are you excited about Leviticus?

Selena: I am because I'm understanding the heaviness of the law in a lot of ways and the duties. Keeping God's law was so difficult. It wasn't like, "Oh, you messed up, try again next time." It's like, "No, you have to die because you did not keep His law up."

Ryan: You actually swept the floor on the Sabbath, oh, see you outside.

Selena: I mean, it was a different time, but still God's law. I'm like, "Why have we lost some of that just awe and fear of the Lord as time has gone on?"

Ryan: Sidebar. There's differences between ceremonial law, moral law, and civil law. Each do have their reflections in the Gospel and fulfillments in the Gospel. I just want to make that distinction. We're not called to live according...

Selena: No, no, no. But it's lifting my eyes to who God is, and the bigness of God, the holiness of God and the...

Ryan: That's one of the main points of Leviticus, I'd say.

Selena: Then the weight and the beauty of the covenant that God made with His people and how it was not eventually dependent. It wasn't dependent on them. It was Him. He was the one that initiated. So anyways.

Ryan: I'm thinking of that movie set or the show psych. What does he say? He's like, "Yeah, of course, I've read the Bible. Genesis, Exorcist, Leviathan, do the right thing." *[both chuckles]*

Selena: Oh, boy.

Ryan: So you're in Leviathan now.

Selena: Yeah, yes. No, I'm almost done with it, though. But it's really somewhat redundant, but also good. So I'm learning a lot of things. Guys, Ryan and I have experienced just a lot more peace in our marriage, a lot more clarity, a lot more clarity around like purpose and vision and some of the deep stuff which flows out into the day to day in how we communicate, how we love each other, how we're connecting. And I can't help but attribute it to the bulk of we're both reading scripture together, we're reading it individually. We're also teaching it to our children. We're reading it with them.

Psalm 119:11, "I've stored up your word in my heart that I might not sinned against you." We're also going to read further down the passage in Deuteronomy about how we need to be training our children. So this daily putting on of armor is a training, right? We want to be in God's word. We want to be training our minds and our hearts, not in a legalistic way, but in a way that is standing therefore, fastening on this belt of truth in a way that I'm not fumbling through understanding some stuff. I don't know if I can have peace in this. No, God said I can have peace because I've been given the gospel of

peace. I can be ready. I don't have to be unsteady and not ready. *[chuckles]* I can be anchored.

Ryan: I want to backtrack a little bit because you said: "not in a legalistic way."

Selena: Okay.

Ryan: You had said, "Oh, I don't to be reading God's Word..." What did you say exactly? I can't remember.

Selena: I think I said we need to be reading God's Word in bulk and training ourselves in it.

Ryan: What you said not legalistically.

Selena: Not legalistically because you can't—

Ryan: Okay. I just want to be very clear. What we mean by that is that "Oh, I'm not going to be legalist. So I'll just kind of do it whenever."

Selena: Right.

Ryan: That tends to be my default when I say, "Oh..."

Selena: Or I'm reading so much that it was almost a self-righteousness.

Ryan: Sure. Sure. We are saved by grace. But we've swung so far on the side of grace that we forget that grace is good for our salvation. But there is still a second part of the gospel, which is salvation. There's also sanctification. And part of that is living by the Spirit, mortifying the flesh, and the act of will that it is to live against the flesh. So when you say you don't read the Bible for legalistic reasons, you're saying you don't recognize that your salvation is hinging upon how dedicated you are to reading the Bible. That's what you mean?

Selena: Yes.

Ryan: But I would say we don't hear that [00:30:00] and think, "Oh, then I can just kind of read whatever and I should never feel bad about ever missing anything."

Selena: Guys, reading the Bible's life-changing.

Ryan: It's important. And it's a call and...

Selena: It's alive.

Ryan: ...it's a challenge.

Selena: It's authoritative. I can't say it enough.

Ryan: Honestly, you guys, that's been a revelation for us is that we can really push. Because think about wartime mentality. All right? You are training. You are getting less sleep. You are eating rations. You are eating MREs. You are tired. You are dirty. You are at war. I think a lot of times we Christians treat this life like we're not. Like we're just kind of sitting on a beach somewhere and we just get to it when we get to it.

Selena: And if we're not, we need to get to the beach. It's this we're worshipping maybe at some level some comfort and pleasure and entertainment. I think the enemy would have a sitting in that lie and living that way. And we're saying no, we're at war and our marriage is on the battlefield. And we need to fight for each other, fight with each other. Together, not against.

Ryan: And that's what these battlefields that we're going to get to is. Okay, we keep saying marriage is warfare. Here's three very tangible battlefronts where this warfare unfolds.

