

THE WARFARE OF PRAYER

<https://fiercemarriage.com/the-warfare-of-prayer>

[00:00:00]

Selena: So do you want to talk about our disconnect or do you want me *[Ryan laughs]* to talk about our disconnect?

Ryan: I don't know. What side do you want to be communicated here? *[laughs]*

Selena: I don't know. We got like 50 minutes.

Ryan: Yeah, we've had a hard time. We mentioned it last week you go through seasons in marriage where you're just humming along, life is dandy. *[both laughing]* Great! Grand! Doing great! And then you have other seasons where you can't seem to sing the same tune. *[Selena laughs]*

Selena: Yeah, it's hard. I mean, you can't even win for trying it feels like. And we are having a really hard time connecting. We both kind of felt like, "Ah, we're connecting in different ways." And then it just felt so shallow and then...

Ryan: And fragile.

Selena: Fragile. That's a good word for it.

Ryan: We would be connecting and then we'd be fighting. And then all of a sudden we would be good, and then we would be fighting again. *[chuckles]* It's totally fragile.

Selena: So it felt fragile...

Ryan: It's totally fragile.

Selena: I don't think it says much. Maybe you. But I feel good. *[Ryan chuckles]*

Ryan: This is why it's fragile people. I'm kidding.

Selena: No, I think it felt like unsure ground, right? So then it was just really difficult to try to connect again because we felt so insecure with each other. So a big part of us kind of connecting again to each other, and of course, connecting more with God was prayer. Prayer is this means of communing with God, communing with each other. It's a way to fight for your marriage. It's a way that we can remember who we are as sinners, and living in that humbleness, and that dependence on God. And prayer really is that way forward, in that

it's showing us our need, right? And who we need to go to. So with that, we will see you on the other side.

[00:01:52] <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 gospel-centered conversations. This is Fierce Marriage.

[00:02:24] <Podcast begins>

Ryan: Okay. So as we do in typical Fierce Marriage podcast fashion, you guys are getting the live feed into what we're processing as a married couple. And our hope and our prayer—dear Lord, I pray it—that our struggles will be a salve to some of you, listeners. That they will help you, and that whenever you're going through a funk, that you can remember, "I remember that ridiculous couple on that podcast and how they talked through this."

Selena: There's fruit to be had on the other side of the funk.

Ryan: I'm hoping for it. I'm hoping for fruit in the funk. *[both laughs]* Funky fruit.

Selena: No. No.

Ryan: A new album featuring Ryan and Selena Fredrick. *[Selena laughs]* So we've had that funky intro.

Selena: Oh, my goodness!

Ryan: So anyway, prayer is, man... Okay, man! *[both laughing]* It's like, your opinion, man. Anyway, prayer is one of those things that should be the lifeblood, the oxygen of a believer's life. And yet it's one of those areas that if we're honest, we live like pagans. A lot of times, as Christians, we live as the pagans do, as non-Christians do. I'm using that archaic sort of word. But we don't pray... I'm feeling convicted because we pray but we...

Selena: Yeah, it can feel burdensome, I think, because we go to God with maybe the same mind-set, the same prayers and we just feel like we're on this hamster wheel of either requests or praise or...I don't know, we kind of feel...

Ryan: All good. These are all good things.

Selena: Not bad. All good things. But I think there's more to be had in this area of prayer as far as even just understanding why we pray and understanding how we can pray, and how Jesus is the new mediator for us. And, so Old Testament versus New Testament, and now, and what does that look like, and why is that important for us to know as believers? So we'll get into that in a moment. It feel like you're diving in.

Ryan: Well, I want to do the housekeeping. We didn't do it early in the episode last week. Ladies and gentlemen, listen with me real fast. Just listen. Do you hear that? That's silence. *[Selena laughing]* That's what might happen if the Fierce Marriage podcast does not continue.

Selena: Stop! Oh, my goodness! *[both chuckles]* I was like, "Listen, that's all they can do. What are you talking about?"

Ryan: Well, I'm trying to illustrate a point, in that, you know what? Our times are changing and our doctrine is not...all right? That's the promise. That our mission is not changing but the vision of how it comes to be might have to change. So we are asking our listeners to consider prayerfully, [00:05:00] speaking of prayer, joining us on Patreon, that's [Patreon.com/fiercemarriage](https://www.patreon.com/fiercemarriage). It's an ark if you will.

If ever this podcast, for whatever reason, because we're proclaiming the gospel within the scope of traditional, biblical marriage, if ever someone with a switch somewhere in a big office building decides that this is too Christian, we'll have a place to go. And that's Patreon. So we do early releases there, we give away books, we give away free enrolments into classes that are coming up. We also give away silicone rings, which are... holidays are here.

Selena: Hey, you know what? It's not the reason why they should be given though.

