

## STRIVING TO ENTER REST

<https://fiercemarriage.com/striving-to-enter-rest>

[00:00:00]

**Selena:** "At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath. His disciples were hungry, and they began to pluck heads of grain and to eat. But when the Pharisees saw it, they said to Him, 'Look, Your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath!' He said to them, 'Have you not read what David did when he was hungry, and those who were with him: how he entered the house of God and ate the bread of the Presence, which it was not lawful for him to eat nor for those who were with him, but only for the priests? Or have you not read in the Law how on the Sabbath the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath and are guiltless? I tell you, something greater than the temple is here. And if you had known what this means, 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the guiltless. For the Son of Man is the Lord of the Sabbath.'"

**Ryan:** Oh, man! There's so much in the idea of the Sabbath. What Jesus said, "I tell you, something greater than the temple is here." Of course, He's talking about Himself the realization of His presence, the temple was no longer fulfilling what it had...

**Selena:** Yes.

**Ryan:** The role it had fulfilled for millennia. Oh, man! So there's so much here, where we particularly want to zero in on Sabbath and what rest means for the Christian couple. For the Christian life, yes, but how that works itself out in our marriages and in our families. It's been monumental for us in terms of figuring out rhythms of rest and finding true rest in Christ. So we are going to talk about marriage today, but specifically around getting agreement and unity on rest, margin, and the Sabbath. So we will see you on the other side.

[00:01:42] <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.

**[00:02:16]** <Podcast begins>

**Ryan:** So we opened this episode with a lengthy reading of Matthew 12. The title of that chapter is "Jesus is the Lord of the Sabbath." And, again, the profound nature of what He is saying is... so we won't be able to cover that. A, because I feel like it's a topic that I can understand so much more.

**Selena:** Yeah.

**Ryan:** But we are trying to, I guess, impress upon ourselves, impress upon you our listeners, the weight, and the beauty of what Jesus was saying when He said, "In the law how on the Sabbath the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath and are guiltless? I tell you, something greater than the temple is here. And if you had known what this means, 'I desire mercy not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the guiltless. For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath."

**Selena:** So good.

**Ryan:** So that is a profound statement by Christ. And, frankly, especially in the book of Matthew, He's railing against the temple and His boldness against things like the Sabbath were the catalysts, were the things that actually brought about His crucifixion. I mean, obviously, He was sovereign over that and knew where He was headed from day one.

**Selena:** But those are the big hooks that we can kind of look back at and hang our hats on in terms of timelines of things, and how monumental it was for those things to happen at the times that they did, and how they unfolded. They were not just random conversations, they were very prophetic, and they were intentional, and there's a lot of power behind it which we'll explore. And I think you know we began this topic of rest and everything because we were feeling some of the holidays. We don't want to date this episode as far as that goes, but the busyness it's kind of...

- Ryan:** It's especially amplified this time of the year.
- Selena:** Yes, there's this season of busyness that tends to encroach upon us. And then the next year hits, and we're all just like trying to regroup from what happened. And I think my own personal goal in my heart is just to not let that wave overtake me in the wrong way. So I don't want to be picking up the pieces of brokenness in our communication, lack of intimacy, our finances have gone to wherever because we just have spent, spent, spent, because of whatever reasons, right?
- Ryan:** Yeah.
- Selena:** But really how are we continuing to subscribe to this idea of rest? How are we anchoring ourselves in it, and understanding that? So, just to kind of set that here's the post, here's the signpost, here's where we're going.
- Ryan:** Yeah, and our hope in that, in processing that is to free you up listener to have those conversations in your own home, and to really get comfortable with creating rhythms of rest. [00:05:00] And we use the word margin a lot which we'll kind of define that more clearly. But we hope that you take away from that this desire, and this drive, and this freedom to really flesh this out in your own marriage.
- So, before we do that if you haven't yet if you haven't joined the Fierce Marriage podcast please do head over to iTunes leave a...is that even a thing? Go to the podcast app... [Selena chuckles] iTunes I think was decommissioned. Go to the podcast app leave a rating and a review. It would mean the world to us, and it would be just a quick way to say thank you if this has helped you. And if you want to go even further we actually have a thriving...I'm thankful to say a thriving Patreon community.
- Selena:** Praise God.
- Ryan:** Lots of people have hopped on board recently thank you to all our new patrons. We can't tell you how encouraging that is to us. But we do early releases there, we do free product giveaways there, we're actually going to start doing some live Q&A Zoom sessions there, even just hanging out Zoom sessions there once a month or so. That's all just for our patrons. But really the purpose of it is to lock arms with you on mission, not just to give you free stuff, although, we're happy to do that. So if you feel a burden from God to be on mission with us please go to [patreon.com/fiercemarriage](https://patreon.com/fiercemarriage). And our mission is this: To point couples to Christ and commission them for the gospel. We

truly do see ourselves as a gospel-centered ministry that happens to have marriage as the field, right? *[both laughing]*

**Selena:** Yes.

**Ryan:** So anyway, hop over there we would love to meet you in Patreon. Okay, and there are links in the show notes and everything.

**Selena:** Yes.

**Ryan:** Okay, so Selena mentioned it early on, but we're kind of staring down the barrel of a gun right now, *[Selena laughing]*, I feel like looking at the holidays.

**Selena:** Yeah.

**Ryan:** Because every year it creates this...and some of that's natural, okay. But every year it creates this tension in our home. Because I don't know the exact count, *[Selena chuckles]* but I feel like there is years where we celebrate—and I'm not exaggerating—five different Christmases.

**Selena:** Well, because you got to go to so-and-so's house, you got to go to this other person's house, blah, blah, blah.