Selena: Right. Just to finish up this thought, though, of what our armor is, is scripture reading together, lots of it and prayer. Praying and talking to God because we underestimate, again, what the function and purpose of prayer is. 1 Thessalonians talks about rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances, for this is the love of God in Christ Jesus for you. We all know that verse.

Reading in Leviticus, guys, you couldn't just talk to God. There was a whole process that you had to go through to bring a burnt offering. And it couldn't just be any burnt offering. It had to be a certain one for a certain potential sin or whatever sin that you did. Or it just had to be a certain offering for the reason why you're coming. That's what it was. The high priest had a whole process that he had to go through.

So this whole idea of prayer, just the journey of where it came from, and where it is today, I'm so convicted of my lack of conversation with the Lord. But also that has increased the more scripture that I read, the more I'm asking, "Lord, how can I understand this better for the day and age that I'm living in? How can your Word bring life to the situation or bring authority or clarity or order to the situation?" So prayer is kind of that outpouring for me right now of what the Scriptures are doing in my heart. So again, daily putting on this

armor, teaching, training our children to do the same. Now let's talk about these three primary battlefields within this context.

Ryan: So first one is a battle for your heart. By the way, we share this kind of stuff in our Instagram feed on Fierce Marriage. I like to think through it kind of more fully when we get to the podcast. So that's what this is. So the battle for your heart is kind of...As marriage does, it sanctifies us and we are kind of put face to face with our selfishness. So instead of saying, "You're an obstacle to what I want, you are therefore the enemy to be defeated on this battlefield," I think the more Christian way to look at that is to say that my flesh is nothing that is being fought in this battlefield. That my selfishness needs to be defeated. The Bible calls it crucifying the passions of your flesh. That's Galatians 5:24.

Think about the vivid imagery Paul is using there. He didn't just say "resist the passions of your flesh." He says that in other places. But here he says, "Crucify the passions of your flesh. Crucifixion is a theme in Galatians. In Galatians 2:20, "I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me." So that's the theme of crucifixion that goes through. But this contrasting crucifying the passions of your flesh and being made alive to life in the Holy Spirit, that is the first battlefield.

So think about pride. Husbands, come on, we tend to be very prideful. Even if you think you're not prideful. If you call yourself not prideful, then that is prove that you're prideful. *[Selena chuckles]* That's one of those Kafka traps where it actually holds up. If you think you're humble, then think again. The way this works out, early on in our marriage, and by God's grace, I have learned to be a better listener, a more tender speaker. I used to talk to you in ways that were dismissive and I would not purposefully like...I did it on purpose, but it wasn't conscious...

Selena: To just kind of a default of how you're able to...you figure out these ways to just kind of fight well for yourself. Right? Selfishly.

Ryan: And in the name of [00:35:00] defeating my wife I would make you feel small or insignificant or—I hate using this word—stupid. And that's not ever been my intention.

Selena: Don't worry, ladies and gentlemen. I flared up just as I should. So don't worry. *[chuckles]*

Ryan: Selena can hold her arm. *[Selena laughs]* The point is I need to love my wife and that she's not the one I'm fighting. So instead, I would repent to her and say, "Help me fight my flesh." So the theme throughout all three of these battlefields is unity. Unity with your spouse. Because you're not warring

against each other. You're warring against flesh and spiritual principalities. Not flesh and blood. Is your spouse flesh and blood? *[chuckles]* Yes.

Selena: Mm hmm.

Ryan: So I would go to you and say, "Help me love you better in this area. Help me crucify my flesh. Help me see why I have this need to be right at the cost of loving you well the way I'm called to love you."

Selena: Right.

Ryan: So the enemy would sell us on each one of these as a contracting lie. The enemy would sell you the lie that you are alone and even against your spouse in your battle. But don't buy it. Fight together with Christ clear insight. Together with Christ clear insight goes back to what Selena was saying about being so just saturated with the Word that it's on the forefront of both your minds...

Selena: Or when lies come, it's so obvious. Honestly, I felt like before I started this reading plan...not felt. I know. Before I started this reading plan, truth was clear on the big stuff, but sometimes in the smaller day to day stuff. I felt like I was missing it a little bit and I was like, "Lord, how come I just feel so unclear about the reasons and motivations for why I'm disciplining the kids a certain way or how I'm responding to Ryan?" I would battle back and forth mentally about, "Well, I should be more humble and less selfish. But why? I mean, I know why but..."

