

5 THINGS TO SAY TO YOUR SPOUSE DAILY

<https://fiercemarriage.com/5-things-to-say-to-your-spouse-daily>

[00:00:00]

Ryan: All right, we're going to be intensely practical this week. We'll talk about some of the concepts here. But really we're radical. We're talking about five things to say to your spouse daily. Now, why do we even go out of our way to say these five things? I think that's the big question that we hope to answer. And we'll also give you an overview of the Frederick household as of late. In other words, you guys, marriage takes work, right? *[Selena laughing]* Marriage takes work. And we've experienced that in very visceral ways, *[both laughing]* over the last couple of weeks. So anyway, we're looking forward to a good talk, and we'll see you on the other side.

[00:00:33] <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.

[00:01:05] <Podcast begins>

Ryan: Oh, here we are. Selena, it's been a rough couple of weeks I'd say.

Selena: Yeah.

- Ryan:** We've been okay.
- Selena:** It's just kind of been an underlying disconnect and... not discontentment, just with each other. It's like, oh, we're good, and then meh! We're just like quickly just are combative with each other *[Selena laughing]*.
- Ryan:** It's just we haven't been nice to each other.
- Selena:** Well, I feel like I've been...
- Ryan:** I've been nice to you.
- Selena:** ...extremely nice to you *[laughing]*.
- Ryan:** I said it first. I said it first *[both laughing]*.
- Selena:** This is it, people. This is it.
- Ryan:** You can get a word in edgewise.
- Selena:** But I think it's because... and I'm not going to say we haven't been exercising self-control, and it's all the devil's fault.
- Ryan:** The devil.
- Selena:** But we have been recording for the beta, "The Gospel-Centered Marriage." And anytime we do anything like that, that's out of our normal rhythm that is pursuing kingdom-building... *[Selena laughing]* I always botch those phrases.
- Ryan:** It seems like whenever we are stepping out and kind of taking ground, I'll say. We're taking ground. So you already mentioned, I want to make sure people know what we're talking about, it's called "The Gospel-Centered Marriage." It's going to be a kind of a marriage course ecosystem with a core part of it. That'll be a certain number of weeks, and then little mini-courses after that.
- And we're doing a beta version of it. We've got over 100 couples signed up. And it's been honestly so awesome to participate. But it occurred to us last night we are having difficulty communicating. We're sitting in our chairs. We have these two chairs where we sit and talk every night *[both laughing]*. Seriously, we're like a picture out of... *[Selena laughing]*. And we canceled our Netflix account. So we just talk and it's been so awesome.

Selena: I felt there's just not enough time. But in my heart, I just long for that timelessness. But we're sitting, talking, sort of communicating, trying to connect, just not happening. It's just rough.

Ryan: Sometimes we'll talk about what we're reading. Sometimes we'll just talk until we go to sleep.

Selena: Just like everything...

Ryan: I was trying to read and you're like, "Oh, don't you care?" *[Selena chuckling]*. And I'm like, "No, I'm here. I care but now I don't." *[Selena laughing]*. I cared, now you can just whatever.

Selena: And then I start talking to him and he's like, "You're trying to tag all these big things." And I'm like, "Well I don't know. We're just talking."

Ryan: See your mind was going a mile an hour. *[both laughing]*.

Selena: So it was just rough. And we just came to a point where honestly the Lord was just like, "Just resign right now and just trust in Me. And just love each other, be kind to each other, give to one another, especially in those moments where you don't feel like it, you don't want to. Just be obedient." Truly is where we landed. So we're excited. Have you landed on obedience yet? *[both chuckling]*.

Ryan: I was there weeks ago *[Selena laughing]*. I'm just glad to see you here *[both laughing]*. Glad to see where I'm at.

Selena: Oh, my goodness!

Ryan: No, last night as we were working through this, and I was like, "This is for sure..." Like a trigger hit. It's like, finally you see the enemy for what he is or what he's doing. And you say, "No, we're going to fight for each other right now. I'm going to love my wife, and it's in your face, enemy! In your face. And I'm going to show her how much I love her in kind of a revolting sort of way."

I thought of this verse from Ephesians 6:10, "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." Schemes of the devil. "For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, 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." So I was like, "All right, cosmic warfare here we are, we're fighting this thing."

So, anyway, this episode is very practical, but there's an underlying thing. And that's why we share kind of our story. [00:05:00] So we're talking about five things to say to your spouse daily, but why do we do this? Why do we intent our hearts on doing these things very habitually with rhythm and with genuine interest in what we're saying? Why do we do that?

Selena: Right.

Ryan: Because if we don't we are trending in the wrong direction. So I was doing a little bit of reading last night as I sometimes do when I'm supposed to be going to sleep. I'm reading articles especially with everything that's going on. And I came across an article that's talking about the historical origins of civil unrest or civil division, right? And another word that you would use for that is civil war *[both chuckling]*. But I was just reading about, okay, what are the predicting factors in this? There are actually people that they focus on. Basically looking at past events like these or like civil unrest, and they've actually been able to predict with pretty good fidelity what it leads up to. And it's cyclical.

There's two things that play into these types of events. And they're two factors. The first one is structural trends. And the second one is triggering events. So if you think of structural trends in a marriage, I'm not going to get into the civic part of it, but I want to talk about structural trends in marriage.

So for our structural trend is that I'm working too much, the kids are causing a lot of stress. And the structures of our life, we're not attending church, we're not connected to other people, our communication is poor, our intimacy is few and far between, and our finances are stressful, right? And whatever causes the finances to be stressful. Whether you're working too much, or you're spending too much or it's just for whatever reason, or your job isn't. Whatever.