- Ryan:** That's true.
- Selena:** We're trying to partner with people because we are on mission.
- Ryan:** So we're not doom-sayers, but we also know that this is the water we're swimming in. So we want to make sure that we are part of...
- Selena:** Times are changing.
- Ryan:** Yes, times are changing, and we're partnering with you, our amazing listeners, to keep this thing going on. It's our livelihood...
- Selena:** And being proactive.
- Ryan:** ...this is our livelihood, so we appreciate you're considering that prayerfully. If God leads you, go to patreon.com/fiercemarriage, and get the latest early releases and all that good stuff. Also, if you haven't yet, please do leave a rating and a review in your podcast app of choice. It means a lot. Okay, so we're talking about prayer.
- Selena:** We've kind of had this theme of warfare around a lot of our episodes. I don't think we've meant to. Honestly, I think it really has just been a prompting of the Holy Spirit and just thematic in our own lives and things that we're learning. And Ryan and I are both has the world always been this dark, or are we now experiencing more light in Christ? I don't know. Maybe those are some big terms...
- Ryan:** Both/and maybe?
- Selena:** Yeah both/and. So it's felt like this war-time mentality and not like picking up physical arms and gearing ourselves up to like fight physical battles. But it's really spiritual, right? It's the verse that we talked about. "We war not against flesh and blood, but against spiritual forces."
- Ryan:** Ephesians 6:10.
- Selena:** Thank you. So, with that said we are going to talk about prayer—the warfare of prayer. We'll even be going to touch on the intercessory aspect of prayer, because I think that can get a little weird.
- Ryan:** We get a little wonky about that sometimes in some Christian circles. We are going to hopefully set the record straight.

- Selena:** And then we're going to unpack 1 Thessalonians 5:17, "Praying without ceasing." Because that can feel pretty burdensome if you are not understanding why we pray and the... what am I trying to say? Why, if we pray, I guess. *[both chuckles]* Right? You can pray without ceasing.
- Ryan:** And how to pray?
- Selena:** How to pray, yes. We'll walk through a couple of reasons of... ways of how we can pray.
- Ryan:** If only there was somebody...
- Selena:** My words are a little bundled.
- Ryan:** ...it's okay. If only there was somebody in the Bible who taught us how to pray, who said, "When you pray, pray like this." *[Selena chuckles]* If only there was that person.
- Selena:** Oh, there is.
- Ryan:** Oh, there is?
- Selena:** His name is Jesus.
- Ryan:** So let me do a little on-ramping here. So last week we mentioned... Selena, you alluded to this Ephesians 6:10-20, which is the full armor of God, putting on the full armor of God and recognizing the fact that this battle that we fight is not with flesh and blood. It is with the spiritual forces of darkness, the principalities of this present darkness. I think that's the phrasing there.
- Selena:** God has overcome, just to put it out there again.
- Ryan:** So the war is won but the battle is raging is what I'm trying to say. So how do we fight as faithful Christians? We talked about putting on the full armor of God, especially within marriage. In marriage, we are fighting... it's a system within a system, right? So we are a marriage-family system. I'm doing some reading right now and synthesizing some ideas around family systems and systems theory. And we're in a family system and we are warring for one another. But even within our family, we are warring on this battlefield that Paul is talking about in Ephesians 6.
- So one of the things we talked about last week is the predictors of unrest. Okay. So prayer I know is a vital, necessary tool in our battle for health in this area and the predictors of civil unrest within our marriage. We talked about

being... and this is Ryan and Selena's idea, this is not an idea from academic types. But typically there's some sort of structural trend that's happening. And the structural trend will create what we called tinder, right? And we compared it to a forest fire. Think about all these massive forest fires that have been around the world this year.

The reason why they happen is because for years and years, there's this accumulation of dry tinder, dry, dead logs, and diseased logs, and things that... then they're falling down. And then there's a second component, which is the triggering event. And the triggering event being that thing, whether it's a lightning strike, or a campfire, or a stray cigarette butt. If someone's driving through the forest, [00:10:00] can be the triggering event that depending on the amount of tinder, the whole forest is... millions of acres are ablaze.

So take that same analogy. We're not talking about civil unrest in a nation. We're talking about civil unrest in our homes. A lot of times we don't clean up the tinder. And so we're not fighting against these. We're more or less just letting the mess accumulate. We're not dealing with our communication dysfunction, we're not dealing with our intimacy dysfunction, we wrote a whole book called "See-Through Marriage." Where we talk about being fully known and the like. And, so triggering events will cause massive fights within our marriage and stuff. Sorry, ahead.

Selena: And I just think that the areas of even worry, and fear, and feeling unsure can also affect those structural trends and be triggers for us. If we feel really afraid we're going to act a certain way. And that may cause division in how maybe spend our finances or where we spend our time, or what we're reading, or what we're allowing to ruminate in our hearts.

So, talking about prayer, talking about what is prayer, just the basics, we went to the New City Catechisms, which, by the way, are on Spotify, and they can just play through for the kids all day. It's awesome. So there's 52 of them. The prayer one starts at 38 and goes through 41, and so these are taken just from them. So what is prayer? They say, "Prayer is pouring out our hearts to God in praise, petition, confession of sin, and thanksgiving."

Ryan: Slow your roll a little bit there.

Selena: Excuse me. You're talking about my rolls?

Ryan: Not everybody knows what a catechism is. *[both chuckles]* Not everybody knows what a catechism is, right?

Selena: Yeah, go ahead.