**Ryan:** Well, we have your mom and your brother and we celebrate with them, and then we have our Christmas. Then we have my parents, and then we have your mom's side of your extended family, and then your dad's side of your extended family *[both chuckles]* right? That's five.

**Selena:** Yeah, and that's not even your extended side of the family. We don't even hardly see them.

**Ryan:** Yeah.

**Selena:** Which is crazy. So we feel these burdens in different ways. So it could be the holidays, it could be a new baby, it could be a new job, it could just be a project at a job, whatever the pressure is, for us, we feel awkwardness and pressure in different ways. For me, I feel like I need to give more, whether that's preparing food, or doing activities with kids, or doing gifts, or going above and beyond. And Ryan's just like, "This is awkward and weird I don't want to do any of this." *[chuckles]*

**Ryan:** I always feel so weird buying gifts for people that I haven't seen...

**Selena:** I know, and it's...

- Ryan:** ...in a whole year. It's like, I don't even know what you like and you don't know what I... let's not do this.
- Selena:** We don't know each other *[chuckles]* very well.
- Ryan:** Let's not pretend that we're buying stuff. It's just an obligation and that's why I think I get...
- Selena:** Yeah, it's kind of a weird traditional obligation. But looking at these kind of deeper issues that are at work there, right? We watched the BibleProject this last Sunday with the kids talking about the Sabbath or Shabbat.
- Ryan:** We have colds running through the house right now and so we'd stayed home.
- Selena:** Yes, we are staying home watching church, having church at home with the kiddos.
- Ryan:** Excuse me, I was teaching church *[Selena laughing]*, I used this video as an illustration.
- Selena:** Sorry.
- Ryan:** Okay. *[laughing]*
- Selena:** Yes, you were leading our home; no, I was very grateful for that. Because we've had Sundays that's been a little willy-nilly *[both laughing]*, so it was good.
- Ryan:** That's been a conviction lately is I need to be clear and convicted in how I lead our family when we have Bible study time.
- Selena:** So, it was so timely that you brought up the Sabbath and we can put the link in the show notes. It's a five-minute video. It was profound. Definitely go watch it. But some of the things that brought up this conversation about the Sabbath is understanding it from a biblical concept. You know, you get words like sabbatical, and there's kind of all these modern conversations that happen around what it is. It's debated even in the Christian world, what it is, what's the purpose of it, and all of that. So, we hope, and like this video kind of their big takeaway, their fundamental question they want to ask is "What did the biblical authors in their own ancient cultural context mean by describing the origins of the cosmos in a seven-day sequence, and what does that mean? Old Testament rest, New Testament rest, like Jesus and putting all those big pieces together. Because there's some transformative gospel truth in this.

- Ryan:** Yeah, it's profound. [00:10:00] Anyway keep going.
- Selena:** It's just worth mentioning there's these seven-day themes throughout Scriptures. The number seven is spelled with the same letters as the Hebrew word "complete" or "full." Like it's an image of complete goodness. You have the Jewish calendar, the sacred space in the tabernacle in the temple. And this is why there was a recognition of God rescuing His people out of darkness and death, and so there's Jewish holidays that they celebrate, there's seventh-day rest, there's Sabbath every week, right? And then there was - what was the one? The year of jubilee?
- Ryan:** That's like the seven times seventh year, so every 49th year.
- Selena:** Right. But which is something we have to take note of when we talk about the coming of Jesus and Him being the Lord of the Sabbath and when He came.
- Ryan:** Okay, little sidebar here. We have to talk about the law, okay?
- Selena:** Yes.
- Ryan:** So the Sabbath, one of the Ten Commandments is observing the Sabbath. And so the question then is, okay, Sabbath again? The day of rest. I'm just going to read it. It's Exodus 20 which is where the Ten Commandments happen. Verse 8: "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates." So this is a really long chunk of text within the middle of the Ten Commandments. So this is pretty important.
- Selena:** They're pretty much listed out but this one is a paragraph or something.
- Ryan:** This one is blowing up, and it says, "For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore, the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy."
- Selena:** Mm hmm.
- Ryan:** Okay, so it's a big deal. It's what we need to glean from this is that for Israel, this is again the Ten Commandments on Sinai, they're in the wilderness, God is graciously giving them His decree, His law.
- Selena:** Right, well, they're kind of reset because they're out from Egypt.

- Ryan:** Right, He's giving them...yeah.
- Selena:** They're just this group of people without anything governing them.
- Ryan:** He's revealing to them His will for them.
- Selena:** Yes.
- Ryan:** So often in Christian circles we see kind of law and grace as in opposition, and I think the better view is the law as grace. The fact that we know God's law is a grace of God.
- Selena:** Hmm-mm.
- Ryan:** Here's the distinction to be made especially in light of Christ. We don't perform the law. We can't, A, but we also don't perform the law to win our own righteousness, to buy our own righteousness, or our own salvation I should say.
- Selena:** Right.
- Ryan:** Christ bought that on the cross. Now, we get to look at the law still as a grace and we get to delight in the law, as the psalmist says. We delight in God's will, God's way. So even within the law, there are...I'm going to use some theological-hermeneutical categories. So you have the civil law, you have the moral law, and we have also the ceremonial law. And so the question of where the Sabbath falls in there. Okay, things like ceremonial law are like don't mix fibers. Well, that was more ceremonial. Obviously, we don't observe that law today. So that was specifically for the people of God, but it was also meant to point us to the finished work in Christ, right? And so that's what ceremonial laws typically do. Civil laws are for a specific moment in Israel's history. One of my professors was talking about how they dealt with the Canaanites. So the people in the desert were instructed to deal with the Canaanites a certain way, whereas Abraham was instructed another way to deal with the Canaanites. So that was a civil law, in other words, God's Word for that moment.
- Selena:** For these people.
- Ryan:** Or God's law for that people in that moment. And then the moral law is a transcendent thing in that it applies to all of God's people for all of time, in all contexts.
- Selena:** Hmm-mm.