So, the structural trends can start to... though all those factors can lead to degrading structural trends in a trajectory that is down. And the downward is that we are falling apart. Whether we acknowledge that, realize that, or not, we're drifting apart and we're starting to kind of see each other not as partners, not as friends, not as co-laborers in the gospel, not as co-laborers in this marriage. But now we're starting to see each other as enemies, as a combat partner. I'm fighting against you.

And then what happens then is that it's laying kind of the groundwork for this triggering event to then spark a fire. So if you think about a forest fire... I used to do wild and firefighting in Washington State. It was awesome. It was awesome. Also really hard. *[both chuckling]* But the reason why you have

wildfires that happen—and there's a reason why they're cleansing events in a lot of ways, and from an ecological standpoint, they're necessary—is because you have these forests that they just grow, and grow, and grow.

And all the while there's trees that are unhealthy, trees that are dying because of sickness, they get diseased, or trees that fall over in storms and they start to rot away, they start to dry out. And until eventually there's so much tinder just built up. It's like a matchbox and then all of a sudden a lightning strike hits. Or somebody's smoking and they throw it out their window when they're driving. Or there's a campfire that's not put out fully. There's a triggering event. And, now, if that forest were completely healthy without any dry logs, the triggering event would do nothing, or it would do very little.

But what happens in these massive, hundreds of thousands of acres of wildfire is that there's a structural trend in that forest that has been headed that way for a while. And it's just waiting for a triggering event. And the further along you get down that road, the more likely a triggering event becomes.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: So if our marriage is very unhealthy, and we don't have time for each other, we're stressed out, and all of the different factors, all it takes is a tiny triggering event, whether it's a tired moment, a word said, a word uttered, a tone used...

Selena: Or a word not said *[laughing]*.

Ryan: Or a word not said. Or a child does something and now you're taking it out on him or her. So that's why we talk... Think in those terms, structural trends, triggering events, and how these five things that we can say to each other daily, are meant to keep our structural trends at bay. And trending in the right direction. Sorry, that was a lot of on-ramping. But I feel like that really sets the stage for why these somewhat obvious statements are so profound.

Selena: Yeah. No, I was just sitting here listening and thinking about how we either say these things, and we feel them, right? There's emotions behind them, we are on board. Yes, this is what I feel, this is what I want to say, and 100%. And then we look at this list and depending on where we're at, we're just like, "Oh, I don't want to say those things, right?" I don't feel like saying those things. They don't deserve to hear those things. I'm not the one that should be saying these things.

And then the other part of that is saying these things with a spirit of just obedience, right? Of, "I'm just going to submit [00:10:00] here. The feelings are not there, they're kind of undeserving." So, there's like, "Yes, I'm on board.

I'm absolutely not on board, right?" Option two. And then option three is just, "I see that these things are right, that I should say them, and I should want to say them. And I need to get on a path of getting towards saying them. God help me, show me how I can be obedient in these areas." So that was just kind of some thoughts that I was having while you were talking. Of just where one might approach these five things said.

Ryan: That's good. And I think the reasons for that struggle and the need for that specific approach are varying. But we look to Scripture, what does Scripture say about the things we do or want to do? Is that they're an overflow of what's happening in our heart. The way Scripture most often puts it is that the fruit of the tree is an indicator of the root of the tree. The fruit points to the root. So if you're having a hard time bearing fruit, then think of anybody who owns an orchard or any tree that you own. If it's not bearing fruit, that's the indication that you know that it's not healthy.

Selena: Yeah.

Ryan: And so what do you do? You either uproot it, or you fix it, or you somehow heal the tree.

Selena: Prune it back.

Ryan: By the way, I think Matthew 7 is a good example of that. Okay, that's the underlying kind of theme. Let's just dive right in. What do you think? So these are five things, again. Get your pen out if you're...

Selena: Not driving. *[both laughing]*

Ryan: If you're driving just grab your iPad, take some notes. *[Ryan chuckling]* I'm kidding. I'm kidding.

Selena: No, just take mental notes.

Ryan: Take mental notes.

Selena: They're pretty easy.

Ryan: They're pretty easy.

Selena: Five things to say to your spouse daily. I think we should just run through them real quick, and then we'll unpack them.

Ryan: Okay.

Selena: So, first one, "I love you." Second, "I appreciate you." Third, "I won't give up on you." Four, "I'm sorry." Five, "I forgive you."

Ryan: Ooh, every day you got to say you're sorry?

Selena: Well, you need to say, "I'm sorry." *[both laughing]*.

Ryan: No, let me just say that every day you got to say you're sorry.

Selena: No, I think that you got to say, "I'm sorry for whatever I might have done. *[both chuckling]* And I don't know what I'm saying I'm sorry for, but I'm sorry.

Ryan: It's your favorite non-apology, right? "I'm sorry that you got upset." *[Selena laughing]*. "I'm sorry that you were offended."

Selena: Start with the first one Frederick. Go back. Go back.

Ryan: Okay, "I love you." That's the first one.

Selena: Again, it seems pretty obvious, right? But if we're both saying it from a place of understanding exactly what it means, like we have the shared meaning of I love you, from a biblical standpoint, "I love you, despite my feelings, I love you."

Ryan: That's good.

Selena: In John, we see Jesus illustrating and modeling love. John 3:16, "For God so loved the world that He gave His Son." So this model of love often is a theme in the Bible. But it's one of death, right? Death to self, death of self.

Ryan: Oh, baby, that's troubling.

Selena: It is troubling.

