

## SEX AS A WEAPON?

<https://fiercemarriage.com/sex-as-a-weapon>

[00:00:00]

**Ryan:** Do wives ever use sex as a weapon? I'm asking you honestly.

**Selena:** I think we can. Yeah. I think if we're not, you know, operating within some healthy boundaries of understanding what sex is and the purpose of it, we can easily use it to manipulate or use it as a weapon to hurt our spouse, hurt our husbands as well.

**Ryan:** Now, let me ask you this: have you ever used sex as a weapon?

**Selena:** No, because that was one of our one rules. We only had a few kind of going into marriage, *[chuckles]* and that was one of them because someone told us, some mentor told us not to use sex as a weapon to hurt each other in terms of withholding or imposing your own desires on someone.

**Ryan:** I appreciate that wisdom. *[laughs]*

**Selena:** You're welcome.

**Ryan:** Today we're talking about sex as a weapon. There's two sides to this, which of course, we will unpack, but there's using it as a weapon but also the weapon that it can be in fighting in unity against the enemy, against temptation, against things like that. This is a very relevant episode for us given what we've been going through recently. But we will, as usual, share with you on the other side.

[00:01:11] <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.
- [00:01:44]** <Podcast begins>
- Selena:** Ooh, guys! It feels like we're a little scratchy and bumpy going into this one.
- Ryan:** Scratchy? What do you mean by that?
- Selena:** Scratchy. My voice feels scratchy. *[both chuckles]* My voice feels scratchy. My throat feels scratchy. It's not the Rona. Okay? It's just cold weather and dry weather. And it's early. We don't usually record in the mornings. But our lovely friend, Miss Kayla had her beautiful baby girl, so she is at home snuggling that baby girl. And grammy is here and grammy could come in the morning. So when Grammy comes in the morning, that's when we record.
- Ryan:** It's been rough, you guys. The other reason that we didn't get... This is actually being recorded the day before it releases, another big reason is my dad, which you've heard us talk about, he and my mom, we obviously love them, my dad is a Christian counselor. Anyway, he had a pretty bad heart attack last week. So we just have been reeling from that. My mom will typically help but...
- Selena:** You can't go in hospital.
- Ryan:** You can't. My mom would typically help with the podcast, but my dad has been down and out. Although she can't even visit him. It's just a mess because of everything that's going on with the pandemic and government stuff. Anyway...
- Selena:** When it rains it pours, guy.
- Ryan:** Oh, my word.
- Selena:** There's just been a lot going on. So we're coming here, showing up...
- Selena:** Showing up and talking about marriage stuff because someone's got to do it. It's the mission God has assigned to us for this season, so we are going to continue doing that. Today is actually the output of us on our conversations

around this kind of external struggle that we've been having with, you know, my parents, my dad being in the hospital, that kind of the trauma that that is and the tragedy that is. Also with everything that's happening in the world, it's caused all kinds of stuff to just kind of come up in our own lives. Our kids have been acting out. Kids in our community group have been acting out. There's this weird...

**Selena:** It's warfare. It's spiritual warfare. And that's kind of been the theme of the last couple of episodes that we've been talking about. Last week, I believe it was about prayer and how we can engage and have an active prayer life in order to war off and to fight against the darkness and principalities that we are going to talk about, or we've mentioned in Ephesians 6. So yeah, this is an extension of that as well.

**Ryan:** Yeah. Especially you may be aware, if not, I'm going to just remind you...

**Selena:** Make you aware. *[chuckles]*

**Ryan:** We're doing a Gospel-Centered Marriage course/content ecosystem. And we've just finished a beta with a bunch of you listeners, a bunch of our patrons on Patreon. Now we're getting ready to film and it just feels like that is becoming the last thing on our minds. But yeah, it is the forefront of what we're doing in terms of Fierce Marriage.

**Selena:** And God's affirming every step I feel like that we're doing. Every step we take, He's leading this. So, of course, there's going to be some blowback, there's going to be some whiplash, there's going to be some, you know...

**Ryan:** But one of the things you said was we should be very intentional about our intimacy over the coming two weeks. In that we need to ramp up our frequency and just use it at...And this was you. This wasn't me [00:05:00] trying to get...

**Selena:** No, because during the beta, if we're honest, it was a struggle because we had a lot going on and the intimacy part of our marriage definitely suffered on some levels. And I think that caused us to stumble. Not in like looking at images or anything like that, but it just caused us to not love each other well, be patient, and being more combative. So there was just some underlying discord there. So this time around, we're definitely trying to be engaged and active in how we fight against things that are going to come up against us without a doubt.

**Ryan:** And seeing sex as a weapon in that fight.

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** That was profound when you brought that up to me. So I thought, "You know what? Let's talk about that and let's look into that more and see, a) is that even biblical? b) What can that look like?" So that's what this episode is all about.