**Ryan:** Okay, so that's an important distinction to make. It's been said that the Sabbath kind of falls in all three of those on some level.

**Selena:** Yeah.

**Ryan:** And that's what you're saying about the ceremonial stuff, the Year of Jubilee, all these different things. Morally speaking, it can still bear its weight on the Christian conscience.

**Selena:** Yeah.

**Ryan:** Not in the same way, right? We don't observe the Sabbath in the same way Israel did in the Old Testament because Christ fulfilled the Sabbath. That meant ceremonial law, the Sabbath. Now we look forward to what Christ said. What did He say? He says, "I am the Lord, the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath." He's the fulfillment of it. Right after that He said, "I tell you, something greater than the temple is here." He's talking about He's brought the kingdom to the doorstep. Through His presence, through His finished work on the cross, we no longer need the temple to commune with God. We no longer need this in-between of the temple between heaven and earth.

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** We now have Christ and His finished work and we have the Holy Spirit.

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** So in the same way the Sabbath is satisfied. But I want to look at the moral component of that because [00:15:00] there is still this universal it's applicable for God's people in every context for all time that you need rest.

**Selena:** Yes.

**Ryan:** Not only do we need rest...well, we sleep a third of our lives, right? So there's this rhythm already hardwired into us. The planet gets rest through the seasons that happen, and that's one of the reasons why Israel was called to Sabbath back in the day. But we also need the rest to keep our hearts soft. I want to read from Hebrews 3. I don't have it up but give me one second. Hebrews 3 and 4, so this is a long passage so I'm going to try to paraphrase it here. I'm going to start in verse 12. So Hebrews 3:12, "Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God."



That's a pretty bold warning: don't fall away from the living God. "But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called "today," that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end. As it is said, 'Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.'" So he's talking about hearing God's voice and listening, and heeding what He says. And the alternative to that is hardening our hearts. So he goes on and talks about the [inaudible]. This is chapter 4, verse 1. Excuse me, I'm going to go back to chapter 3, verse 18, "And to whom did he swear that they would not enter his rest, but to those who were disobedient? So we see that they were unable to enter because of unbelief."

Chapter 4 verse 1 of Hebrews now. "Therefore, while the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us fear lest any of you should seem to have failed to reach it." It goes on, and on, and on, but it goes all the way to these popular verses in chapter 4, verse 11, "Let us, therefore, strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience. For the Word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, joints and marrow, of discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart." Okay, what does that have to do with rest? He's saying they didn't enter into rest because they had hardened hearts because they weren't...he's talking about Israel.

**Selena:** Obedient to God's Word.

**Ryan:** He's talking about Israel wandering in the desert for 40 years, rest has always been the promise.

**Selena:** Yeah.

**Ryan:** He said, "If you obey me..." God, right? God said, "If you obey Me you will enter My rest." That's what Sabbath points them to...

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** ...is that forward promise it's coming.

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** That rest will be here. Now, the author of Hebrews is pointing us back to that and saying, "Don't harden your heart the same way they did in the desert." Now, when we say enter into the rest of Christ, so, now, Christ is the fulfillment of the Sabbath, but now we are called to now... Instead of looking forward to this thing that is yet to come, we now as modern believers look back to the

finished work of Christ on the cross and we rest. And we rest knowing that, that is the starting point of...and that is where our life begins both here and now, but also it stretches on into the future.

A fun fact that we were talking about is how disruptive...when Christ came, how disruptive it was even to the Sabbath observance, right? It used to be at the end of the week because it was a symbol of resting at the end of a long week. So you're looking forward to a rest that has yet to come. And now they switched it from Saturday now to Sunday to where now it's the beginning of our week because it's the starting point of the Christian life. It's point of rest in Christ and how it's where our rest roots take place, if you will, and then the flowering happens.

**Selena:** Right. What's the parallel to His crucifixion? Like it talks about how when He is the Lord of the Sabbath...not when, but He is, He launched His public mission on a Sabbath announcing that the ultimate Year of Jubilee was beginning through Him. Also He timed His conflict with Jerusalem's leaders to take place during the Passover, a seven-day Jewish festival.

**Ryan:** Yes.

**Selena:** And then He was executed and placed in a tomb, where His body lay during the Sabbath. And when Jesus was raised from the dead it was the first day of a new week.

**Ryan:** How profound is that?

**Selena:** That is a new creation, a pattern of seven as well.

**Ryan:** Yes, so all of this to say that, yes, we're not bound to observe the Sabbath in the same ceremonial way that Israel was bound to observe it." But we're making a case right now for the moral imperative that is the observance of the Lord's Day. And now, does that mean we can't turn on light switches, and we can't start fires, and we can't plow the field? That's not what that means. That means that there is a sense in the believer's heart that my source of security, my source of salvation, my source of anything good in this life is from God alone.