Ryan: Because anybody can say "I love you," because words are cheap. But when you say, "I love you," with the intent of living it out, what that means biblically speaking is that you intend to die to yourself in the name of love. And that's a big pill to swallow. That's a big pill to swallow.

Selena: Which is why these words should not be thrown around or I think said.

- Ryan:** Yeah. Well, let's back out a little bit again. Again, it seems obvious, you'd be shocked. Okay listener, maybe this is you, just know that we see you. There are a lot of marriages that these words "I love you" are not uttered commonly.
- Selena:** They're foreign. Yeah, they are foreign.
- Ryan:** Or they mean very little. And it's just, "Okay, see you, I love you." And then you're asking yourself, "Do you though? Do you though? Do you really love me?" Love is one of these things that is... in culture, there are few ideas that are as convoluted as love when it comes to culturally speaking.
- Selena:** That's in the Bible, yeah.
- Ryan:** How the culture has cobbled together this godless version of it. If I can say that. Because we want all the love without any of the depth. We want all the emotion without any of the actual service.
- Selena:** Yeah, without responsibility.
- Ryan:** And so we tend to - what is it? Love is not about self-realization; it's about dying to self. At its very core, it's the opposite of self-satisfaction. And true love is self-sacrifice. So like you said, and I love that you brought it around to that, if we're sharing this meaning, then when someone says, "I love you." It's not just three words. It's these deep, eternal, lasting truths. And hopefully, and ideally, your love would be proven before you even utter those words.
- Selena:** Right, and it's reflective of what's actually happening in the culture of your marriage. Are we being patient with each other? 1 Corinthians is talking about the superior way of love. Are we being patient and kind with each other? Are we persevering and suffering long [00:15:00] with each other? Love is not just this feeling that floats to the top because we had a good day, right? Love is something that is so much more enduring than that. And it's also, of course, in Galatians 5:22, a product of the Holy Spirit indwelling you.
- Ryan:** That's so good. If you're a Christian, you've been around the Bible for a little while. You have heard this passage, the Love chapter, the way of love. 1 Corinthians 13. Selena said "It's the higher way," which is... those are Paul's words. This just occurred to me. If you read 1 Corinthians 13:2, it says, "If I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith..." Okay, those are all good things. "...if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but I have not love, I am nothing." Why does he say I am nothing? He doesn't say I have nothing. He says I am nothing. And so to me, that is...

- Selena:** It's a personification... not personification, but there's personhood... God is love. And so the substance...
- Ryan:** Like the substance of me is nothing if I have not love in this way. Now, he's talking about himself speaking to the Corinthian church, so there's some context there. Meaning that as a minister of the gospel, if I have all of these things, but I have not love I am nothing. I'm not useful to you, as if I am not even here to you. Because I lack love. So it is the substance of the life of a believer. And because of that, it's the substance of the believer. Now, does that make sense?
- Selena:** Yeah.
- Ryan:** And so, but it's very important that we get this idea of love right. Because you hear of people who haven't even opened their Bibles in a decade they say, "God is love." So love is anything I want it to be. And if you doubt me, if you come against me. And you don't affirm whatever version of love that I'm saying, then basically you're hateful. That's not love.
- Selena:** That is not love.
- Ryan:** That is not love. Love it's a character trait of God, and it goes alongside His other character traits like holiness, and mercy, and justice and so many more things.
- Selena:** He is love. He is holy. He is... yes.
- Ryan:** It goes alongside. So "I love you" is vitally important to mention and to mean. To mention it and to mean it, I think is what we're trying to say. So go home tonight, today, whatever, *[Selena chuckling]* tell your husband, tell your wife, "I love you. By the way, here's what that means." *[both laughing]*. And maybe try to explain it a little bit, I think that can be really helpful.
- Selena:** All right, the second phrase is, "I appreciate you." We have another podcast episode called "The Art of Appreciation." I would encourage you to take a moment to check out that episode. Basically, appreciation is kind of like a muscle. The more you exercise it the stronger it grows. So, "I appreciate you." Is really saying "I see you for the gift that you are from God. I see that we have a purpose in our marriage covenant. It's ordained by God. I appreciate you and the contributions you make to our home, to the life of Spirit, like walking together towards the things of God, and how you give of yourself. Like God has brought us together, Mark 10:9. And I'm grateful, and I appreciate you."

And so understanding the power of appreciation really can change things. And we have to take the time to identify ways to appreciate each other. Slow down and be intentional about that. But again, knowing each other in order to... I think we talked... was it last week we talked about being fully known? Maybe it was. It was somewhere we were talking about some... on the beta.

Ryan: It was on beta. We were talking about transparency and trust.

Selena: Yes. And, so understanding, and knowing someone. Knowing that appreciation, words of appreciation, or whatever, this is a way that they experience love as well.

Ryan: Yeah I think if I can be candid, of all these five phrases, this is the one that we struggle with the most. This happened recently. I'm saying these words but this is too strong of a way to say it. You were having a bit of a meltdown. You weren't having a meltdown, but you were feeling the full weight of a lot of things. And it was causing you to be frustrated. So it wasn't a meltdown I don't want to say that.

Selena: That's fine.

Ryan: And, so my tendency is to come to you in those moments and be like, "Why are you even worried? All this is fine?"

Selena: "These are not big things."

Ryan: Like just dismissing it. Instead of just saying, "I see you, I appreciate what you're going through, I appreciate you." Not I'm thankful for you, or not thank you for doing this thing, but "I appreciate YOU. Capital Y-O-U. I appreciate everything about what's happening here." In other words, I understand, [00:20:00] empathize, and I'm walking alongside you. I feel like that's how most often where our unproductive fights, that you don't feel seen and loved.