- Ryan:** Did you mention that?
- Selena:** No, thanks for listening though.
- Ryan:** It's very simply...*[both chuckles]* sorry, I was taking a drink of my delicious iced coffee.
- Selena:** I heard the ice clinking around. *[laughs]*
- Ryan:** I can only do one thing at a time. Catechism is kind of an old school term for basically a call and a response. It's asking a question and memorizing the answer. It's a way that traditionally the orthodox church, I say orthodox meaning within Christian-established doctrine, not necessarily Greek Orthodox, or Roman Catholic, things like that.
- Selena:** It's mostly known in the Catholic Church. Catechism is more like...
- Ryan:** Well, no they more feel like liturgical sort of services, right?
- Selena:** Right, but historically you would find these in the Catholic Church.
- Ryan:** In which most liturgies are coming from sort of tradition. Anyway, and so you ask a question, "What is prayer?" And then the responder, which could be your children, it could be each other, they would have this answer memorized: "Prayer is are pouring out our hearts to God in praise, petition, confession of sin, and thanksgiving."
- Selena:** This is super awesome, guys, because when we do, "What is our only hope in life and death?" Our only hope in life...
- Ryan:** Now, that's the first question.
- Selena:** That's the first, yeah. "What is our only hope in life and death?" "That we are not our own but we belong to God." They're set to songs so they're really easy. I was trying to think of it without singing it. *[Selena chuckles]*
- Ryan:** They're by default. They're by default. They're meant to be memorized in a longer form. You were talking about the kids' version.
- Selena:** The kids' version is the songs. And it's powerful because it really does break down what these words are? "What is prayer?" The second one is "With what attitude should we pray?" So, it can be really difficult to define these things.

And so the catechisms are incredibly powerful tools to simplify and be accurate.

Ryan: I would put them in the same category as creeds and confessions. In that they aren't the Bible but they sure do help us understand the Bible. And they sure do you help us lock the Bible away into our hearts. A lot of people frown on catechisms, creeds, and confessions. I think they're great, and this is a guy that didn't grow up in it.

Selena: Same girl.

Ryan: Thanks for clarifying that. Anyway, so the second one, you ask a question and then answer it. "So with what attitudes should we pray?" "With love, perseverance, and gratefulness; in humble submission to God's will, knowing that, for the sake of Christ, he always hears our prayers."

Selena: That's a powerful thing which we will talk about after this last catechism that we wanted to mention. Because... we'll talk about Christ mediator, historically, Old Testament.

Ryan: Third question. "What should we pray?" Selena?

Selena: "The whole Word of God directs and inspires us in what we should pray, including the prayer Jesus Himself taught us."

Ryan: Wait a second, Jesus taught us how to pray? *[both laughs]*

Selena: Oh, my goodness! This guy!

Ryan: I'm being facetious here.

Selena: He's trying to be funny.

Ryan: So, I alluded to that early on and said "If only someone said to us, 'When you pray, you should pray like this.'" *[both laughs]* Jesus did that in Matthew 6, which we will get through. But, you want to first get into why can we pray? We've established what is prayer...

Selena: And then what's the history of prayer? Again, this is not going to be a big, long history lesson. I wish it was. But talking about and understanding the Old Testament ways of praying versus the New Testament how Jesus Himself brings in this new communion and He is the mediator. So, [00:15:00] the Old Testament nation of Israel, couldn't pray or talk directly to God. I think if they tried, would they get stoned or something? Like you just weren't able to. They

had to go through a quote-unquote, "Mediator," so typically like a priest, right?

Ryan: Yeah, it would have been the Levitical priesthood.

Selena: And if you look in the Bible, and you look up different kinds of prayers in the Old Testament, I mean, it's mostly in the Old was what I was seeing, but there's prayers of dedication, prayers of wisdom, benediction, prayers of gratitude. But the big difference between the Old Testament and the New Testament, when Christ came, is the role of the gospel in prayer.

So in Christ, we have this new communion with God given by the power of the Holy Spirit. You said this, "That's given to us from Christ." Christ is our ultimate mediator. Was that part of when the curtain was torn? Was that could not be part, sort of... because He didn't have to necessarily go through a mediator. Christ was making the way. He is the mediator. So now we can pray directly to Him. And I think, personally speaking, for many years, and I still continue to take that for granted, that ability.

Ryan: I think we all do. A few weeks back we talked about striving to enter rest. And the whole premise of that was looking at the Sabbath not as a moral command, but rather as recognizing the ceremonial law that it was and how Christ fulfilled the Sabbath, right? So instead of pressing into... the rest of Sabbath was always meant to point to the rest that we are to have in God. Christ fulfilled the Sabbath. That's why He said, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath." And also Christ fulfilled... He is the better temple. And by the power of the Holy Spirit, He's allowing us now to be temples of the Holy Spirit. That's what Paul talks about.

All of that has been satisfied in Christ, and He is now our mediator. We read all about that, how He's fulfilling and presiding in the high priestly role. We read all about that in Hebrews. And the book of Hebrews is meant to point us to both the triumph of Christ, but also the trials experienced by believers. So that's why the whole high priestly language and theme is all interwoven, the order of Melchizedek, and all that kind of stuff into the book of Hebrews was meant to show us and the early believers, that in our trials we have a high priest who is standing mediating constantly. And we can pray directly to God now because of the Holy Spirit in us and the regeneration that's happening.

And it's all about that kind of that spiritual resurrection that Paul talks about, in that we are now brought to life in Christ. Just as He resurrected as an event, now we are resurrected spiritually in Christ. These are all Paul's message, now we can look forward to a coming resurrection because of Christ. So it's living in light of that life, that payment for our sin now we can freely enter into this

throne room of grace. We can freely do that. That was not always the case. It was not the case certainly before Christ.

Selena: Seriously, reading the Old Testament has brought so much more, I think, risks, like fear of God in me in such a good way that my heart has been needing, obviously, to be able to stand in awe of the Savior.

Ryan: All right, that's good.