Real fast, I want to make mention of our Patreon community. It's a thriving group of listeners and readers who have decided to join arms with us on mission. This is an invitation for you, listener, into that community that's actually becoming more and more close-knit, but really it is it...But we do this. This is our life. This is what we do, so we're looking for the church to partner with us. One of the verses that keep coming to mind...let's see if I can find it real fast. It's Galatians 6:2, "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." He's talking about the church bearing with one another. So we've really leaned on that community of people.

Anyway, there are free things. [*chuckles*] We hope that you can also lean on us in that and that we can bear your burdens in the sense, that we can give you gospel-centered marriage, I guess, advice or thinking or ways of processing or tools. So just go to [patreon.com/fiercemarriage](https://patreon.com/fiercemarriage). You can find all the info there. We would love to have your partnership.

Okay! Sex as a weapon. Again, we mentioned in the intro there's two sides to this coin. We can see sex as...Okay, if you think about weaponizing it within a marriage, anytime you weaponize anything, it's this "I'm in the place of power on this, and I'm going to withhold it as a means, as a chess piece, as a means to advance my side of the board. I want to get what I want so I'm going to use it as a weapon. And I'm going to either going to use it as a negative weapon or as a positive weapon. I'm going to withhold it or I'm going to use it to manipulate how you feel about me so that I can get past you and get onto the thing that I actually want."

**Selena:** Right. So this is obviously the way that we discourage wielding this tool of intimacy as it's obviously hurtful, unproductive, and selfish. I think a way of kind of defiling the marriage bed, like taking away from the purity of it, maybe not in the defiling sense of extramarital affair or anything, but I think that it's taking away from the purity that the Bible calls us to engage in within the marriage covenant.

**Ryan:** Yeah. Yeah. It perverts the meaning of intimacy. The whole point of intimacy is to be vulnerable and to experience love with your spouse in a very physical, visceral way. And also, there's the purposes of sex, which aren't just pleasure. That's part of it, but also there's procreation, and there's being fully known

and fully loved, and being exposed and still loved in your imperfections, and how that's a tiny reflection, or maybe even a big reflection of the gospel. So when we weaponize this gift, we take something that God created for our good, for His glory and we now make it into something that's for our glory, for our selfish gain, for our selfish good, and not our selfless display and giving to one another.

**Selena:** Right. Right.

**Ryan:** That is obviously, yes, like Selena said, we discourage that.

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** Sex is not a weapon in that way. We can weaponize more than things in sex. Today, we're specifically talking about sorry.

**Selena:** So the way that we're moving forward in terms of this podcast episode is how we can wield our sex life and intimacy to build up our unity, to be on mission together, to push back the darkness, the forces of evil, to be actively engaged with each other in order to further that perspective and view that we are worth fighting for marriage, sex is a gift from God, it's designed to be enjoyed.

I guess I just wanted to talk about quickly a little caveat here. Because whenever we talk about sex, there's always some sort of past abuse, maybe diction [00:10:00] or physical drawbacks or struggles. Again, the goal of this episode is not to gloss over those things or just look past them, or even just say like, "Hey, do these things and you'll have a better sex life and you'll keep off the bad guru or juju, whatever."

What we're saying is that we believe a healthy, intimate life needs to be cultivated over time, and it means that you and your spouse can face some of these struggles without fear and with full hope because of Jesus. Full hope for healing, for reconciliation. And by God's grace, you'll be able to move into a healthier place of intimacy. So the goal here is to kind of highlight and paint a fuller picture of intimacy that, you know, we're working... Why are we working so hard to find unity, to experience pleasure in this area, and to engage in the beauty that is sex? It not only does in fact physically but spiritually. Again, enabling us to war against the darkness and principalities in Ephesians 6.

It's Ephesians 6:10 that reminds us where to go to find our strength, to fight this. It says, "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might." When you read "his might", I think there's words, there's... It's like His authority, His power. So that means...Sorry, I'm getting ahead of myself.