Selena: Yeah, well, and another thing too I think it's just in our minds, appreciating our spouse. Because I think that's where we tend to fight with them the most. At least for me. Like we fight with them, *[Ryan chuckling]* we villainize them, right? It's already happens in our minds. Sort of I can come in with gratefulness like the Lord instructs us to, right?

Ryan: Yeah. Coming in with gratefulness and rejoicing in those hard truths and rejoicing in the frustrating times that we might face in our marriage. Appreciation, again, it's a muscle if it feels hard, and it's weak, and it's difficult to lift that...

- Ryan:** Muscle? *[both laughing]*
- Selena:** Muscle. To lift that weight of appreciation. *[both laughing]*.
- Ryan:** Let me go lift muscles later. You want to join me? *[both laughing]* It's going to be a good workout.
- Selena:** Then just start in your thoughts. What do I appreciate about my spouse? What do I appreciate? And why do I appreciate that about them?
- Ryan:** So I think this is so telling. Again, this is me and you because your version of "I appreciate you" is that I see you. You want to feel seen and understood. And not unseen, not misunderstood.
- Selena:** You want... let me see if I get this right. *[chuckling]*
- Ryan:** Did I get that right?
- Selena:** Yeah, I think so.
- Ryan:** Good, don't mess it up.
- Selena:** I don't even sometimes know these things about myself. I think you're just a great observer of me. You like to be appreciated with... words of affirmation are a big thing for you. And you feel appreciated when you are wanted and when you are valued through words. You're not a big gift guy. I mean, if it's a good gift then you're like, "Yeah, I'm a gift guy," but if it's exactly what you wanted. *[laughing]*.
- Ryan:** If it's the specific thing that I want. Don't mess up Christmas. *[both laughing]* Party's on.
- Selena:** Is that right? Do you think...?
- Ryan:** Yes. No, you nailed it. You nailed it. Yours is more kind of implicit. Mine is very explicit. I need you to say "Thank you for working hard for us. Thank you for loving us well. Thank you for leading us well." I need...
- Selena:** The problem with those is sometimes we project those on each other and then we're just like, "You don't appreciate me." *[laughing]* You're like, "Babe, but I just said it a thousand times in a hundred different ways." And you're like, "But that's not... I don't..."
- Ryan:** Well, you didn't say it how I wanted to hear it.

- Selena:** [inaudible] So the contrast, I think though, to not appreciating each other is what you were talking about with the structure and the trends. So if we tend to be ungrateful, some discontentment is going to start surfacing. It's going to pick away at that structure, right? We then become frustrated, some resentment, maybe concerns settling in there. And then you've got...
- Ryan:** You've got a wildfire waiting to be sparked.
- Selena:** ...a wildfire, just contempt all around. And it's just going to take one little spark.
- Ryan:** Again, that's the whole structural trends. If you are not appreciating one another over a long period of time, you guys, your marriage is ready for an explosion on some level. Now, you might explode differently than another couple. The explosion could be catastrophic. It could be relatively just maybe an outburst. It could all of a sudden you realize that you're falling away from each other. And that triggering event could be anything. And that's the thing about triggering events is the structural trends are more or less predictable, the triggering events are unpredictable.
- And so anyways, I just want to keep you kind of thinking in those terms. So the first one is "I love you." The second one, "I appreciate you." Again, these are all very loaded statements if you think about it. The third one is "I won't give up on you."
- Selena:** Yeah.
- Ryan:** And this is modeling the understanding of covenant and the purpose that we hop on that [inaudible].
- Selena:** Right, and clinging to that promise from God, right? Like in Galatians 6:9 he says, "And let us not..." Is it Paul? Yeah. Writing to the Galatians. "And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up." Committing to your covenant, saying "I won't give up on you," that is doing good.
- Ryan:** It's not growing weary in it too. That's us these last two weeks.
- Selena:** Yeah, I mean, it's been...
- Ryan:** I was doing so good. [chuckling] And I was doing good for you.

- Selena:** Yeah, I mean, we felt like we were in the sweet spot and we're like "Let's take on some more things." And then we did, and we're like, "Oh, no, you know, just get rid of that."
- Ryan:** Well, we kind of knew...
- Selena:** We knew it was going to be a tough season. But I'm just trying to identify that doing good is staying committed. Like doing good is saying, "I'm not going to give up on you." Doing good is obedience when the feelings are not there. And, sometimes you're just saying those words. Again, those words, you can say them with the emotions loaded. You are like "Yes I will not give up on you." Or you're like, "I won't give up [00:25:00] on you. This is really hard. And I'm struggling but I'm not going to give up." It comes in a lot of different forms.
- Ryan:** That is all about perseverance and perspective. You noted Romans 5:3-5, "More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope." Think about this progression, "And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us." And remember, in Ephesians, Paul calls the Holy Spirit a guarantee of our future resurrection.
- Selena:** Yeah, when you jumped into Romans 5, headed down below, it's not giving up in perseverance so that endurance produces hope. And then in Romans 12, he talks about "Rejoicing in hope, being patient in tribulation be constant in prayer." So again, this hope that has been produced through these markers of "I will not give up on you," it's producing this character of steadfastness, of hope. And I'm sticking to this, "I value and understand God's idea of oneness in Genesis 2. "We committed to each other, we've made this covenant, I'm not going to give up on you."
- Ryan:** Yeah, that language for not giving up in Scripture, when you see words like perseverance, which you mentioned, steadfastness, again, covenant is one of those words that have to do with that language. So again, I mentioned perspective. I want to remind myself. Because we had this conversation just in our kind of funk, one of the bickering conversations we had *[both laughing]* was: Selena, when you feel really stressed out, you tend to have a really near-sighted perspective on things. You just see the thing that's stressing you out, forgetting this kind of...
- Selena:** I'm blind, people. It's just like white light in front of my face. And that's all I see. *[laughing]*