Selena: Well, the work. I mean, there's just so much. It's not simply Christ dying for our sins. He is now the mediator. He is fulfilling prophecy. He's checking like a thousand boxes just by coming, living, dying, and being resurrected, right? There's just such so many of these layers to peel back and understand. But I think one thing we need to get into as believers and as a couple is understanding this idea of intercessory prayer. Because if you talk about warfare, I feel like intercessory prayer just kind of fits right in that kind of idea. But we got to define it, we got to talk about it because it so quickly can go wrong and turn into these ideas of like incantations or...

Ryan: Well, if I just pray hard enough then God will answer me. As opposed to if I weren't praying hard.

Selena: Or as if, I mean, can I really... that's saying that you can...

Ryan: You're basically saying the right things, and the right passwords, and the right things.

Selena: ...tell God, do you think the name like Ah! this feels very unholy even saying this.

Ryan: But we're still very much called to intercede. And I think that the difference is it's not that intercessory prayer is bad, it's that it has a bad brand right now. And that's what we're trying to clarify. That it's very clear in Scripture that we are called to intercede on behalf of each other. And that means just praying for someone.

Selena: That is what intercessory [00:20:00] prayer is. It's the act of praying on behalf of others. So, in the Old Testament, you have a mediator like Abraham, Moses, David, Samuel, Hezekiah, yadi yada. Christ is pictured in the New Testament as our ultimate intercessor. And He is the ultimate mediator. He closed that gap between us through His death on the cross.

And He said, well, because of His mediation we can now intercede in prayer on behalf of other Christians, for the lost, and asking God to hear us. It says in

1 Timothy 2:5, "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus." This is Romans 8:34, "Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God, and is also interceding for us." Which is what you were talking about of where Jesus is.

But we see in Daniel 9 kind of a model for intercessory prayer. Again, intercessory prayer is praying on the behalf of others. So interceding on the behalf of others. So some of the words that characterize a true intercessory prayer, again, found in Daniel 9, it's in response to the Word, listed in verse 2, is characterized by fervency, verse 3 and self-denial, identified unselfishly with God's people, it's strengthened by confession, it's dependent on God's character and has, as its core, God's glory.

Ryan: That's a big differentiator between...

Selena: That's a big differentiator because it definitely... I mean, you can talk about how it can go wrong.

Ryan: I mean, I don't want to get too far into that, because it can get uncharitable pretty fast.

Selena: Sure.

Ryan: But the point that I think we're trying to make is that interceding is important, it's biblical, but it's not as sensational as I think it often comes across as. In other words, every believer is called to intercessory prayer, is called to be in interceding prayer. And that's what we're trying to get to in terms of marriage and how prayer as warfare is all about interceding for and with your spouse on behalf of God's will for your marriage. And there's so much that happens in that. You mentioned humility is one of those things. You can't go to the living God with pride and not be humbled in that process.

Selena: Right. I mean, if you're talking about true intercessory prayer, it really seeks God's glory, ultimately, and not our own. And so that can be a big indicator for what are we starting to pray for? Are things kind of turning sideways? Like in our marriage, are we praying, like, "God help my husband to hear me better?" Or are we praying, "God help me to have a soft heart towards him and help me to..." I'm not saying that these are your only prayers. But I guess just kind of filtering down through everything. How are our prayers bringing God glory and not necessarily just meeting our own needs and things that we want?

Ryan: So we started this whole episode talking about the warfare prayer, and I mentioned it... and so I want to keep us for the remainder of this because

we've set the stage. We now know what prayer is, and we'll get into how to pray. But we've defined prayer. It's pouring out our hearts to God in these various ways. And we can pray. We looked at Christ as our mediator now, what intercessory prayer is, and what that means.

And the whole reason we're talking about this in marriage is because we were in a funk, and it was one of our toughest. It's funny we're even able to record. We are actually recording two days late because when we were supposed to record this, I was just like, "There's no way we were doing this right now." And this was not going to work. So I went for a walk instead just to be completely...

Selena: Yes, that's only happened, I think, maybe one other time before. I don't remember.

Ryan: And so you might be hearing this and you're like, "Oh, they're always great." I'm telling you that we're not always great. We needed a breakthrough. And prayer was the breakthrough. And it came, by God's grace, through a good friend of ours who says, "When we're in that issue I pray with my husband." And so we were talking, you said, you go, "It's late at night, kids were in bed," you're like, "We need to pray together more before this morning." I was like, "Dear Lord..." *[both chuckles]* I just started praying. And so that was the beginning of us realizing the warfare of prayer and interceding on behalf of one another. So I do want to make a nod real fast here. A lot of what we're talking about was actually... It's funny, we literally wrote a book on prayer. Not the book, but a book. We wrote these two devotionals.

Selena: I don't know if we mentioned that in the beginning?

Ryan: We didn't.

Selena: I think we skipped it over. It's too good.

Ryan: "40-Prayers for My Wife." "40-Prayers for My Husband." I'm just laughing because I remember when we wrote these, we were thinking what we're talking about right now. [00:25:00] And we're talking about it right now as if it's new to us. But what we...

Selena: It's a renewed joy.

Ryan: It's a renewed joy and a renewed kind of sense of awe in all that prayer is and can be in the life of a married couple. There's two main premises to these books. And by the way, you can check them out. Just go to 40-prayers.com is a couple's bundle. I think it's like \$20 or something for the bundle of books.