- Ryan:** Well, I'm wondering...
- Selena:** That's an obedience call in some ways. I'm not going to fight the way I think I should fight, but we're going to fight together by engaging in...
- Ryan:** I know what you're saying. I'm wondering how we get from Ephesians 6:10 to sex as a way to fight these spiritual battles. Because that's not what Ephesians 6:10 is talking about.
- Selena:** After that, it's saying, like, "Put on the armor of God." So the armor that we're taking on is not our own armor. It is something that comes from the Lord. The line that's connecting the dots here is when we are, again, identifying God's design of sex, we're under that authority, that this is what it's for, procreation, pleasure, unifying, helps us fight, when we are unified, when we're engaging in the way that God has designed it, we're saying we're going to go be strong in His might and His power and His ways. We're not going to engage in our own and say, "I'm going to hold this over you." We're choosing to fight the way that the Lord has instructed us to fight and with His might and His power behind us by being obedient and submissive in ways that might rub us wrong.
- Ryan:** Hmm. So what comes to mind there is, okay, what I hear you saying is Ephesians 6 is all about...
- Selena:** Armoring up.
- Ryan:** Armoring up. Paul makes a case the first three chapters. "Here's the grace that you were called into as Gentiles, and being the Gentiles are now adopted in because of Christ, and there's this new reality, right?"
- Selena:** Right.
- Ryan:** And then the last three chapters of Ephesians are him saying, "Here's how you live out that reality, you live in light of that reality." And it culminates in this last passage, Ephesians 6:10-20, where he says, "Now put on the full armor, and basically gird up your loins, get ready for spiritual battle." I think we talked about this in detail in one of the past episodes. So I hear you saying that. Then what I also hear you saying, although you haven't mentioned it yet, it's in this rundown we have here is 1 Corinthians 7, where Paul is saying, "Don't withhold sex from your spouse for any other reason other than to pray and to..."
- Selena:** Spiritual.

- Ryan:** Yeah, as a spiritual discipline. There's all kinds of stuff that can be pulled out of that. Basically, he's saying, "Do not weaponize this thing. Don't withhold for any other reason other than you're in agreement."
- Selena:** Right. Don't weaponize it against each other.
- Ryan:** Yes, against each other.
- Selena:** But weaponize it as a unit.
- Ryan:** Right. When Paul talks about, in Ephesians, putting on the full armor, you're making the connection that that full armor is many things. One of the many things is scripture, and is what God tells us about how the world works and how we work as individuals.
- Selena:** As believers, yes.
- Ryan:** Okay.
- Selena:** Sorry, that might have been a foggy line. In my head [*chuckles*] it sounded clear than it did. When he's saying, "Finally be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might," His might is displayed to us through His law and through His power and through His instructions, through His authority. So submitting to his might, His authority gives us strength to do it. He's called us to do and to live the way He's called us to live. That being in marriage, how do [00:15:00] we live out this thing called marriage? Why are we supposed to have sex regularly as a married couple?
- Ryan:** Hmm. Let's read Paul in 1 Corinthians 7, just so we can start from there. And then we'll go into how intimacy is a weapon against the darkness. Okay. I just want to root ourselves in that. So this is 1 Corinthians 7 starting in verse 1. "Now concerning the matters about which you wrote: 'It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman.'" That's what they wrote to him. So he's recapping what they said. And then he's answering, "But because of the temptation to sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband. The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband. For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. Likewise..." Before you get too scared, "Likewise, the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. Do not deprive one another, except perhaps by agreement for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control."

- Selena:** Interesting enough here, when I read, "But because of the temptation is sexual immorality, you should have a wife and a husband," *[chuckles]* I'm like, "Oh, so we're just..."
- Ryan:** This is we got married so young. *[both laughs]*
- Selena:** So we're just like a place to...I mean, God could have made it so much more utilitarian I think and He gifts it to us. The way Paul writes about it, I don't know, Paul and I need to have conversations. It feels a little more like...He's instructing. And I get that. He was instructing.
- Ryan:** Again, you have the context of 1 Corinthians too.
- Selena:** Right. Right.
- Ryan:** Corinth was a very worldly city and there was a lot of kind of misconceptions about love, misconceptions about sex...
- Selena:** There was a lot of sexual immorality. *[laughs]*
- Ryan:** A lot of it. So he's speaking specifically to that issue.
- Selena:** And I think that God is so good in His gift to us that it's not just a place for us to just, you know, have our physical experience and be done with it. But it is more involved than that and it's a way of procreating. It's a way of experiencing deeper unity. It could have just been like, "Oh, just physical. That's it."
- Ryan:** The language that hits me in this is there's two kind of opposing terms. It's having and giving. So you have a wife, you have a husband, give to your wife your conjugal rights, give to your husband his conjugal rights. The husband does not have authority over his own body, the wife has the authority; husband has the authority over the wife's. So you see what's happening here it's this intertwined relationship. It's not I have my authority, my own body and I am my own person. It's I am yours. You are mine.
- Selena:** We're one.
- Ryan:** That we are one. Yeah. Again, that's one flesh union. That's all way back to Genesis that became one flesh. Jesus cites the same thing. So there's the sense that I am no longer mine.
- Selena:** Right.



**Ryan:** There's a lot of individuals that are married right now and they're in a two flesh marriage. They're not in a one flesh marriage. They don't live as if they're one flesh at least. I think they are one flesh, they just don't live like it. What happens there is if you're a one flesh union and you're living as two flesh, what is that? That's torn. That is flesh torn.