- Ryan:** Yeah, it could be like I tripped over the dog. *[both chuckling]* And this is the thing that is ruining my life.
- Selena:** It's the spark.
- Ryan:** It's that event. But Paul uses language... we're using a lot of Paul's writings here. Galatians, Romans, I've mentioned Ephesians. Paul uses this cosmic warfare language that was in Ephesians 6. I read it at the beginning. When we lose that perspective of this cosmic warfare. We are not able to hold to our steadfastness, and our perseverance, and our covenant as well.
- We have to remember the perspective. This perspective is key on saying to someone, "Honestly, I won't give up on you." The only reason you can say "I won't give up on you," when your spouse has been a complete idiot and they're not loving you well, and they're doing whatever...
- Selena:** Oh, yeah *[laughing]*.
- Ryan:** I know nothing of this because you're never an idiot. *[Selena laughing]* You're awesome. But when...
- Selena:** Great.
- Ryan:** So don't screw it up *[Selena laughing]*. But the only way you can love your spouse and say "I won't give up on you" in that perspective, in those moments is when you understand that this thing is more than this moment. That this covenant is a lifelong thing. Not even a lifelong thing, it's lifelong but it's also a bond that God Himself has sealed, that He Himself has tied together. So it's not only is it have the breadth of purpose, but it also has the length of time perspective.
- Selena:** Right, and it's reflective of His own creation of Christ, and the church, and the bride. It's a reflection of the marriage between Christ and the church. Also one last little note here about how I won't give up on you, I definitely think it speaks to how we value and honor our relationship that I'm saying it's worth fighting for. And I'm going to fight for it. I'm going to fight for you. Hebrews 13 was talking about... it says, "Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and the adulterous."
- Ryan:** Held in honor.
- Selena:** Held in honor is the kind of phrase we're focusing on. But I think it is interesting that the sexually immoral, and the adulterous comes up under. Because I think

this phrase of "I won't give up on you" probably falls under a lot of that for marriages that are struggling, right? There's been maybe some breach of trust. Again, the structure has declined. The woods are dry and there's been some sort of catastrophic event.

And when we can cling to Jesus and we can cling to His Word, and God is unchanging, and we can have that hope, when we say these words "I won't give up on you," we're saying I value and I honor our relationship. And maybe there's been some sexual immorality and there's been some adultery, but we're going to stand firm, and we're going to work this out. We're not going to give up.

Ryan: That's good. It's really good.

Selena: Sorry, the marriage bed to be held in honor. [00:30:00] So you were going to talk about held in honor.

Ryan: Yeah, well, when a verse asserts something and then makes kind of a secondary assertion based on that first assertion, I always like to kind of, in a productive way, deconstruct it. So "Let the marriage bed be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled." Well, another way of saying that is that to dishonor the marriage, to not hold it in honor is to defile the marriage bed.

Selena: To give up on it, right?

Ryan: Yeah, well, defile it. And so that word specifically...

Selena: But by defiling you're giving up the covenant. You're giving up on your...

Ryan: In a sense. I mean, because you're not seeing the honor that is worthy of. And that's the whole perspective piece. But I just want to speak specifically to defiling a marriage bed and the correlation between defiling your marriage bed. And what I mean by that, what the Bible means by that is...I don't know the Greek word underneath there, but I'm pretty sure is probably somehow related to porneia, right? Sexual immorality, which is porneia. And so you think of things like pornography. And you think of things like any sort of lustful thoughts. We talked about emotional lust, right? Is that a way to defile our marriage bed? This place where our marriage is sacred?

And so this "I won't give up on you," there's a correlation between our heart's tendency to be okay with not holding our marriage in honor, therefore, defiling. This sounds really odd, but I'm seeing once you start peeling back the layers on these obvious statements, it becomes pretty clear they're not that

obvious. If we actually mean what we're saying. So first one, "I love you." Second one, "I appreciate you." Third one, "I won't give up on you." Here's the fourth one. "I am sorry."

Selena: Yeah, this goes hand in hand with "I won't give up." Usually, there's somebody saying "I'm sorry."

Ryan: This is a road well-traveled.

Selena: Yes, yes. I mean, the life of a believer is to repent and believe. Mark 1:15 says, "And saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the Gospel.'" These are the words of Jesus, around and after John the Baptist talking about yes the kingdom of God is at hand. He is here. God is here.

Ryan: Yeah, that's the reality we live in. That Jesus is the reigning King. And so this call to repentance is a constant call. It's almost like a strong rubber band, right? We're stretching it out chasing the gospel, but we're always kind of pulled back. We need to constantly repent.

Selena: Right, and then 1 John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, He's faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all righteousness."

Ryan: "All unrighteousness."

Selena: "Unrighteousness," sorry. Keep the righteousness. *[both laughing]*

Ryan: It's not how that works! *[Selena laughing]*.

Selena: So, acknowledging, repenting. "I'm sorry." Repenting. Acknowledging, first, that we are sinners. And that we first need to repent to God and then we repent to each other. Sometimes even writing these words is hard. Acknowledging your part in sin, admitting that you're wrong. Humility. What does the Bible say about humility, right?

Ryan: Wow.

Selena: What is the theme around humility?