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** And I will rest to remember and celebrate that. [00:20:00]

**Selena:** Right.

- Ryan:** And that happens to be on a Sunday when we celebrate with believers. It's not something to do alone, but we do it together with other believers. We study God's Word. In our household we try to have a really nice meal, I mean, relatively really nice.
- Selena:** Right, right.
- Ryan:** And that's fairly recent for us by the way, it's not something that we've had figured out for years. It's important.
- Selena:** Right, so there's this when we were reading through Hebrews 3 and 4, and I think you said it, but I want to make sure that we highlight it a bit that we see this correlation between a lack of rest and disobedience.
- Ryan:** Hmm mm, wow!
- Selena:** So I think that with rest we have peace. Can we have peace outside of rest? Yes. That's not necessarily the indicator of disobedience. If we're not having rest, if we are not able to let go of the plow, right, sit here open-handed, there is some disobedience that's happening. Where are our hearts? I mean, where are we ignoring Scripture's instructions and authority when it comes to rest? Where's our disobedience happening? You know, asking the Holy Spirit to transform our hearts and to make those areas of our hearts known to us so that we can begin walking in obedience. But that was kind of a revelation for us, and maybe everyone else knows that because they're super smart, and everything like that Just kidding.
- Ryan:** Yeah, so the takeaway there is we're hardwired in a sense to rest daily.
- Selena:** Yes.
- Ryan:** We need rest, I mean, everybody would acknowledge that, but there's a spiritual component to this that is very much obedient decision.
- Selena:** Yeah, like there's the flesh part I think that is like, "I don't need to rest. I feel fine. We're good. I know that I love Jesus."
- Ryan:** "Plus, I got this laundry to do." And not that you can't do laundry on Sunday, but the point we're making is there's a heart orientation there.
- Selena:** Yes, are we stopping, are we acknowledging? And not just are we, but is obedience the thing that we are engaging in? Not just can we or should we, but are we being obedient? Is I think where it boils down to.

- Ryan:** Yeah. So we've hopefully at least started to lay the groundwork for this idea of Sabbath as being important to the modern Christian life.
- Selena:** Yes, I read books, and books, and videos and all the things...
- Ryan:** And, again, I want to be clear this is not a legalistic thing, it's a thing we do because of the goodness we receive in Christ and it's observing God's sovereignty, and grace one day a week.
- Selena:** His sovereignty, yeah.
- Ryan:** And taking the day to do that and to abstain from certain things in the name of rest.
- Selena:** Yeah.
- Ryan:** In the name of resting, not just vegging out in front of the TV but rest, active rest in God's goodness and grace.
- Selena:** An active rest. *[chuckling]* That's interesting.
- Ryan:** So, active rest. Well, that's a weightlifting thing, right? If you're doing a weightlifting program they're going to say, "Do active rest," that means don't sit on your butt, it means go out and go for a walk. Just don't lift heavy.
- Selena:** Sure.
- Ryan:** Like enjoy your life so to speak. Okay, so we started talking about margin, we've talked about Sabbath, which effectively is in a sense margin. It's creating extra space every week, one-seventh. I haven't done the math of what is one-seventh. It's probably like 15%, 17%, or something of our week.
- Selena:** Okay.
- Ryan:** Okay.
- Selena:** You're way better at math for now.
- Ryan:** Yeah, well, I'm just spitballing here. It's probably way off *[Selena laughing]*. The point being, so, if we were to create a 17% margin in every area of our lives, what would that look like?
- Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** I'm going to do the math now because I'm a little bit...like, I want to just know what it is. All right. So there's one divided by seven. That's easy enough. 14.3%. 14.3% of your life. What if we created that much margin?

**Selena:** Hmm-mm.

**Ryan:** Okay, margin around, okay, marriage podcast. Let's get into the marriage stuff. Margin around your communication.

**Selena:** Yeah.

**Ryan:** And what does margin in communication look like?

**Selena:** Yeah.

**Ryan:** Meaning that you actually have time together.

**Selena:** Yeah.

**Ryan:** All of this is going to be time-related in some way. You have the energy to engage one another.

**Selena:** Yeah, and I think ideally we're working to be consistent and to be regular in these rhythms of margin and whitespace. There are busier seasons and I think just identifying those is the first step. And also just disseminating any lies that might be creating pressure on you, like unduly pressure that is not from the Lord, right? I just want to say that. I just want to put that out there that there are seasons of some like tension and things that you kind of have to just grow in, like there's this holy tension, and there's growth happening.

But around those seasons we should be able to engage in these rhythms of rest so that we kind of have like a default line, or a plumb line maybe it's better most articulative here. We know that these are healthy ways in which we rest, [00:25:00] and we can then better communicate to each other, right? I don't communicate well as a wife when I have so much going on and I feel too much pressure in my heart, in my mind. And those expectations come from myself, they're projected typically I see someone and I think they're thinking this about me, so I need to like...not compensate. Is that a word there?

**Ryan:** Sure.

**Selena:** Compensate for that. And the Lord is gracious in alleviating me from that, and showing me where my identity rests, right? But when I'm not engaged in His Word or I'm not creating it, we are not having that margin for our marriage,

for our time, for our connection, then my heart is going to be hard and there's stuff just going to be flying everywhere, and it's not going to be a place of rest, not me coming to a place of rest.

**Ryan:** Think of any time you've had a really bad marriage fight or anytime we've had a fight. It's been because we were just at our wit's end where there's no margin. Because we were fighting each other in other ways other than verbally.

**Selena:** Yeah.

**Ryan:** We're fighting for time. I read a book a while back called "Essentialism," and it's basically like finding out the most important thing that you can do to contribute, whether that's family, whether that's work, whether that's even church.

**Selena:** Yeah.

**Ryan:** I can't remember the name of the author. But one of the big takeaways he said was, "By having an essentialist view," which he's saying, "Rate everything from like 1 to 100, and then take everything that is under like 95 and just get rid of it."

**Selena:** Okay.

**Ryan:** Anything that's under a 95, just get rid of it.

**Selena:** Wow!

**Ryan:** And obviously, there's some stuff. You have to go through the book to know what that means.

**Selena:** Sure.

**Ryan:** But he said, "What happens is you get people that are good performers in their job, and because they can't say no, people go to them." And what happens is they say yes to things that they really don't have the margin to do, or do well. So either the project fails, it doesn't get done, or it's done poorly. And so what happens is that person ends up being...it's like a double-edged sword, right?