**Selena:** It's painful.

**Ryan:** It's painful. It bleeds. It injures your union, it injures your...no piece of flesh is fully functional in a healthy way. This is really important language. So when we talk about sex, because sex is the mechanism that consummates marriage, there's a one flesh kind of spiritual union. There's also literal one flesh, physical union that happens when you make children. By the grace of God, that's a miracle right every time it happens around the world every day that we are able to conceive and bear children. It's just it's so profound.

How sex plays into the one flesh unit is what I'm trying to get at as a weapon. So if we are unified in this and we're wielding sex as the gift it is, and we are even abstaining for prayer, that's a weapon too. We're saying, we're going to abstain, we're going to hold back our fleshly desires which are good, in a sense...

**Selena:** Within the covenant of marriage.

**Ryan:** Within the covenant of marriage. We're going to hold back because we feel God calling us to abstain for the purpose of agreement, for the purpose of prayer, for the purpose of devotion to God. So that's a really profound thing.

**Selena:** I'm trying to reconcile, and this is just in real-time, it is good for a man not to have [00:20:00] sexual relations with a woman. Those were the Corinthians talking. And Paul is saying, "Well because of the temptation for sexual immorality, you should each have your own husband or wife because that's the way basically God designed it. And there's gifts in that. I'm thinking of Ecclesiastes, right? Well, Genesis. Genesis 1 and 2 when God said it is good, everything He created is good. And then the one time that He started saying it is not good is when man is alone. So reconciling this idea of it's not good for man to be alone. Ecclesiastes 4 talks about two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall one will lift one up. And if two lie together, they keep warm. And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him—a threefold cord is not quickly broken. So I know there's a lot of pieces at play here.

**Ryan:** I want to address the question you raised though. The first part says, "It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman." That's what they asked him.

**Selena:** That's what the Corinthians were asking him.

**Ryan:** Right. But he does speak directly to that further on down. This is 1 Corinthians 7:25. "Now concerning the betrothed, I have no command from the Lord, but I give my judgment as one who by the Lord's mercy is trustworthy. I think that in view of the present distress it is good for a person to remain as he is. Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be free. Are you free from a wife? Do not seek a wife." Pause. Are you free from a wife? That's different language. You're free from this. It makes it sound like you're free from this ball and chain. "Do not seek to be bound to a wife. Do not seek a wife. But if you do marry, you have not sinned, and if a betrothed woman marries, she has not sinned. Yet those who marry will have worldly troubles, and I would spare you that. This is what I mean, brothers: the appointed time has grown very short. From now on, let those who have wives live as though they had none, and those who mourn as though they were not mourning, and those who rejoice as though they were not rejoicing..."

What he's getting at is not saying like you've made a mistake, now live as if you were single. He goes on to talk about worldly cares and worldly anxieties, and godly cares and godly anxieties. He's saying, "Care for and stay in the thing that you're in. It is good. It is not a sin. It is good. But live as if Christ is paramount. Live as if the gospel is still the most important thing." And what happens there is that ends up trickling down, and now we actually care for our wives and our husbands even better with that priority. So he's establishing priority here. It's not one or the other. He's saying that live as if the gospel is the primary thing.

**Selena:** You're so smart.

**Ryan:** He's trying to calibrate the Corinthians here because they had this very skewed view of sex, sexual relations, marriage, love. That's why 1 Corinthians 13 is all about love. But they had this very skewed view of these things, very worldly perspectives.

**Selena:** How far we've come. *[both laughs]*

**Ryan:** How culture has evolved and progressed. No, we still face the exact same problems today. And so we can be calibrated in the same way.

**Selena:** Right.

- Ryan:** So we're trying to calibrate ourselves on the view of sex in light of marriage.
- Selena:** Yeah. So live in a way that is holy as if Jesus is paramount. That was well said. Good job, babe.
- Ryan:** Thank you. I appreciate that.
- Selena:** These are questions I had trying to reconcile the Bible. I'm glad you can do that on the fly. It's one reason that I love you.
- Ryan:** That's the reason these episodes aren't 25 minutes long because we do spend some time trying to get down to the root of it, and we have to spend time to get in there.
- Selena:** Right.
- Ryan:** Okay. How is intimacy a weapon specifically? Let's get into that. I think we've established the idea and the biblical precedent or the biblical proof that intimacy is good, we are to enjoy it, we are to give freely to our spouse. Again, we're barring any sort of physical inhibition, physical difficulty. And obviously, if you're going through some sort of breach of trust, we're not saying just ignore that.
- Selena:** Go forward and ignore. No.
- Ryan:** We're saying that all things equal, I mean, you're in a fairly unified place, in a fairly healthy place—
- Selena:** Painting that bigger picture of what fighting for and why we're fighting for this unity so that we can continue to push back the darkness, continue to battle the way that God has intended for us as a married couple to battle. I mean, He says it in Ephesians 6, like, we do not wage war against flesh and blood. It is different. The spiritual war that we are fighting, we don't 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 [00:25:00] in heavenly places. So our fighting and battling is going to look different. It's going to look like prayer. It's going to look like unity within our marriage.
- Ryan:** Oh, wow.
- Selena:** What is that?