It just felt like there was just this tension and I couldn't figure it out. But reading and being in Scripture, even in Leviticus, it's like the clarity around the order has come and the clouds are gone. "This is why I respond this way. This is why I'm doing this. These are the reasons why." Because the purpose is clear. It's clear. So when I see a lie, I'm much more quick and able to identify it. And I praise God for that because it's only by His grace.

Ryan: That's a belt of truth.

Selena: Belts of truth right there. So the second one is the battle for your household. Every victory won for your marriage is a victory won for your children. We're talking about this. And who we're fighting for? Not only are we fighting for unity within our marriage, and fighting for God's kingdom and purpose to be done on earth, but we're fighting for those future generations to be able to experience and know God.

- Ryan:** Yeah, scripture is life with that language of generational thinking. Your children and your children's children. That the people of God are constantly reminded that "obey my law," this is God speaking, "and it will go well for you, for your children, your children, you will be blessed for generations." All throughout Scripture. The redemptive promise in the garden was through the generations of people. We see that language again in Deuteronomy. I don't know if you have the verse up here, but the verse is that teach it to your kids.
- Selena:** Deuteronomy 6. It's right down here.
- Ryan:** You want to read that real fast?
- Selena:** Yeah. It's just talking about how we fight in unity...
- Ryan:** Just read the verse, we'll go back.
- Selena:** "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates."
- Ryan:** There's no mincing words there. It is completely saturating every aspect of the Christian home. It's everywhere, and it happens all the time as we are looking at this scripture. So as we are battling this Battlefront in marriage being warfare, okay, we can sit down for dinner, and just eat and leave, or we can skip the meals. Or I can be so enthralled with work, or so enthralled with hobbies, or going to the gym, or going to Bible studies that I am missing these opportunities to actually open God's Word and actually do what Moses is instructing in Deuteronomy is saying, "Teach them diligently to your children and it shall talk to them when you sit in your house." What if you never actually sit in your house?
- Selena:** Or you do but you're on your screens. Or you're doing whatever.
- Ryan:** Or when you lie down and when you rise and you're on your phone? I'm speaking conviction to myself right now, by the way. And instead of binding them on a sign on your hand, [00:40:00] instead you're looking at your smartwatch or your phone.
- Selena:** It's not just distraction, it's disobedience. I think we just need to drop that because that's been my conviction. It's not "Well, I'll do this sooner. I'm not

going to do it." It's straight-up disobedience to the Lord. He's called us in Deuteronomy to teach and train or to love God, love Him with all of our heart, our soul, and our might. What does that mean? These words, you shall teach them diligently. You shall talk of them. They shall be everywhere. When you walk, by the way, whenever you're doing, these are the things that are in your head, in your speech, on your heart. At every front. no, I don't think I should sorry.

Ryan: It's not just distraction, disobedience.

Selena: Disobedience.

Ryan: So yeah. The enemy would tell you a lie that the home and biblical values are arbitrary, and that these are suggestions for living. Don't buy that lie. Fight alongside each other. This is critical. If you haven't had this talk, what does it look like to fight for our children in this way? If you haven't had that talk, have it, and then determine to fight for it, to work together to actually resist the devil and to crucify your flesh in this.

That leads us to the third one. You can see the kind of move out from the heart to the household now out into the community. Or if you want to stay with H's home, in your homeland. As the household goes, so goes every other institution of society. That's a quote from C. R. Wiley, in the book we mentioned earlier. So traditional family is no longer normal, you guys. I think people would say this in their heads. Okay, but we haven't quite wrapped our hearts around it, is that anyone will say, "Oh, yeah, of course. Yeah, divorce rates are up. It's no longer seen as necessary to have a father and a mother required in a home. It's nice to have." In a lot of cases, some people wouldn't even say that. You would know that and recognize that in your head, but let that sink into your heart for a minute.

Traditional Orthodox Christian home, biblical marriage, that is radical. It's a city on a hill. It's oil and water with our culture. If you are choosing to do these things and fight for one another, it is a truly radical thing that you can do. So the enemy would sell us a lie that marriage is an outdated institution.

Selena: Well, and I just want to—

Ryan: I want to finish it.

Selena: Okay.

Ryan: Don't buy it. Instead, be united as a husband and wife in the call to live as lights in a dark place.

Selena: Right. Well, and I just want to say, when you're saying think about what this is saying, think about that thing that you might be...We look at the world and we think that okay, yes, these are bad things that are happening. But we're kind of letting the world interpret our view of God sometimes I think in this. Like, we're saying, "Okay, I see this. What does God's word say about this?" But how is God's Word I guess bearing weight and being the authority and how we are seeing and responding the world? Does that make sense?