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** They end up feeling terrible but then the project is actually terrible as well. And he said what happened with one story he shared, is somebody said they

became really clear on "This is what I'm going to contribute with, I'm going to say no to everything else." And so he started saying no to his superiors, and they were like, "Hey, Jim always does this, so just give it to Jim." And he said, "I'm sorry, but I'd love to do that and I don't think I can do it well, so I will have to say no." And of course, they were miffed and frustrated.

And then what happened was this is over weeks and months, people started really respecting the work that he was doing. The opposite effect happened. He was flourishing and now people were honoring those boundaries. And so often we fear the opposite will happen. That if we say no to something someone will be offended, and then they won't like us. There's something about family now.

**Selena:** No, everything you're saying I'm for sure. And I think when we are beginning that process, people around us are going to be miffed if it's a new rhythm that we're trying to establish. They're going to like, "Huh?" But over time, the people, like our family members, they'll either respect it or they won't. And that's fine. We can't control how they respond, but we can control what space and time the Lord has given us within our marriage. And we can boldly explain and not be rude about it, but like, "Hey, we just can't make it; we need time for our family and that's important. Ryan and I have not been able to connect this week I would love to make to you dinner or whatever, but we really need this extra time this weekend." And sometimes those are hard conversations, but again, more often than not people respect the no, and they also begin to I think embrace it in their own lives. I've embraced that from other friends that have just been so bold in their reasonings. I don't question it, and I respect it, and I support it, and it's wonderful.

**Ryan:** Because the bottom line is if we don't say no to things, everything will fill in the spare space in our lives. Another really poignant example from the book, he talks about somebody going into a bookstore, and it's one of the world's biggest bookstore.

**Selena:** They're going to buy a Fierce Marriage book for sure.

**Ryan:** Yeah totally, *[Selena laughing]* they're totally. He was talking about "See-Through Marriage." *[Selena laughing]* It's the one he's trying to find. And He goes in there and it's one of these bookstores that has millions of books, and it's so kind of ridiculous in that regard. They have books that are stacked in a way that become bookshelves for other books.

**Selena:** Nice.

- Ryan:** And so he was marveling at this and he said he hit a realization point. And the realization was this: "I will never be able to read everything in this store. So, I will have to curate, I'll have to choose. I'll have to choose something that I can put in front of my face, and I can take it in a quality way." And so that was just such an epiphany because in life we do the same thing, we'll take anything that comes at us and say, "This is my life..."
- Selena:** Well, especially now.
- Ryan:** ...forgetting that if we don't curate our lives in this way, that we are in a sense [00:30:00] okay, Hebrews...
- Selena:** Three and four.
- Ryan:** Hebrews 4:11, "Let us, therefore, strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience." Which he's talking about hardness of heart.
- Selena:** Which is they knew what they were talking about.
- Ryan:** And a fear. And this is verse 8. "For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken of another day later on. So then there remains the Sabbath rest for the people of God, for whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works, as God did from His." I think about Joshua's role, right? He was the one who was leading the conquest into the Promised Land, what was the thing that stopped that? It was fear. Before the conquest really gets steam is they were afraid but they went in and saw. And so we will disobey because of fear, we'll disobey because...
- Selena:** Pride.
- Ryan:** ...of pride, our hearts have been hardened. And so we have to think, how can we enter into Sabbath rest, striving to enter that rest with our day-to-day lives?
- Selena:** So striving to enter that rest could either look like humility and or it could look like courage, brave?
- Ryan:** And it's yes.
- Selena:** Fearlessness, I guess.
- Ryan:** Yes, and it's a reminder to us, and here's the function of it. It's not just so you can sleep better or it's...The function of it is to point us to Christ.



**Selena:** Yeah.

**Ryan:** Remember what we said early on is that we rest now. We remember the first day of the week, we stand here now looking back in history at the finished work of Christ and hope that it gives us if we look forward into eternity.

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** That's what Sabbath does it calibrates us.

**Selena:** Yeah.

**Ryan:** It says "This matters this doesn't." So I have to strive to enter because my flesh wants to stay out of it.

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** My flesh wants to work; my flesh wants to take on every commitment that comes at me. And because of that we wonder why we don't have rest when we've refused to enter into it.

**Selena:** Well, we wonder why we can't be intimate with our spouse on some level? Or we wonder why we're stressed out about our finances? Or we can't communicate well because we're just operating at this tip-top mode that's just stretched all across every which way. And we are not engaging in the rest that God has commanded us to and instructed us to enter into and to engage with. So, you know, as a married couple listening to this, I'm imagining you're probably already going through your stressors, right? We have a whole episode on stress and anxiety and how stress is kind of that external factor that creates internal anxiety.

**Ryan:** Yeah.

**Selena:** Go back and check that out. But what are the things that are in your way? What are those objects that are keeping you from entering that rest? And as a couple we need to be in the Word, asking the Holy Spirit to help us discern through this. How are we striving? Are we striving? Is there pride around this issue? Or are we fearful? And identifying why are we fearful? What is the fear source here? That I won't be able to make ends meet? That we have no way of really connecting, but I guess I'm just going to go for it in terms of intimacy, but I don't have any margin, and I don't really want to do this. How are we going to respond? And how are we going to identify the factors that are keeping us from entering this rest?

**Ryan:** Hmm-mm. So, you're asking listeners what are those pain points? What are the stressors? And then how can you draw boundaries around each stressful area in the name of rest? I think it's funny the author of Hebrews is talking about Joshua which was all about his conquest. There was more to it, but it's all about his conquest into the Promised Land, leading the people of God. The whole thing that people quote is like, "As for me and my house we will serve the Lord." Like him kind of drawing lines in the sand.