**Ryan:** Unity as a weapon. I never thought of that. But that's essentially what we're getting at.

**Selena:** That's basically what we're saying. Yeah, intimacy as a weapon, which is our first point against the darkness is that it's unifying. Again, we talked about Genesis 1 and 2 how God said, "It is good." He created the heavens and the earth. It is good. It is good. All these six days...or four? I don't know. I can't remember what day he created a man. Was it 5?

**Ryan:** Sixth day.

**Selena:** Sixth?

**Ryan:** Yeah.

**Selena:** I thought it was sixth. I'm just questioning myself a lot these days lately. But it is not good for man to be alone. And we can feel lonely in our marriage without sexual intimacy. We can become isolated in our own marriage—you talked about that—if we aren't actively fighting back the darkness through cultivating a healthy, intimate life. So unity is, I think, I would argue the biggest reason why we need to engage actively in sex.

**Ryan:** You just said something that I do not want to gloss over. You said "cultivating a healthy, intimate life." I just want to be crystal clear. Sex is not just a physical exchange. It's not a physical act. It involves physicality for sure, but it's not just, "Okay, we're going to..."

**Selena:** Wham bam, thank you.

**Ryan:** Yes, thank you. We're not just going to get the physical thing done, and therefore, we're good. No, it's cultivating a healthy...What did you say?

**Selena:** Intimate.

**Ryan:** Intimate life.

**Selena:** I think if we didn't define intimacy let's go ahead and do that right now.

**Ryan:** Yeah, go ahead.

**Selena:** Intimacy is being fully known and fully loved...

**Ryan:** On every level.

- Selena:** On every level. Physical, emotional, spiritual. So sharing of mutual knowledge and mutual affection for each other. Again, today, we're talking more specifically about physical intimacy. But...
- Ryan:** It is usually the symptom of.
- Selena:** ...it is very intertwined. Yes, go ahead.
- Ryan:** The symptom of the spiritual relational intimacy and any health you experience or don't experience in the area is almost always a result of what's happening in your relational life, emotional...you know, how that's dynamic is playing out.
- Selena:** I want to jump around a little bit on the ways that intimacy can be used as a weapon against the darkness. We talked about unity. I don't know if you want to elaborate more on that. But the second one I want to talk about is boundaries. I know that was a big one and exclusivity. We were discussing this kind of last night just talking a little bit more about how boundaries that God puts into place are, again, not to inhibit our joy but to actually deepen it. Again, I'm thinking happiness and joy. God is not here to give us... He's not our like entertainment cruise director.
- Ryan:** Our deepest joys are found in Him and our deep joys don't often look like worldly...
- Selena:** Thank you.
- Ryan:** ...happiness or worldly joys. They often do. Okay. I have a smile on my face because I love God and I feel loved by Him. But it doesn't mean that everything else is just dandy all the time because your biggest security is in Christ.
- Selena:** Right. So these boundaries, they keep good things in and growing and thriving while also keeping bad things out.
- Ryan:** We're talking about spiritual warfare. You said, "bad things out." I'm thinking like demonic forces. C. S. Lewis said we can make...I think it was him. We can make two mistakes when it comes to spiritual realities. We can either give them too much power or we don't give them enough. We talk about them too much, we don't talk about them enough. So we got to find a balance there. I don't feel like in our lives we've been under demonic attack. However, I know that the enemy is alive and well and he is doing what he's doing. And one of the things that I think he is doing right now in our culture is breaking the household.

- Selena:** Deconstructing.
- Ryan:** Deconstructing the household and even roles in terms of husband and wife man and woman.
- Selena:** Sexual gender, fluid, you know, there's all that.
- Ryan:** It's funny how it can devalue someone's...Anyway, I don't want to get too far into that. *[Selena chuckles]* The point I'm trying to make is when we talk about boundaries and sex as a weapon, basically, we're saying that, okay, we are not fighting against each other. Now we are together. We are one unit. We are fighting you, enemy. We're fighting darkness, with truth, with life, with light, with obedience.
- Selena:** God's might. It's His power.
- Ryan:** We are one flesh. You are not part of that, we are fighting you. But typically, around intimacy issues, we're fighting each other because I'm not feeling like you're giving me what I need, I'm not giving you what you need, and I deserve this or you deserve that. That divides us. And this is saying that we are so intrinsically one flesh that we are going to be close intimately right now, especially more often because we recognize that we need to fight together. [00:30:00] And this is how we stay together. This is how we stay vulnerable to one another. This is how we stay available to one another.
- Selena:** I would argue that this goes maybe with what was spoken in 1 Timothy 6. "Fight the good fight of faith, take hold of eternal life to which God has called you, which you have declared so well before many witnesses."
- Ryan:** It makes me think of we had a friend recently who said... They were kind of confiding in us and they had said they were fighting, and kind of...What was the word that they used?
- Selena:** I don't know because I can't remember.
- Ryan:** They were just not being kind to each other. They were fighting each other...
- Selena:** Combative.
- Ryan:** Combative. *[Selena laughs]* They were being combative. The wife just said, "You know what? We just need to make time and just go and have sex. We just need to stop talking about it. We need to stop processing. We just need to go and be one flesh. We just need to go join and be vulnerable." That to me

was profound because you've said similar things in weeks past. You're saying, "We're fighting and we just need to stop fighting."