- Selena:** Couple's bundle.
- Ryan:** Couple bundle. *[both laughs]* And it's 40-days. And there's all kinds of reasoning why we did 40-days. Building habits, but all sorts of number of significance in Scriptures...
- Selena:** It's in the intro if you want to read too. *[chuckles]*
- Ryan:** It's all on the intro. But the two main approaches are this, and we'll talk through this for the rest of our time, is we pray as a response to what God has said to us in Scripture and we pray in the way that Christ has outlined to us. and that's through Matthew 6—the Lord's Prayer.
- So we're going to talk through those things, but a married person listens to it in the context of your marriage, okay? We're talking through a biblical concept. We're saying, "Apply it intentionally to your marriage." How can you pray Scripture over your spouse? How can you pray Scripture over your marriage, over your children, over whatever trial you're facing, praying the promises of God, reciting the promises of God back to Him? "God, You said that You would take care of our every need. Lord, help me believe that, help me to see that, help me to trust You. That You are a God that keeps His promises. Help me." And you can do that about any passage that you read.
- Selena:** Donald Whitney, we've mentioned him before, he wrote, "Family Worship," he also wrote "Praying Scripture". Again, the same sort of size and framework of the "Family Worship". So take Psalm 23, "The Lord is my shepherd." So how would you pray through this as a couple? Like, "The Lord is my shepherd I shall not want." God in those times that I've wanted, in those times where I've been wandering, and needed guidance, You have been my shepherd. In You, I have everything. I don't need to want. I don't want.
- Ryan:** Or, God, we feel like we're wandering right now. You are our shepherd. Lead us back beside still waters. Calm our souls, comfort us in this. So it's just praying Scripture back.
- Selena:** Truly, it's just writing a line of Scripture and then writing underneath it your prayers. It's a super fresh way. I hate saying fresh, but it is. It's a renewed way of praying and being in the Word. So that's one of the ways to pray. Did you want to go through these ways to pray and then conquer 1 Thessalonians 5:17?
- Ryan:** I mean, it's the second shortest verse in the Bible I feel like.

Selena: There's three words in it. Versus 2 "Jesus wept." This one is, "Pray without ceasing." And I think as believers especially if we're in marriage, and we're really praying for some breakthrough, we're praying for the hearts of our spouses, we're praying for connection, we're praying for intimacy, we're praying for just no more division in our home, unity, how can we be anchored? And then Paul goes ahead and writes this: "Pray without ceasing." And you're like, "What? I can't close my eyes and bow my head all day. I've got a 7-year-old, a 4-year-old, and a 1-year old."

Ryan: And we're just asking, what does that even mean?

Selena: What does that even mean? It's the age-old question. But one thing that we kind of started to understand in our studies is that he's not just referring to just this non-stop talking, and this bowing of your head. But really it's this attitude of what we discovered of God-consciousness and God's surrender. So we're in-depth...

Ryan: That's such a weird way to put that, I'm sorry.

Selena: I know...

Ryan: It's not God-conscious. It's consciousness of God is what I think is...

Selena: Yes.

Ryan: Otherwise, you sound like you've got [inaudible].

Selena: Sorry. That was how it was written when you're reading it.

Selena: No, that's good. Because when I read it out loud, I was like, "That's not [inaudible]." But no, it's as you're living, you're living in this awareness that God is with us. That He's actively involved, He's engaged in our thoughts and actions.

Ryan: That's a prayer without ceasing thing, that's being aware...

Selena: That's praying without ceasing. Yes. That He's always with us and that we can always surrender, we always need to be surrendering things to Him. So when we get worried about "What's He going to say next?" Or what trigger is going to happen in our lives or what... we're afraid, right? There's a lot of fear happening right now.

We've experienced some depths, at least I have, some fears in my own heart that we've had to work through in discouragement or anger. The Bible talks

about how we're supposed to quickly turn those thoughts into prayers, and every prayer into thanksgiving. We see this in Philippians 4:6, "In everything by prayer and petition with thanksgiving present your requests to God."

Ryan: And to be honest, I don't think listeners will need to be convinced of that. I think more than anything they need to be reminded that that's what that looks like. And that's what I think you're saying, and I want to make [00:30:00] that clear.

Selena: I'm excited because I'm excited about the reminder, I guess. *[laughs]*

Ryan: Good, well, that's good. And I am too. It's when you...

Selena: I'm not really convinced. I just get excited about the message of when we're worried, what's the process and what is the pathway to dispelling the worry, the fear, the anger, the discouragement, the frustration with our spouse, whatever?

Ryan: That's good. The pathway is important to remember that this is a pathway to gratefulness, a pathway to thanksgiving, a pathway to worship. I'm not trying to put you out. I'm sorry on that. So let's talk through kind of what that could look like when you recognize those moments, the Lord's Prayer. Can you read that?

Selena: Okay, I wasn't there yet but...

Ryan: I know. That's why I'm trying to get there. *[both laughs]*

Selena: Okay. Just two last thoughts on verses in Colossians 4:2 about Paul was teaching people of Colossae to devote themselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. So I guess this idea of thankfulness and prayer, and then the watchfulness, that goes hand in hand with this idea of warfare and prayer, being watchful, being vigilant, being in prayer. And thankfulness is another way we can combat the advances of the enemy, right? So, also Ephesians 6:18, let me just pull it up, "Praying at all times in the spirit, with all prayer and supplication to that end, and keep alert with all...perseverance, making supplication for all the saints."

Ryan: And that comes from the same passage of taking up the full armor of God. That's at the tail end of that passage there.