Ryan: This language has to be learned. It has to be learned. Because if you're not used to using words like "I'm sorry" or "I repent of my sin," or "I've sinned against you," "please forgive me," then this will feel foreign. But we're here to remind you that repentance is part... the life of a believer is one of repentance and belief.

- Selena:** Right, and the language will become easier the more you use it.
- Ryan:** Yes, yes. A good friend of ours, she's written a bunch of articles that are releasing in the coming weeks for "Fierce Parenting," all around homeschool. Lydia, she's brilliant in many ways, has an incredible story. But in one of her articles, as I was reviewing it, she had the simple headline, "We are repenters." We are repenters. As Christians, we aren't repenters.
- This is what we do. And it's not this wallowing in sin. It's not in a sense glorifying our sin, but it's acknowledging that we are not perfect. It's acknowledging constantly that we need the One who is perfect. And that's what saying "I'm sorry" is. And again, Selena has the grace to say, "I'm sorry," like very intentionally and to ask "Will you forgive me?" every time. And so our girls are learning that.
- Selena:** It's a training ground. *[laughing]* It's a training ground.
- Ryan:** I'm still learning it. They've learned it; I'm trying to catch up.
- Selena:** It just feels half-hearted if you're just like, "I'm sorry." Well, what are you sorry about? And what are you actually *[both laughs]* seeking forgiveness about? It's training technically.
- Ryan:** Ironically, when you're frustrated, your apologies are very half-hearted. They'd be like, "I'm sorry, I just... I was..." *[Ryan laughing]*
- Selena:** Sorry, you're so frustrating for me. *[chuckling]* Again, recognizing my need for a savior and the role of Jesus. In Luke, [00:35:00] Jesus was talking here. He says, "I've not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance." Who's righteous? No one. We're not righteous. We are sinners. We're made righteous.
- Ryan:** There's no one righteous. No, not one. Oh, there is one and His name is Jesus.
- Selena:** But we're made right because of Jesus. We're not completely perfect in the here and now, right? But the there and then. But we can walk out of the work that He's done and live out of that rest.
- Ryan:** I want to highlight one thing because I think it's helpful. Highlighting how this dynamic works in our own relationship. Because I feel like we are two archetypal people in a sense. You'll say the words, "I'm sorry," without meaning them. And I will not even say them *[laughing]*. If we are in the middle of a fight

- Selena:** You won't say them until you feel that you mean them.
- Ryan:** And you'll say them...
- Selena:** And I won't mean them. But I'm saying them as I need to get my heart to this point.
- Ryan:** It's a segue.
- Selena:** And you're like "My heart's not at that point, so I'll say it when my heart's that point. Again, it's different like..."
- Ryan:** Pride is governing the whole thing *[both laughing]*. Like both of us are sitting in...
- Selena:** Not mine. I feel like I'm so humble when I'm trying to say this.
- Ryan:** No, because you'll come in, we're having an argument where you've somehow wronged me. *[both laughing]* It happens so much I don't even know. I can't even think of an example.
- Selena:** Oh, my goodness!
- Ryan:** And your apology is usually just a segue into the excuse. You are like, "I'm sorry, I just have had a really stressful day. The kids have been doing this and you've not been available and all this stuff. I'm sorry, okay. I'm sorry, I'm sorry." *[laughing]* And that's not a real apology. That's, "I just want to get over this thing. So get over it."
- Selena:** Are you venting? *[chuckling]*
- Ryan:** I'm just saying. I bet people can relate.
- Selena:** No one can. *[both laughing]*
- Ryan:** Right, because it's my struggle alone. And then I'll just clam up. I'm the stewart. I stew, I brood.
- Selena:** I'm like, "What are you playing? Mind games over here? Why don't you just apologize?" And you're just like, "Because I don't feel like apologizing."
- Ryan:** Because I'm not wrong *[both laughing]*.

- Selena:** I just have to wait for him. I just have to sit and wait for him to come around and for the Holy Spirit to get a hold of his heart.
- Ryan:** And usually, by the way, husbands...
- Selena:** You're wrong *[Selena laughing]*.
- Ryan:** Hear this humbly. I'm going to say it's going to sound very prideful. But I'm very wrong when it comes...Hold on. *[both laughing]*. Dang, it! I was going to say I'm very rarely wrong from a factual standpoint. I'm usually right factually but I'm wrong in how I've loved my wife or communicated lovingly to her in that.
- Selena:** Word! *[laughing]*.
- Ryan:** And so I have to usually repent. And I repent of my... hey, listen, I'm sorry I was a huge jerk to you. You're right. I need to ask for your forgiveness. Although I was right in what I said. *[both laughs]* Don't add that.
- Selena:** Don't add that until everything's cooled off.
- Ryan:** It's just a complete backhanded thing. So anyway, I wanted just to draw the contrast there. The final one, it goes hand in hand with this one is "I forgive you." We were on our friends' podcast I don't know when it's going to air. But we got to be with Dave and Ashley Willis. They do The Naked Marriage podcast. It's phenomenal. But they asked us, as we were leaving, "What's one thing you can tell couples?" And for some reason, this came to mind, I haven't thought of this in a year or more, it was, "Be quick to apologize, fast to forgive." So one tip I could give you as a couple, be fast, quick to apologize fast to forgive. See how those go hand in hand?
- It doesn't mean you sweep it under the carpet, under the rug. I always switch those around. Under the rug. It means that you recognize that you can pull out of it. If you're in a nosedive, the best way to get out of a nosedive is not to wait until it's accelerated but to pull out of it as quickly as possible.
- Selena:** De-escalate, apologize.
- Ryan:** You're cleaning up all that tinder so it doesn't cause a fire later. Get in there, clean it out, and get out.
- Selena:** The apology is not just, "Let's get out of this quick." An apology is saying, "I recognize what's happening here, you're right. I am wrong in this, let's reconcile and get past this." But the forgiveness part too. I think we need to

highlight, of course, that there's this level of understanding of the forgiveness that we've been given in Christ, right? Just go google verses on forgiveness, and you'll find the whole Bible. *[both chuckles]*

Ryan: Nice.