**Selena:** Hug it out. *[both chuckles]*

**Ryan:** Hug it out married people style as we say. Okay, let's move on to the next one if that's okay.

**Selena:** Yeah.

**Ryan:** Okay. So we talked about, as a weapon, intimacy unifies you, it creates boundaries.

**Selena:** Yes. Sorry. I was just thinking about fight the good fight of faith in 1 Timothy 6, and I just wanted to stop there for a minute. Because it says, "But as for you, O man of God, flee these things. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses." This is, again, how we're fighting the good fight of faith, pursuing righteousness, pursuing love, pursuing godliness, faith, steadfastness, gentleness. I don't see how intimacy would fall outside of these things is what I'm trying to say.

**Ryan:** Good. Good. So boundaries unifies us. You have pleasure in here. How is pleasure part...? Like I always say that. *[both chuckles]*

**Selena:** Pleasure.

**Ryan:** Pleeeasure!

**Selena:** Well, I think it's Ecclesiastes 6, it says, "Enjoy the wife of youth." This idea of pleasure it's not, again, our primary function or objective as believers. We're not trying to seek the most pleasure and happiness and joy.

**Ryan:** John Piper would disagree.

**Selena:** Okay.

**Ryan:** The Christian hedonism thing...

**Selena:** I guess I mean...Okay.

**Ryan:** ...saying that our greatest pleasure is in God Himself. So, therefore...

**Selena:** Yes, not our own like...

**Ryan:** You're saying you won't find it anywhere other than in obeying God.

**Selena:** Yes. So God created sex to be an enjoyable gift, and it is His glory that we are mutually enjoying it and to benefit. There's a couple of arguments here around pleasure. Some Christians, like sincere Christians, believe that sex should only be used like it's a utilitarian thing. Like we only engage in sex when we're trying to procreate because of just the rise of pornography, and the idea of pleasure around that.

**Ryan:** And materialism.

**Selena:** And materialism, yes.

**Ryan:** What I mean by that is not buying things. It's that the material world is all that is. I just want to be clear.

**Selena:** Good. Sure.

**Ryan:** The physicality of sex oftentimes it's far more heavily weighted than the emotional and spiritual toll that sex takes. That's why you see pornography is so rampant because we dehumanize each other. And you see hookup culture and...

**Selena:** There's a longing to be one. There's a longing to be loved.

**Ryan:** But in just physical is what the...that's the thing.

**Selena:** Right, that's what I'm saying. But physical only goes so far. It's not that that fulfills that. It's that God designed it to be physical, spiritual, emotional, all of that. I think you pressed too deeply into one or the other and it becomes obviously hurtful. That's not the way God designed it.

So pleasure as a means of a weapon. If we are not enjoying the good gifts of God...we are created for enjoyment, we are created for pleasure, He designed our bodies and all of us to feel things a certain way. But if we are not finding that within the confines of marriage, we are going to go elsewhere for that. Does that make sense as why I feel like it's a weapon?

**Ryan:** Yes.

**Selena:** Because God created marriage to be...We're created...



- Ryan:** It's a place where this happens.
- Selena:** Yes.
- Ryan:** I don't know that that's a safe thing to say that if you don't get everything that you're needing in sex in your own marriage you're going to go somewhere else.
- Selena:** Agreed.
- Ryan:** That's the definition of fighting the good fight of faith is trusting that God's way is better. You're not going to go find it elsewhere. You said it in a way that it's a guarantee. I know you didn't mean that.
- Selena:** No, no, no. You're right. You're right. [00:35:00] I think it's more of a temptation.
- Ryan:** That's what Paul is talking about.
- Selena:** I think that not enjoying each other the way that God has designed can leave us open for temptation. That would be a better way to say it. Can you edit that out? *[both chuckles]* This does beg the question of what if there's a lot of wives right in saying that sex is just not great, it's hard, it's difficult, and it doesn't feel great, it's not enjoyable. What do we do?" We don't mean to gloss over that because some people don't feel physical pleasure in the same way and some marriages are still struggling through that. Just know that we're not trying to ignore that. I think, by God's grace, there are ways to move forward. And we would advise you to get help medically or even with counseling. Whatever that is. But you're saying that by partaking in this gift...let's talk about that.
- Selena:** We're not sinning.
- Ryan:** You're not sinning. You're saying that I am stepping in to enjoy the good gift that sex is, whether it's physically pleasurable or not. Because there are lots of times when it's when...
- Selena:** A little more functional.
- Ryan:** A little more functional. And for you, you've said...this is getting really personal, but that's what we do, is at times you're just like, "I'm good. I'm good. This can be just a less rapturous thing." *[chuckles]* And you're saying, "Just so you know, I'm okay. And that's fine. And I love you."