**Selena:** Yeah.

**Ryan:** And then entering in, kind of battling for that which was rightfully theirs.

**Selena:** Theirs, and God had given them.

**Ryan:** God had given them but they had yet to kind of fight into it.

**Selena:** Yeah.

**Ryan:** And the promise was still there. The fighting was absurd by the way. They should have never won.

**Selena:** Yeah.

**Ryan:** And so they're walking in faith fighting battles in faith, and whenever there's a battle that doesn't go their way, Joshua was a good enough leader to say, "It's not because we don't have enough men, it's because we're in disobedience." And he would right the wrong.

**Selena:** Yeah.

**Ryan:** And then they would enter into the same battle and they could have won the same battle with two hands tied behind their backs.

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** Because God was with them.

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** And so I find it funny that we're talking about boundaries now. I'm not trying to make too close of a correlation here, but we're talking about boundaries now. And here we're talking about Joshua fighting his way into the boundaries of the Promised Land, and the correlation between disobedience and a lack of

rest, and how the disobedience of Israel led to their lack [00:35:00] of rest. And Promise Land is rest, but in Christ we now have the promise of eternal rest, that's already bought and paid for. And we just need to do what? We need to fight into it.

**Selena:** Oh, so good.

**Ryan:** We need to strive into it. Strive to enter that rest, as Hebrews 4:11 tells us. So boundaries, striving to enter it, drawing boundaries. Let just spend the next 5, 10 minutes talking through drawing boundaries around these various areas. Okay, so communication, I want to talk about finances especially in light of the holidays but in general, intimacy, and stress levels.

**Selena:** Yeah.

**Ryan:** So just really practically speaking.

**Selena:** Like priorities, I would probably say that. I would say priorities.

**Ryan:** Okay priorities and stress levels.

**Selena:** Stress levels go with all of it I think *[laughing]*.

**Ryan:** Yeah, okay. So I think as with most things like this, we always like to start with an audit. You sit down, you give yourself enough time, and you start asking questions about where you are today. Where are we today? What's the health of our marriage? What is our typical schedule rhythms look like? Where is the health of our parenting and our agreement in that sphere? Where is the health of our intimacy?

**Selena:** Yeah.

**Ryan:** Okay, this is not going to be a quick conversation.

**Selena:** Well, and these are, again, questions that we need to ask before the busy seasons not in the midst of them.

**Ryan:** Good, that's good.

**Selena:** And not in the 11th hour. Learn those ones. I'm still learning those. Just a little tidbit of advice there. *[both laughing]*

**Ryan:** Yeah, 17 years in, we're in our 18th year of marriage which...

- Selena:** Heyoo!
- Ryan:** Heyoo! So having those conversations, auditing where you're at currently, and that means asking hard questions.
- Selena:** Yeah.
- Ryan:** Are you satisfied with how I've been communicating with you?
- Selena:** Hmm-mm
- Ryan:** Why or why not?
- Selena:** Yeah, have you felt loved and respected in how I talk to you or how we engage with each other? And what about when we argue? How can I honor you and love you when we're working, we're fighting these things out, and sharpening each other?
- Ryan:** Do you feel honored and loved in our sex life? Do you feel honored and loved by me when we are being intimate?
- Selena:** Hmm-mm.
- Ryan:** Why or why not? Do you feel honored and loved with how I approach you when it's time to be intimate?
- Selena:** Great.
- Ryan:** Okay, so a lot of you think, "Well, what does that do margin?" Well, if we're both tired, okay, it's been five days since we've been intimate, and we're both tired, and no one's saying anything to anyone about it, and it's 10 o'clock at night...
- Selena:** It's been a rough week.
- Ryan:** Everyone's tired...
- Selena:** Yeah there's a disconnection.
- Ryan:** ...that's not the opportunity, that's not the best way to honor and love each other in that, because you're going to be sexually charged and you're going to be tired, and there's going to be some emotions, and probably some words said and some things done that you're going to regret.

**Selena:** Right. Well, and one of the better things that you could maybe do in those instances is just acknowledge the moment that you're in with each other. "I love you, I know this has been a rough week. We've not connected let's make time for this tomorrow," or "this has to be a priority because we're married, we need to."

**Ryan:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Selena:** God said. *[both laughing]*.

**Ryan:** Intimacy is important, and we've talked about that a good amount. And so you're prioritizing, you're drawing a boundary around this area of your marriage saying, "How can we enter into rest in this? How can we strive to interest in our intimate life?"

**Selena:** Such an interesting statement. Strive to enter rest. Like strive...

**Ryan:** It's counterintuitive.

**Selena:** But we have to fight for it, right? Otherwise, there's distractions, there's hobbies, there's...everything will soak up your time and you are not...it's never like I have this extra time. No, your time is consistently ticking away. And so...

**Ryan:** And I'm consistently shocked by what you, our listeners, are living your lives doing. Not in a bad way but we have listeners that are like doctors, and surgeons, and people that are business owners, and people that just maybe have seven kids and they're raising them faithfully. You all have busy lives is what we're trying to say...

**Selena:** Right. Right.

**Ryan:** ...is that this will never happen by default.

**Selena:** Yes.

**Ryan:** We have to strive to enter the rest so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience. Strive to enter rest. So we talked about intimacy. Finances. How do we draw our boundaries? And how do we strive to enter rest in our finances?

**Selena:** I think it's really easy for us to have an identity crisis in terms of when it comes to our finances, right? It's easy for our eyes to kind of wander and to look around either social media, or to our neighbors, or whatever. Again,

understanding I think God's Word, God's instruction, God's authority on the usefulness of finances and what they're for and how they're not our God.

**Ryan:** Right.

**Selena:** We don't treat money like a God but we realize that He is the one that gives the seed to the sower. He's our provider. He [00:40:00] gives us what we need when we need it. The overcompensation on our part is I feel like a function of a lack of rest.