Selena: So as we're going through our days, prayer really should be some of our first response to any of the fear and anxiousness that we're dealing with. And if you look at the other side of that, a lack of prayer can cause us to become

more self-dependent. I think we become more prideful and we stop remembering, and living in these areas of truth, right? We're not breathing in the truth of God, we are becoming slightly just a little bit [inaudible], but degree by degree becoming more dependent upon ourselves.

So this idea of 1 Thessalonians 5:17, "Praying without ceasing." We read about another example of how prayer is like the air you breathe in this atmosphere. He took the idea of breathing, right? There's pressure on your lungs so you have to breathe. So it's harder to hold your breath than to breathe. And so when you are living in this atmosphere, we're Christians, we're believers, we're living the way of God, we have this air of prayer now. We can now breathe in and we can talk like prayer should be something that is so ingrained within us that it's like breathing. And so you think about a couple who's just really starved, it feel like their marriage is dying, maybe are we holding our breath, right? Are we not engaging in those truths? Whether it's Bible reading or being prayerfully engaged with the Lord every day.

Ryan: I don't remember what Psalm it was but is "As the deer pants for the water so my soul longs after you." We wonder why we're thirsty when we never drink. Or we wonder why we're air hungry when we never breathe. And that's what you're saying is that this is something that... I mean, I'm reading a Desiring-God article. It says, "Begin every day with God, spend every day with God, and close every day with God." And it cites Psalm 5:3, "O Lord, in the morning..." This is beginning your day. "In the morning you heard my voice; in the morning I prepare a sacrifice for you and watch."

Selena: Oh, man! As a mom, just hearing those like "I prepare sacrifice for you." Lord, am I preparing a sacrifice? Or am I just flirting around looking for ways to fulfill my own desires, right?

Ryan: Yeah. And then "The spend every day part" is the "Pray without ceasing." And then "Close every day with God," Psalm 4, "In peace, I will both lie down and sleep; for you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety." So it's this all-encompassing breathing, I'm waking up and the first thing is... so often our first thing we think about is our phone or our breakfast...

Selena: Or to-do.

Ryan: ...or just to-do list, or I got to get a shower before the kids wake up, something like that. And maybe our first thought can be different. That's a blessing to think, "O Lord, in the morning you hear my voice, and I go to bed because You've given me peace." That's a deep thing. I want to contrast what Christ taught versus the intercessory kind of the bad-branding that intercessory prayer has. Because we see that in Matthew 6. When Jesus is teaching His

disciples how to pray. He's teaching the people around Him how to pray, it's in response to...and I can't find it. It's [00:35:00] in response to what's happening with the Pharisees. So they are, at one point beforehand, they had been praying in an obnoxious way, I'll say.

He says—this is chapter 6, verse 2—"Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. And when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that you're giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others."

So often, our prayers can turn into that, especially if we're in a small group setting, that we're praying in a way that is meant to not connect with God but to impress ourselves or to impress each other. And so Jesus is speaking against that, and He says, "Now when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do." Why did the Gentiles keep up empty phrases? Because they were, it was a very legalistic. It was, "I need to kind of drum up." I'm thinking of in 1 Kings... is it chapter 18? It's Elijah, right? He brings down the fire of God, it's the whole showdown between Baal and God. And all the prophets of the Baal's are basically, for a whole afternoon, they're praying and jumping around and trying to get Baal to send down fire, to light the sacrifice on fire.

And Elijah's just like, he's just making fun of them the whole time. So finally, he just says, "How long will you limp between two different opinions? If the Lord is God, follow Him, but if Baal, then follow him." And then so he calls down the fire of God, sets the sacrifice ablaze. It's an amazing display. But that's I think what Christ is getting at is "Don't just heap up empty phrases like the Gentiles, the godless people, the people who aren't of the family of God."

Instead, pray like this, "Our Father in heaven, Holy is Your name. Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."

So, if you haven't memorized that yet, Fierce fam, you do that. I think it's a valuable exercise. I was fortunate enough, blessed enough, I'll say, to have my parents or my teacher, somebody, Sunday school, somebody taught me that when I was like 7 years old. And now I'm trying to teach our 7-year-old. She used to know it and I think she forgot. *[laughs]*

Selena: She knows it.

Ryan: But the point I'm trying to make is that is such a beautiful outline. So wherever you feel stuck, there's a very tangible, useful tool for working through that. It's an acrostic or an acronym as the...

Selena: The ACTS.

Ryan: ACTS. A-C-T-S not A-X-E. But A-C-T-S. The acrostic or the acronym...acronym has to be a word. That's what this says, I guess. "A" is "Adoration." So start it by just recognizing who God is. The second one is "Confession." The third one is "Thanksgiving" for "T". And the fourth one is "Supplication" which is asking for things.

And so a lot of times if I'm praying with the family, if I'm praying with the girls, I'll start with "God, thank you for this day, You are God, I am not." I love how He starts the prayer. Think about this. "Our Father." That's how He starts the prayer. Our Father. It's not our God, even our King, but He gets there, but it's a relationship that people will understand. Every person in all of humanity has had a father.

Not all fathers are great; the point is that He is great, He is perfect, and we can talk to Him. He is our Father. Now, where does He sit? In heaven. So He's our Father, but He's not like every other Father. He is special, He's in heaven, He's Heavenly Father, He's perfect, He's holy. Oh, wait, "Holy is Your Name." [chuckles] So we have this perfect Heavenly, Holy Father. That's our starting point.