- Selena:** "I'm still here with you. We're still engaging mutually."
- Ryan:** Even though physically it's...but you are still very much engaged emotionally and spiritually in that sense. I just wanted to clear the air around.
- Selena:** That's good.
- Ryan:** Okay. The final one...
- Selena:** Does that make sense?
- Ryan:** Yes. Sex as a means of engaging in prayer, repentance, and forgiveness. This sounds a little odd because we don't really pray...
- Selena:** It's hard to articulate these things.
- Ryan:** ...while you're having sex.
- Selena:** No, but it's hard to articulate these ideas of how sex is a godly weapon I think in fighting off temptation. It's fighting off pride in this instance, right? We're fighting off...
- Ryan:** Wait, wait, wait, wait. What do you mean fighting off pride? What do you mean by that?
- Selena:** Pride meaning I don't need a Savior. I can save myself and do the things that I want to do like...
- Ryan:** And how is sex...I'm really confused.
- Selena:** Sorry. So sex is a means of engaging in prayer, repentance, and forgiveness. So if there has been withholding or a wrong weaponizing of sex within your marriage, then there needs to be some steps taken. If we've had an addiction, or if we've dealt with brokenness or infidelity, there needs to be first of all prayer. God, how do we handle this? Where do we go? What do we do? Who do we talk to? And then of course, eventually, there's going to be repentance and confession of that sin. So this is the exercise, you know, the life of believer is repentance and forgiveness.
- Ryan:** So it becomes a gauge by which we can tell when it's time for us...we recognize our own pride is what you're trying to say here.
- Selena:** Yes.

- Ryan:** I'm holding for reasons that are not godly, I'm repenting of turning around or I have not engaged for reasons that are fear-based or shame-based or somehow not informed and ruled by the gospel. Therefore, I need the Savior. That's what you're getting at?
- Selena:** Yes. Well, I'm being reminded right now that I am acting in selfishness and not in selflessness. I am not submitting to the God's way of love. I am not submitting to His design for sex when I am withholding or when I'm weaponizing it.
- Ryan:** [inaudible] husband or wife too, right?
- Selena:** Yes, yes.
- Ryan:** Okay.
- Selena:** I think, again, it's a constant reminder. I mean, Paul just talked about it. We just read it about how my body is not my own, yours is not yours. We are called to love as Christ loves the church to submit. I want to be careful with those words, again. We need to understand the biblical authority and theology behind the message that is there. God is not shying away from the word submission.
- Ryan:** I love it. And Paul didn't write those words for us today.
- Selena:** It's not a whoops.
- Ryan:** But the truth those words are timeless because they're scripture, but they...I love that you said that God's not like somehow like, "Oh, I put the wrong word in there, and it's going to be offensive to people in 2020." So what I hear you saying is that sex is almost like a check engine light that comes on in your marriage. The health of your sex life will... if it's unhealthy, you'll see. It'll be an indicator that there's something under the hood that is not functioning properly that needs the attention of a mechanic or our attention.
- Selena:** Our Savior.
- Ryan:** We need to maintain this thing.
- Selena:** If sex does not fall outside of the bounds of a believer...it is fully within and requires prayer, repentance, forgiveness. Because I think that sometimes..
- Ryan:** You used the word "engaging" in prayer, repentance, and forgive. I think maybe gauging would be a better word. Just engaging it. Because you're

totally right. Just in our lives, maybe that's why we're saying this because this had [00:40:00] been our experience. If our sex life is not healthy, check engine light. Something's wrong.

**Selena:** There's a symptom of something spiritually going on with us.

**Ryan:** And it could be priorities. It doesn't mean that we're off finding our satisfaction elsewhere. It's like maybe our priorities are wrong, maybe we have not communicated well in hard seasons. We were into a difficult season yesterday. I was just like, "We need to stay unified in the next three weeks. It's going to be very, very busy, you're going to get angry, you're going to get frustrated..."

**Selena:** Never! *[both laughs]*

**Ryan:** "We just need to be unified that we're not going to do that. That we are going to fight for each other, not against each other."