**Ryan:** Okay, so what creates the overcompensation? I think, comparison.

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** So we live in an area or in a country wherever you are, most of the listeners are in the United States or South Africa.

**Selena:** Yeah.

**Ryan:** Honestly, I think the second *[laughing]* so welcome South Africans. But there's this sense that I have to keep up with my neighbors, keep up with my friend group, keep up with Instagram, Facebook, and all the social media stuff. And so that comparison, you look at your house, and then you look at your friend's house, or you look at your car or your friend's car, and you think, "I, for some reason, don't feel good right now I need to fix this."

**Selena:** Yeah, it creates this...

**Ryan:** It can suck up our margin into finances. We overextend ourselves financially. We're very debt-laden as a country. Thankfully I think there's a lot of there's a movement within the church where debt is less and less common.

**Selena:** Yeah.

**Ryan:** There's a difference happening there. But the point being our finances are honestly they're usually a secondary thing under our priorities.

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** So if we prioritize financial gain for the reasons we've just described, or we prioritize our careers, and status, and even power in some cases...

**Selena:** Sure.

**Ryan:** ...or whatever that thing is, we tend to lose margin in our time, but we also lose margin in our money as we strive to keep up.

**Selena:** Yeah, yeah.

**Ryan:** So we always use a personal example.

**Selena:** Yeah.

**Ryan:** We had pretty good jobs, you and I?

**Selena:** Yeah.

**Ryan:** We were making, at the age of 20 - what? 26?

**Selena:** Yeah.

**Ryan:** I feel like we were making more than we make today, *[Selena laughing]* 10, 12 years later.

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** But we had to make a conscious decision that we were going to live by a different kind of set of priorities.

**Selena:** Yeah.

**Ryan:** Money was like fourth or fifth down in the list in terms of needs, in terms of desires, I should say. Is that right? Is that accurate?

**Selena:** Today?

**Ryan:** No, back then. We kind of had to make that decision that we're not going to work for money, we're going to value things like freedom, being around each other.

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** We're not going to value having a nice home over actually being in the home together.

**Selena:** Yes, yes, the Holy Spirit was good and gracious, and faithful to us.

- Ryan:** Yeah, He was gracious. And so we moved. We quit our jobs because we felt called to a different State to help...well, I was going to start a business that tanked by God's grace. I do mean that He was gracious in allowing that to happen. And we did another business, which kind of has given us the freedom, I did web development for a number of years, living hand to mouth, but all the while saying this is what we wanted.
- Selena:** Yeah.
- Ryan:** We didn't want to be beholden to a paycheck. We'd rather trust God in this area, now granted, I am beholden to clients or I was beholden to clients so...I don't know, I'm just kind of spitballing here. But we had to kind of draw those lines and say, "We're not going to just keep our jobs because they pay really well."
- Selena:** Yeah, because there's always a cost.
- Ryan:** Right.
- Selena:** There's always a cost I think, at the higher paying levels.
- Ryan:** Sure.
- Selena:** I couldn't manage that. Well, that was hard for my heart.
- Ryan:** And not to say that you can't do that listener.
- Selena:** No.
- Ryan:** You have to listen to the Holy Spirit...
- Selena:** Yes. Yes.
- Ryan:** ...and respond to the convictions that He's giving you in real-time.
- Selena:** Yes.
- Ryan:** For us, that was something that we had to draw a boundary around that. Because had we not drawn that boundary, we would have sapped all of our margin in terms of our time, and our ability to do the ministry that we're doing today.
- Selena:** Right, absolutely. Absolutely.



**Ryan:** I hope I represented that accurately. It's hard to think about that in real-time.

**Selena:** Yeah.

**Ryan:** Okay, so we talked about communication, finances, intimacy, and priorities.

**Selena:** Yeah. I think just looking at, again, striving for rest in these times of celebration, or busyness, there's always creative ways to kind of integrate. So sometimes, I guess if this is helpful, I look at like the list of things I need to do, and I wonder how I can kind of piggyback things onto each other which essentially makes them deeper, rather than...there's less and we go deeper rather than more spread across the board. Does that make sense?

**Ryan:** Hmm-mm.

**Selena:** Like we want to be memorizing Scripture with our kids, and so one way we do that is we listen to it through songs, and car rides. We want to engage in family worship, and discipleship, and building relationships. So how do we do that? Well, we're intentional about meals, we have set times for meals, we have kind of a flow of what those look like, we've settled into those rhythms.

**Ryan:** Yeah.

**Selena:** We have to kind of identify our limits looking at our weeks, looking at our margin, looking at the rest that we are coming from, and knowing that it will be zapped [00:45:00] probably, it is usually by the end of the week. But God is so good to give us that day of rest again to remind us that we are not our own, right? We are not our suppliers of all the things that we are supposed to do. But He's given us stewardship, and dominion over this area.

So how can we have these home rhythms? How can we have these rhythms that build margin, create and keep margin during these times? That can feel like a big wave just crushing us, right? So being intentional about family worship, being intentional about Bible reading. Bible reading should never be sacrificed for anything. *[Ryan chuckling]* Period! That's just my own conviction.