Now this is where it gets really cool is it doesn't start with this but it includes it. "Our Father who art in heaven, who is Heaven, holy is Your name." Then what? "Your kingdom come?" Who reigns in a kingdom? A king. So we have a Father and we have a King. And if that doesn't calibrate our hearts for who we're talking to, we're talking to a loving Father, who has adopted into His family. But you know what? He's also a King. He deserves our submission, our getting underneath His mission, under His authority.

Selena: I mean, part of this A-C-T-S is confession. And I think confessing that He is King relinquishes control from us, right? "Hallowed be Your name, Your kingdom come." Not Selena's will be done, but Yours.

Ryan: It's an aligning of our hearts to Him.

Selena: It's an alignment through confession, absolutely.

- Ryan:** "Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it isn't heaven." I want to see your version of reality real here. And help me to see [00:40:00] that and to want to enact that the way you're calling me to do that.
- Selena:** I don't think we made this clear for listeners. Really quick. So the Lord's Prayer, there's A-C-T-S which is an acronym. So A-C-T-S. "A" stands for "Adoration." "C" stands for "Confession." "T" is Thanksgiving." And "C" is supplication.
- Ryan:** "S" is "Supplication."
- Selena:** What did I say?
- Ryan:** You said "C" is Supplication." *[laughs]*.
- Selena:** We're going to run. This is my life, people.
- Ryan:** It's okay. So but that acronym coincides with the Lord's Prayer. The confession is confessing sin. "Lead us not into temptation, deliver us from evil. For Yours is the kingdom, and the power and the glory forever," thanksgiving, supplication, Amen. It's a loose outline according to the Lord's Prayer, but it does resonate in there. There are other outlines, but that's typically the one that I will follow. And then as much as you can, pray Scripture into those spaces. And so here's the couple's piece to this, is you do it together. It's not just me praying, and then we just go. But instead I'm praying for you, with you, out loud so you can hear it.
- Selena:** There's this thing my friend mentioned that really hit my heartstrings, where she said, "It really serves to anchor us in our greater source, who is God and it anchors us in our unity."
- Ryan:** As opposed to anchoring in our own...
- Selena:** Which is how we can fight and combat the spiritual battles that are happening around us. We have to be unified. We have to be anchored in a source that is outside of ourselves in order to fight and to have victory in these areas that God has given us.
- Ryan:** I mean, I don't want to use a big, broad, sweeping thing, but I'm going to. *[both laughs]* I feel like if a couple prays together this often, they're going to be hard-pressed to be dysfunctional for long periods of time.
- Selena:** Right, absolutely. Absolutely.

- Ryan:** In other words, if you try to somehow find a correlation between the depth and consistency of prayer in a couple's life, there might be a correlation to the fruitfulness or the dysfunction. Meaning that the couples who pray are going to experience greater fruitfulness. Couples who don't are going to experience greater dysfunction.
- Selena:** Well, and the fruitfulness, what does that look like? It doesn't mean that their problems are gone. But it means that they're able to have the peace of God through those problems, the provision of God. So, I just want to highlight that, it may be obvious but it may not. I think there's just different ways to see because there's external stresses, and, I was like, "Man! I thought we were good as a couple." But the last couple of weeks have been pretty rough. And I just started questioning things and feeling insecure about things, and wondering where we stand. Not where we stand. I mean, I know where we stood but it just kind of felt like we were...
- Ryan:** At one point, I was just walking... we recorded the episode last week, that was "Five Things To Say To Your Spouse Daily." And I was like, "What are those five things? I should probably say those to her. *[both laughs]* And I was like, "I love you." And you were like, "Okay that hasn't changed." I still love you, and I already could feel my heart getting softer.
- Selena:** Even me hearing that was just like, "Yeah, I know that." But hearing you say it was very powerful.
- Ryan:** The second one that we talked about was "I appreciate you," or "I see you." And I was like "I see everything you're doing for our family. I appreciate it. Thank you."
- Selena:** It was a good way to warm up. It was a good way to warm up. We still had to have some tough conversations, but we were able to reconnect at a deeper level where all those fears and insecurities just kind of went to the wayside. It took us a long time guys...
- Ryan:** Here's the crazy thing is nothing happened. *[chuckles]*
- Selena:** There was no monumental like bombs or outside stressors. It was just kind of...
- Ryan:** I mean, we weren't really nice to each other and we were kind of that. But it was just like this low grade...
- Selena:** It's combative.

- Ryan:** It just goes to show that...
- Selena:** You can miss each other...
- Ryan:** ...man, the flesh is alive and well and we can still not feel loved or show love in ways... even though the fact of us loving each other hasn't changed. Because our flesh gets in the way. We trip things up. So, here's your couples conversation challenge. Can you guess what it is? *[Selena chuckles]* Pray together.
- Selena:** Praying together.
- Ryan:** If you're looking for a place to start, go to the Lord's Prayer, Matthew 6:9. That's a great place to start. Talk through your prayer life, pray together out loud, holding hands. But somewhere before or after that, talk through your prayer life. Where have you been? And where are you headed? Are you happy? Are you satisfied with your history as a couple in terms of your prayer? Traditionally, do you typically just pray around meals, and pray at church together? Or do you actually intentionally pray for and with each other, for each other. To me that's key is praying with each other, for each other at the same time? So, have that talk.
- Selena:** Check out those New City Catechisms [00:45:00] supplementary level Bible of course. Do the 40-Prayers for My Husband and my Wife. Here's like shelving our books. *[laughs]*
- Ryan:** Go to 40-prayers.com. I'm serious. We wrote this because we want people to read them.
- Selena:** And we do.
- Ryan:** It walks you through "here's what it is..."
- Selena:** What are some of the prayers? Go to the table of contents. Whet the appetite.
- Ryan:** Day 19, "You pray for, or you pray for God to give her confidence in our covenant." This have rest and reflection days two...
- Selena:** Use the table of contents.
- Ryan:** "I pray for her as she runs her race," that's based on 1 Corinthians 9. "I pray that she would be anchored in Christ," that's based on Hebrews 6. "I Pray that she would forget what is behind," that's based on Philippians 3.