Ryan: Mm hmm.

Selena: I feel like we can kind of dial it down a little bit. I was trying to look for something that I had seen about this very thing. That sometimes we acquiesce to okay, yeah, I see the bad in the world. And so we kind of change our measures, or we kind of...

Ryan: We lose ground.

Selena: Yes.

Ryan: This is a reminder to see it for what it is. If you read scripture for what it is, and then you measure that up with society, you'll see that there is not just a slight contrast. It's a staggering contrast. And we're called to live and embrace that as - what does the Bible call us? Sojourners. We are not citizens of this world. We are citizens of God's kingdom. Our King does not reign down here. He has not yet taken full reign down here. He reigns in heaven.

So we can stand on that contrast in confidence with all the armor that we discussed earlier. Without any of that stuff, we will do as Selena is saying, is that will kind of be pushed back and be caught on our heels. We'll be on the defense. So I think this is a call to arms in that regard seeing marriage as what it is the first, I think in a lot of ways, the first step in recognizing the true warfare that is marriage.

Selena: Right. Right. There's lots of purposes that we've talked about as far as community and flourishing, human flourishing, all of these dominion taking fruit-producing themes for why we're fighting and where the battles are. So just another quick overview of how do we fight [00:45:00] in unity. Putting on our armor together through prayer, through Scripture. By doing those things, we begin to get to know our King, know our Savior, see His redemptive character throughout the whole Bible. He is the same.

We're gaining wisdom, we're growing in understanding of who He is, and even who we are and our shortcomings. Be more able to identify, again, the

battlefields and how to fight them confidently. You know, how I said I was kind of staggering and just unclear on how to navigate discipline or being a wife or how to respond my husband. And it's like, no, this is clear and I can follow this. And not only can I, I will. And then teaching and training our children to do the same that battle for our household. And being in church community. Did you talk about community?

Ryan: No.

Selena: Okay, I'm sorry. I'm going to skip that.

Ryan: No, no. That's part of the battle for your community. So every institution of society, right? You got your household, you've got church, and you've got state. So as the household goes, as C. R. Wiley says, as the household goes, excuse me, so goes every other institution. That just trickles out. So if the household is rooted in Christ and is living out the Word of God, those households living out the word of God faithfully will participate in the community of God, which is the church.

In the West, we have nonprofit organizations that are churches. There's also home churches, there's Bible studies, there's your Christian friends. Like that's capital C Church. The point is, is that being in Christian community, we've talked in the past about specifically Christian community, not just friends, not just friends who are Christians, but a Christian version of community. There's vulnerability. There's rebuke. There's prayer. There's commitment. There's dedication.

Selena: Perseverance.

Ryan: Perseverance. That is a version of community that is exclusive to Christianity. There's disagreements that are reconciled. They're not just perpetual; they have to be reconciled. Especially when it comes down to the core things. So yeah, that's the point I think we're trying to make. It echoes outward

Selena: So our last point before we have a little conversation challenge here is just to kind of, I think, bring some encouragement and highlight some areas that maybe you're already fighting together today. Maybe you guys are doing family worship or you've started that, you've heard us talk about that. That is basically what putting on your armor is. It's singing a short song. It's reading scripture, and it is...

Ryan: Praying.

- Selena:** Praying. Oh, my goodness. See, there goes my brain. Praying. So if you're engaging in family worship, awesome. That is how we are warring against the enemy, the principalities.
- Ryan:** Guys, for this podcast, the marriage podcast, I just want to be very clear. As a married couple, doing that in unity. All right. I think we are taking for granted that family worship. You understand what that is and you value what that is. We can't make you value that. There's a biblical call to family worship. So if you value God's Word, I encourage you to very seriously look into valuing family worship. But as a couple, fighting in unity for that, I think is the thing we really want to push on and press on here.
- Selena:** Be praying for each other, reading scripture together, praying with each other, and for each other, holding tight to marriage advocates versus adversary. Maybe you're already recognizing and kind of pruning out some of the friendships that would pin you and your spouse against each other.
- Ryan:** Pin them together, not against each other.
- Selena:** Where was I at?
- Ryan:** Pin. That's a good thing.
- Selena:** Guys, we're getting to the end.
- Ryan:** Pin against my spouse.
- Selena:** Also...
- Ryan:** I want to go back to the praying for. What I mean by that is praying for your spouse with your spouse. I was having a hard morning a few weeks back. I think you might have mentioned this. I woke up, my stomach was in knots, and you could tell. You were changing the baby's diaper. I'll sit on the bed getting my shoes on. And you're like, "Are you okay?" And through our bedroom door into the other door, I said, "Can you just come pray with me? I need you to come pray with me." And you stopped what you were doing. I think you were right about to change the baby and she had a poopy diaper. Not smelling great. And you just brought her over and prayed for me out loud with me. And I can't tell you how...
- Selena:** Prayer is more important than poop people. *[both chuckles]*
- Ryan:** Hashtag. I can't tell you how that ministered to my hearts. And God answered those prayers. It was awesome.