**Ryan:** Yeah, so I think the takeaway from here for our listeners is you know the areas that you feel lack a margin. *[Selena chuckles]* *[crosstalk]*

**Ryan:** Only you can know that.

**Selena:** Yeah, you or your spouse can discern those.

- Ryan:** And our encouragement to you is to give that to God and to look to Him as the Lord of the Sabbath, as the one who has fulfilled the legal requirements of the Sabbath, and then invited us to live in the rest, the restful rhythms, and the restful kind of intrinsic need that we have for the Sabbath. So that's hopefully to...
- Selena:** Strive for rest by doing less.
- Ryan:** *[chuckles]* Oh, that's got some very... *[laughing]*.
- Selena:** There we go.
- Ryan:** I will give you a B+.
- Selena:** I'm going to embrace that, that's my mantra.
- Ryan:** I'll give you a B.
- Selena:** All right Mr. Marketing.
- Ryan:** I want to close with one quick just anecdote when we were living in California where we said we did the business thing...
- Selena:** It's not glamorous people. We were like in an apartment and...
- Ryan:** It's a desert. It was hot...
- Selena:** Yes, it wasn't like we were these cool Californians.
- Ryan:** It was awesome; I mean I liked the weather.
- Selena:** It was fun, yeah.
- Ryan:** But anyway, I remember there was one evening I was waiting for the payment to come in on this website that I just finished for somebody.
- Selena:** Yes.
- Ryan:** And rent was due for us. It was already like two days late.
- Selena:** They give you like a three-day grace period.
- Ryan:** And it had *[Selena chuckling]* not come yet.

- Selena:** See, this is how much we remember it *[both laughing]*.
- Ryan:** And I remember we had \$75 in our bank account. And the payment was the final payment on a pretty big project. So it wasn't massive but it would have covered our rent. And so we were definitely on the hook for this, and with bated breath, we were waiting for this rent check to come in or this payment check to come in. And I'm on the deck just kind of contemplating life and thinking, "God what in the world is going on? I've been spinning my wheels..."
- Selena:** Is this you striving or figuring out how to enter rest *[laughing]* in some way?
- Ryan:** I was angry at God in my foolishness. I was angry at God, not cursing God like in the Job sense, but like, "What is the deal? You said you would provide, you're not providing. I'm working my tail off, I'm spinning my wheels, I'm being diligent, I feel like I'm operating under a certain level of wisdom, God, what is going on?" And I just heard...sometimes you hear the Holy Spirit just kind of just push down on you in a really peace-imposing way. *[Selena laughing]* And He goes, "You are not your provider, I am." *[chuckles]*
- Selena:** Thank you God for your authority.
- Ryan:** And that was like a lightbulb moment in my life. And as a man, as a husband, as a father, I am not my provider. God is. Even though my role is as a provider, ultimately, God is our provider.
- Selena:** Yeah.
- Ryan:** And what that did is that it reminded me of this rest that I can have in Him. And so in the same sense, I just want to give you, listeners, the freedom and hopefully the reminder right now to strive toward that rest. Because that is the life of a believer to believe more fully in the finished work of Christ on the cross and rest in it.
- Selena:** Yeah,
- Ryan:** And strive for rest in it, so that our hearts don't become hardened...
- Selena:** Right.
- Ryan:** ...toward each other, toward our friends.
- Selena:** Well, and there's the freedom aspect of that, right?
- Ryan:** Yes.

**Selena:** There's freedom, we're not enslaved to this work. We are free to rest...

**Ryan:** Amen!

**Selena:** ...because God is sovereign.

**Ryan:** Amen!

**Selena:** We are out of time.

**Ryan:** Free to rest. So, Lord, I thank you for this reminder. I thank You that you have called us into rest, that You have graciously called us, and You're insisting that we take You upon it, that we obey You in how we rest, and how we turn away from our work, turn away from our worldly striving, and instead we strive toward our rest in You.

So Lord, help us to believe that truth, help us to walk in the reality of that You are the Lord of the Sabbath, that you are better than a temple, that You have satisfied the requirements of the law and You are inviting us to live out of the law in light of Your Grace Lord. I pray that You would help us understand and apply that. I pray for the couples listening to this, who are feeling it; they're feeling like their marriage is in trouble, they're feeling like they have irreconcilable issues, I pray that you would give them hope, Holy Spirit, that you would point them to people, and to passages in the Word that would set their foot on [00:50:00] the path toward reconciliation, toward health. In Jesus name, Amen.

**Selena:** Amen.

**Ryan:** All right, ladies and gentlemen, quick reminder, we would love and we...we are so enlivened by those who have partnered with us on [patreon.com/fiercemarriage](https://patreon.com/fiercemarriage). The reason why I bring it up now is because you guys, I feel like the time we're in a really special...special is not the word. *[Selena chuckles]* We're in a really kind of tense moment, *[Selena chuckles]* culturally, and who knows how long we'll be able to be free to just hearken the message of the gospel, and the message of biblical marriage.

So if you feel like God is leading you to be on mission with us, we are committed to hearkening the gospel in the marriage and family space for as long as God allows us to do that. We'd love to partner with you, [patreon.com/fiercemarriage](https://patreon.com/fiercemarriage), and it would mean the world. All right. With that this episode is—

**Selena:** In the can.

**Ryan:** As usual, we will see you in about seven days. So until then—

**Selena:** Stay fierce.

**[00:51:02]** <outro>

**Ryan:** Thank you for listening to the Fierce Marriage podcast. For more resources for your marriage, please visit [FierceMarriage.com](http://FierceMarriage.com), or you can find us with our handle @Fiercemarriage on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Thank you so much for listening. We hope this has blessed you. Take care.

**PODCAST NOTES**

- **[00:00:00]**
  - Scripture references:
    - Matthew 12:1-8, ESV
  
- **[00:08:20]**
  - Recommended video:
    - [BibleProject](#)
  
- **[00:11:04]**
  - Scripture references:
    - Exodus 20:8-10, ESV
    - Exodus 20:10-11
  
- **[00:19:23]**
  - Scripture references:
    - Matthew 26, ESV
  
- **[00:15:46]**
  - Scripture references:
    - Hebrews 3:12-13, ESV
    - Hebrews 4:11-12, ESV

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