- Selena:** I pray on Day 11 for a vibrant prayer life for you. *[Ryan chuckles]*
- Ryan:** That's so meta.
- Selena:** 1 John 5:14. *[both chuckles]* That's funny, I just flipped to it. But for assurance and purpose, Proverbs 19:21. Because I think that men can struggle with being assured in the purpose that they're living, right? That as a father, as a husband, the roles that are God-given.
- Ryan:** And each day is literally just a prayer that you can pray out loud or in your heart, or to your spouse. And then there's a journal area on each day where you can write your own prayer. Now, there's an Easter egg in this book. Do you know what it is? See if you can find an Easter egg. And you can email us or send us a message somewhere, and we'll send you a free pair of books. But how can you find it unless you have the books? *[both laughing]* It's a trick. We'll send you something for free if you can find the Easter egg in this book. But you won't be able to find it with the naked eye. *[Selena laughs]* You need to have assistance. Anyway, okay. So 40-prayers.com, check those out. New City Catechism, that's helpful. Donald Whitney, his book called "Praying Scripture," is very helpful. Tim Keller has a book simply called "Prayer"...
- Selena:** Because he is Tim Keller. *[laughs]*
- Ryan:** ...in classic Keller fashion, check all those out. You guys, prayer is not to be underestimated, it's a discipline, it's also a weapon. And it is the primary way that we can converse with God. We hear His Word through Scripture, through the Holy Spirit, but we need to speak to Him. We need to converse and have communion. So speaking of which, can I pray us out today?
- Selena:** Yes, please. I was like, "Please don't ask me to pray." Not because I don't want to pray. But I feel like I always pray, and I think that's a good thing...
- Ryan:** Somebody's been [inaudible] in the whole interview. I mean, the whole podcast.
- Selena:** How dare you? How dare you? *[Ryan laughs]* I wrote this outline.
- Ryan:** Oh, did you? Did you?
- Selena:** I sure did. You go ahead and pray. Lead this podcast, my man.
- Ryan:** All right, well, don't mess it up. I can't mess it up. Oh, Lord, I thank you for just your sovereignty and your goodness over our efforts here. That you would take our words and somehow bend them to Your will, twist them for Your

glory. God, I pray that would be the case. And that in the hearts of the couples listening to this, that they would be equipped and enlivened to start their conversation with You together anew, and that they would begin to build habits around prayer together for their marriage, and in their family. Lord, I pray they be encouraged, not discouraged by this. That no matter where they've come from, or what their history holds, that there's only hope in You. There's only hope in the future because of all You've done Christ as our great mediator, as our high priest, you have called us into this relationship., so I thank You. I pray the couples would just step into that reality. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Selena: Amen.

Ryan: Okay. This episode is—

Selena: In the can.

Ryan: All right, we're going to see a good friend of ours who just had their baby. So Selena is just itching...

Selena: We got to go, people.

Ryan: She's just itching to see that kid, so maybe we'll hang out a few more minutes.

Selena: How dare you? I'm going.

Ryan: All right. This episode is—

Selena: In the can. I already said that.

Ryan: See you again in the next seven days. Until next time—

Selena: Stay fierce.

[00:48:54] <Outro>

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

PODCAST NOTES

- **[00:06:54]**
 - Scripture references:
 - Ephesians 6:10, ESV

- **[00:11:09]**
 - Recommended resource:
 - [New City Catechism](#)

- **[00:14:33]**
 - Scripture references:
 - Matthew 6, ESV,

- **[00:20:32]**
 - Scripture references:
 - 1 Timothy 2:5, ESV,
 - Romans 8:34, ESV
 - Daniel 9, ESV

- **[00:25:25]**
 - Recommended Book:
 - [40-Prayers for My Wife](#)
 - [40-Prayers for My Husband](#)
 - [Family Worship](#)
 - [Praying The Bible](#)

- **[00:26:47]**
 - Scripture references:
 - Psalm 23, ESV,

- **[00:29:44]**
 - Scripture references:
 - Philippians 4:6, ESV,
 - Colossians 4:2, ESV
 - Ephesians 6:18, ESV

- **[00:33:36]**
 - Scripture references:
 - Psalm 5:3, ESV,
 - Psalm 4, ESV,

- **[00:36:10]**
 - Scripture references:

- 1 Kings 18, ESV,
- **[00:45:32]**
 - Scripture references:
 - 1 Corinthians 9, ESV,
 - Hebrews 6, ESV,
 - Philippians 3, ESV,
 - 1 John 5:14, ESV,
 - Proverbs 19:21, ESV,
- **[00:46:54]**
 - Recommended Book:
 - [Prayer](#)

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