Selena: Isaiah 53:5, just to highlight our understanding of forgiveness and to bring some depth there, it says, "But He was wounded for our transgressions," is referring to Jesus. "He was crushed for our iniquities; upon Him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with His stripes, we are healed."

Ryan: That's one of those verses that always gets taken out of context. He's not talking about physical healing. He's talking about healing of the broken relationship between God and His chosen people. And it's by those stripes... He was whipped.

Selena: The blood.

Ryan: The blood. He was whipped by stripes on His back. So what that does to our attitude toward forgiveness is it calibrates us, in that we can only be healed, we can only be made right with God by no action of our own, no righteousness of our own. We have been forgiven in Christ. So how could I possibly not [00:40:00] forgive you?

Now, there's times when forgiveness has to be worked out. But like the transaction of forgiveness can be fast. But the working out of what that transaction means for your intimacy and for your... Intimacy, I mean, full-spectrum, not just physical. But before you're back to functioning in a way that you... that can take time. And so forgiveness doesn't mean you're forgetting. It just means that you've said, "I will not morally hold this over your head because I can't. Because I am forgiven in Christ."

Selena: And forgiving doesn't mean you just automatically trust them 100% again.

Ryan: No.

Selena: It means there's that's part of working out the forgiveness. Is the rebuilding trust. Matthew... go ahead.

Ryan: Trespasses can take a lot of forms in marriage, right? If I speak to you in a way that's disrespectful or not loving, or I'm not considerate of you, that's something you can be pretty quick to forgive. If I, in some other way, betray your deep trust that would then make you question years of trust, then that's going to take a long time. And by God's grace, we've not had that happen. But

I'm just saying there's different kinds of expressions of forgiveness and different healing. Now, the transaction of forgiveness, as I said, will have an instantaneous...it's like it's realized. I forgive you, boom, it's realized. Now that's worked out in our hearts as we come to grips with what forgiveness actually means.

Selena: Would you liken it to kind of like a cauterization to a wound maybe? Forgiveness is just this work, like, "I forgive you, we're stopping this bleeding. But there's been some big damage that has happened." And so now we need to work out this reality after this humongous wound. The blood has stopped gushing; we have acknowledged the situation.

Ryan: I've stopped accruing interest on this debt. I'm going to change analogies from the cauterizing to the financial peace because I feel like that makes a lot of sense. If you have a home loan, and your bank all of a sudden said, "Your debt's forgiven..." Or let's just back this off, because that's a different example. Say you can't pay your mortgage. All right, you've proven yourself a poor steward of your finances. You've gotten it over your head, or circumstances or whatever, you are just a financial liability.

I'm saying, what if the bank said after six months of non-payment, they said, "You know what? We forgive your loan. We're no longer going to accrue interest on this thing. The debt is forgiven. However, we're not going to give you any more money. However, don't come back and ask us for another mortgage until you prove to us that you can pay it. That you can make good on your promise." Does that analogy work?

Selena: I think it works in a marriage.

Ryan: In a marriage, right.

Selena: It's not how God approaches us, right?

Ryan: Yes, yes, yes.

Selena: So, I'm sure people can back that up.

Ryan: Well, I mean, God does call us in the central... that's what forgiveness is. Not that we're trying to earn His forgiveness again. He gives us grace unconditionally. But in terms of human relationships and trust, I can forgive your debt without also letting you go further into debt with me. Does that make sense?

Selena: Right, yes.

- Ryan:** It's a hip-shot analogy. So please don't email me if it doesn't hold up [*Selena laughing*] in terms of, well, whatever. [*both laughing*].
- Selena:** Matthew 6:15, "But if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." Some heavy, heavy words. And powerful words from Jesus, that we should take heed of Ephesians 4:32, "Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you." Again, there's context around these letters to the Ephesians. The message still rings true of being kind to one another, tenderhearted, and forgiving one another as God and Christ. I think, again, it's a mark of a believer the ability to forgive and the ability to seek repentance. Like repent and forgive, and loving...
- Ryan:** That's one of the biggest differentiators of Christian community versus every other community on the planet is that if you wrong me you're dead to me. Christian community says "I'm committed to you beyond what you wronged me, how you wronged me, I'm going to reconcile with you." That's amazing.
- Selena:** And Colossians 3:13 takes it that further, that next step of "Bearing with one another and if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive." So it's not just a quick... I mean, in marriage we are committed to bearing with one another, right?
- Ryan:** Mm hmm.
- Selena:** But in other friendships we may not feel like we need to bear with one another. But as believers, I think there is a call to some long-suffering with each other. Like it would be easy to walk away from people that are struggling in our lives. But they are believers, and they're actively seeking God's authority and His wisdom in that situation. That's not [00:45:00] a place for us as believers to turn our backs and walk away. So bearing with one another, especially in our marriage is something that we just can't ignore. It's just you can't... You can. I mean, you can, right?
- Ryan:** Right. Well, not to your health.
- Selena:** Not to your health yeah.
- Ryan:** So these five phrases, they're very practical in that if you say them daily, or as needed you're liberal with these five phrases, and they're used in your marriage, they will have a very practical fruit-bearing characteristic. In addition to that, they are also very foundational in that they say something about your understanding of these big, deep doctrinal truths about love, and

forgiveness, and repentance and about the nature of covenant, and appreciation.