Selena: Again, that could have been a moment of me saying, "Well, I've got this priority of taking care of my kids. She's poop. My husband needs prayer. I get that." But like reading scripture, it's a no brainer. [00:50:00] Those decisions become so much easier. Also...

Ryan: So you're mentioning this next one down. [inaudible] to marriage advocates.

Selena: Maybe you've already started pruning out some of those relationships or creating some boundaries and distance. Good job. Keep that up. Again, another way we can war for our marriage. And then when you talked about, Ryan, in Galatians, about laying down our pride, seeking forgiveness, responding to the promptings of the Holy Spirit, engaging in the fruit of the Spirit. How? In our communication with each other and how we approach and engage in intimacy, in our commitment and discipline to attend church, whatever that looks like today, being in the body of Christ. Guys, these are the ways that we fight back the darkness.

The light will overcome the darkness. The darkness has not won, and it will not. But it is pressing. Sometimes I think it feels super, super dark. But God is light, and He is good. He's given us instruction and purpose in those instruction and authority to continue to bring light, to bring His truth, His words to our lives to give us order, to help us.

Ryan: It's good. Good. Did you do the challenge yet?

Selena: No. I always leave that for you because I write it and then he's like, "You know what? I'm just going to go with something else." What are you doing today? What are you doing? It's okay.

Ryan: No, this is it.

Selena: They are usually good.

Ryan: As a couple, you know, we encourage you...you'll probably listen to this alone. So go home, talk to your husband, talk to your wife, and propose these questions and ask yourselves this big question. Can we answer these? Here's the three sub-questions. What are you fighting for? What are you fighting for? The second one. Have we been putting on our armor faithfully? Again, go back to Ephesians 6. Was that the passage?

Selena: Mm hmm.

Ryan: The final question is, are there battles that we are ignoring or avoiding? Those would be I think, more specific to maybe on these warfronts, or these battlefronts we're talking about. But maybe there's things in your marriage that you're not addressing, and it's hindering your unity. What are those things? Anyway. What are you fighting for? Have you been putting on your armor faithfully? And answer honestly. Are there battles that you're ignoring or avoiding? With that said, let's pray this out, and then we'll call it an episode. Go ahead.

Selena: God, thank you so much for lifting our eyes to the war that is at hand. Thank you, God, that you have already won the war. That no matter the battles we face, we can have peace. God, no matter the battles we face, you've given us truth. And we can bind that around ourselves, Lord, and we can rest in it, we can fight with it. God, we can live in it. You are so great and good to us. Help us, God. May your word bear weight on our lives and on our marriage. May our prayers, God, be ones that are offered up with humility and grace and vulnerability. Father, help us to...lead us, Lord. Lead us rather. in how we can war for your gospel, for your truth for today and in the future. Amen. Amen.

Ryan: Amen. All right. We hope this has been encouraging to you and livening to you as Paul wrote to the Ephesians. He says, "Stand! Therefore stand." Get to your feet and just know that you are not the one who's on the hook for the victory. The battle belongs to the Lord. But we are still in the middle of it. So fight well, fierce couple, fight boldly, and fight knowing that you serve the king who has already won.

Speaking of warfare, and being a part of all this is going on, I want to put a quick plugin again for our Patreon community. I've just seen it come to life over the last couple of weeks. I'm thankful for you. If you're a Patreon already, thank you so much. It's encouraging to us. I can't say that any more clearly. I don't know how else to say it. So if you want to be a part of that, then we would love to have you there. Just go to patreon.com/fiercemarriage. You can read all about it there. And we would love to meet you there.

So with that said, this episode is—

Selena: In the can.

Ryan: All right. We will see you again in about seven days. Until next time—

Selena: Stay fierce.

[00:54:39] <outro>

Ryan:

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PODCAST NOTES

- **[00:14:48]**
 - Scripture references:
 - Ephesians 6:10-13, ESV
 - Psalm 119:11, ESV

- **[00:33:34]**
 - Scripture references:
 - Galatians 5:24, ESV
 - Galatians 2:20
 - Deuteronomy 6

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