**Selena:** Fighting good fight of faith. Pray for us people. Pray for me.

**Ryan:** Okay. Okay. So let's recap real fast. Intimacy as a weapon against the darkness. Okay. It's intimacy unifies in seeking pleasure the way God designed. That is a weapon because we're taking part in something that's good. That is basically us saying, like, "We understand that you've made this good..."

**Selena:** And closing the door on any unrighteousness.

**Ryan:** Yes, close the door on temptation. Sex is a means of gauging our own kind of health. And that usually means there's a lack of prayer, repentance, or forgiveness somewhere. Then it's also a means of creating boundaries that keep bad things out and good things in. And we're saying that we are unified. Enemy, you are not part of this unity. We are against you. And being very overt in that declaration and the practice of it. We were all over the place with those, but I feel like that summary...

**Selena:** God that we follow and who is our God, He has no equal.

**Ryan:** Oh.

**Selena:** That's where I want to just drop that because that's so powerful for us to engage in and to live in and to walk in. When I engage and I submit, my desire to manipulate you with sex or intimacy or to withhold, I am not wielding that tool properly. And I am going to submit to the ways of God to fight the good fight. He has said, "This is how you fight." So I need to submit my way of

fighting trusting that we will bear fruit, that we will be unified, that we will experience each other the way that God has intended.

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

**Selena:** It's always better than ours.

**Ryan:** That's really good. I'm going to attempt to kind of bring it all around because it feels like we've been processing in real-time. More than usual, again, we just told you at the beginning how everything has been so out of sync in our lives. There's been some tragedy and some things we're dealing with. So you appreciate your grace in that.

**Selena:** Some high highs and some low lows.

**Ryan:** Very, very.

**Selena:** There's some big, big leaps here.

**Ryan:** And we're not out of the clouds yet, not out of the fog yet. We still have a lot to go. So we made a very specific declaration in our own marriage. And maybe this is a challenge to you fierce couple, fierce wife fears husband to recognize and maybe even weaponized sex against the enemy, to weaponize your intimacy as a means for keeping you ridiculously unified, as a means to astute distraction and astute unrighteousness in your marriage, meaning go around and avoid distraction and righteousness. So maybe that's a call to you.

Sex is not only just a gift, but it is the means by which you live out very tangibly. There's lots of ways but this is one of the main ways you live out very tangibly what it means to be one flesh. That you submit yourself to each other, you give of yourself, you have one another. Giving and having is what Paul was talking about. And you are so intrinsically intertwined and unified in that and how that can be a force for good in your immediate life, but a force for devastation than the enemy's advances. I don't know. I hope that all makes sense. I hope we made a good case for it. I know that we're really pressing into that reality over the coming weeks. We will report back with... *[both laughs]*

**Selena:** Really?

**Ryan:** Does it mean that every opposition just automatically ends? I don't think so. But it does mean that we are now fighting from the same...shoulder to shoulder instead of face to face. We're fighting on the same battlefield together. That allows us then to lift our eyes and be about God's work as Paul talks about in 1 Corinthians 7. It allows us to now engage in spiritual warfare

and not marital warfare. To turn and say, "Wait a second. He's got us divided against ourselves. Let's turn these guns toward him and let's fight."

**Selena:** The battle is not ours. Yeah.

**Ryan:** Yeah. Yeah, battle cry. Hurrah.

**Selena:** Hurrah! *[Ryan chuckles]*

**Ryan:** All right. All right, Selena, I think that's enough. Do you want to pray? *[both laughs]*

**Selena:** Sure. God, thank you for the gift of sex. I pray for continued wisdom around wielding this gift and tool that it is [00:45:00] for Your glory. Father, I pray for unity among marriages that are no doubt under enormous pressures of today. I pray for a path forward for clarity around what those next steps might be to be able to engage actively and fully with each other. You are so good, God. We just humble ourselves before you. We trust you. We give our lives to you, Father. Just bless all the listeners that are listening, unify them. In your name. Amen.

**Ryan:** Amen. All right, ladies and gentlemen, thank you for joining us once again for The Fierce Marriage podcast. I'd like to remind you, if you want to partner with us, we would greatly appreciate it. Just go to [patreon.com/fiercemarriage](https://patreon.com/fiercemarriage). There's lots of details there. Everything matters, everything counts. We'd rather have a thousand of you at the \$2 a month level than one of you at thousands of dollars a month because that means that the army of Christ is working together. So anyway, it does help us a lot.

Anyway, with all that said, this episode is—

**Selena:** In the can.

**Ryan:** We will see you once again in about seven days. Until then—

**Selena:** Stay fierce.

**[00:46:21]** <outro>

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

- **[00:06:26]**
  - Scripture references:
    - Galatians 6:2, ESV
    - Ecclesiastes 6:10, ESV
    - Ephesians 6:10-20, ESV
    - 1 Corinthians 7:1-5, ESV
    - 1 Corinthians 7:25, ESV
    - 1 Timothy 6, ESV

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