So, I think out of all of these five phrases, I would say, well, we'll get down to the couple's conversation challenge. I just want to remind you of our analogy that we were using—the structural trends. If you have these deep truths in place and you use these phrases with generosity in your marriage, you're going to keep your forest fairly tidy. It's not going to get filled up with dry, dead logs that's just waiting for a triggering event to set your marriage ablaze. You're going to keep it pretty tidy. And then what happens when those triggering events come along, instead of doing just that they will now just kind of sputter out.

We'll have a little fight. We've had a lot of really fast fights in the last month. The last two weeks have been a slog. But if you go two weeks beyond that, we had a lot of really fast turnarounds where we would quickly repent, quickly forgive. Because we saw it for what it was and we value those things.

Selena: Yeah, those muscles are getting stronger. Things like discernment and being able to see, and hear what's happening. Again, not sweeping it under the rug, not just trying to get past it, but dealing with it in a quicker way. Because we understand what these terms mean, we understand the orientation of our hearts, we're repenting of that and we are forgiving each other of that specific thing, naming it.

Ryan: It's really good.

Selena: Couples conversation challenge: start using these phrases today.

Ryan: I would say, use them today. If you made it this far, you've been listening, something probably jumped out at you, I would say start with that one. Whichever one jumped out at you.

Selena: Go where the fire is at.

Ryan: Go where the fire is at...

Selena: Start with that fire theme.

Ryan: ...so you don't fire at things later. *[Selena laughing]* Set things afire. *[both laughing]* I'm going to go lift muscles later. *[both laughing]* Sorry. Anyway, start with these phrases. Let's recap them real fast so that you have them at the top of your mind. "I love you." "I appreciate you." "I won't give up on you." "I'm sorry." And "I forgive you." These are five things to say to your spouse

daily. That also have accompanying, there it is, core truths to them. Well, that said, do you want to pray us out, Selena?

Selena: Okay. I always get caught off guard for some reason. *[both laughing]* God, thank you so much for just Your goodness, Your word, who You are, and Your presence and Your sovereignty in the world that we are in today. And I pray for all the marriages listening, Father that these words would be fruitful in their marriage. Holy Spirit use them to do work. I pray for soft hearts. I pray for repentance and forgiveness to be freely given and freely accepted. I pray that these words would come easier, and easier, and they would build unity, they would build love, and depth, and connection. In your name, Amen.

Ryan: Amen. All right, ladies and gentlemen if you have experienced the Fierce Marriage podcast for any period of time. You might have heard us say this, but we're going to ask you again. The way that this podcast is supported is through you, our listeners. Namely through a platform called Patreon, and there's a URL you can go to. It's patreon.com/fiercemarriage. That's patreon.com/fiercemarriage.

And what it is, it's a thriving community of listeners and readers who have decided to get on mission with us. And what it does is it maintains our independence. That even if we do have advertisers, if we don't have to, we clutter each episode up with these things, we can instead focus on just the good work that God is allowing us to do. And that is perpetuating the gospel and families around the world.

So if you want to partner with us; please do two things: pray about doing that, and talk to your spouse about doing that because we want you to be in agreement on that. And then we just ask that you act on whatever God convicts you to do. Even if it means just praying for us. Maybe you can't handle it financially, that's fine. But if you do feel led, go to patreon.com/fiercemarriage, and we do appreciate you considering that. All right, with all that said this episode is—

Selena: In the can.

Ryan: Thanks for joining us once again for the Fierce Marriage podcast. We will see you in about seven days. Till then—

Selena: Stay fierce.

[00:50:09] <Outro>

Ryan:

Thank you for listening to the Fierce Marriage podcast. For more resources for your marriage, please visit [FierceMarriage.com](https://www.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

- **[00:04:20]**
 - Scripture references:
 - Ephesians 6:10, ESV

- **[00:11:16]**
 - Scripture Reference:
 - Matthew 7
 - John 3:16 ESV

- **[00:15:12]**
 - Scripture references:
 - Galatians 5:22, ESV
 - 1 Corinthians 13, ESV

- **[00:18:21]**
 - Scripture references:
 - Mark 10:9, ESV

- **[00:24:94]**
 - Scripture references:
 - Galatians 6:9, ESV
 - Romans 5:3-5, ESV
 - Romans 12:12, ESV
 - Hebrew 13:4, ESV

- **[00:32:44]**
 - Scripture references:
 - 1 John 1:9, ESV
 - Luke 5:32, ESV

- **[00:39:06]**
 - Scripture references:
 - Isaiah 53:5, ESV
 - Matthew 6:15, ESV
 - Ephesians 4:32
 - Colossians 3:13

- **[00:17:46]**
 - Podcast recommended:
 - [Fierce Marriage: The Art of Appreciation](#)

FIERCE MARRIAGE RESOURCES

Main Site: <https://fiercemarriage.com/>

Shop: <https://shop.fiercemarriage.com/>

Patreon: <https://www.patreon.com/fiercemarriage>

Podcast: <https://fiercemarriage.com/podcast>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/fiercemarriage>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/fiercemarriage>

Instagram: <https://instagram.com/fiercemarriage>

Facebook: <https://facebook.com/fiercemarriage>

Pinterest: <https://pinterest.com/fiercemarriage>

Ask Us Anything: <https://fiercemarriage.com/ask>