

**BOUNDARIES Q&A**

<https://fiercemarriage.com/boundaries-qa>

[00:00:00]

**Ryan:** All right, Fierce listeners. Today we are wrapping up, finishing up, polishing off, that sort of thing, our month-long series on boundaries. I hope you found it helpful. Today we're focusing in on some Q&A. So over the past few weeks, we've opened it up through our call in/text in line for people who have questions all around boundaries. Now, we also opened it up to our Instagram and Twitter followings, Facebook, and those sorts of things. I'm astounded at (a) the number of questions that we received, hundreds if not over a thousand responses to this, but also the themes and the nuances within those themes.

So our mission for today is to go through... I have about 35 questions down. *[Selena laughs]* I think we'll probably get through about 10 or 15 of those. But there's a lot of overlap in there. And the goal is not to necessarily answer the questions, but to address them biblically and to give you kind of a jumping-off point to think and address the same questions biblically. Maybe the questions you're not addressing in your life right now, you might have to handle or deal with sometime in the future. So we hope this episode is helpful to you. It's going to be very practical, very tangible. Again, Q&A, rapid fire sort of format. And we will see you on the other side.

[00:01:18] <Intro>

**Selena:** Welcome to the Fierce Marriage podcast where we believe that marriage takes a fierce tenacity that never gives up and refuses to give in.

**Ryan:** Here, we'll share openly and honestly about all things marriage—

**Selena:** Sex—

**Ryan:** Communication—

**Selena:** Finances—

**Ryan:** Priorities—

**Selena:** Purpose—

**Ryan:** And everything in between.

**Selena:** Laugh, ponder, and join in our candid, gospel-centered conversations. This is Fierce Marriage.

**[00:01:51]** <podcast begins>

**Ryan:** All right, Selena, quick question. What do you think is the number one boundary-related theme?

**Selena:** Well, I knew it. I was going to start it like that. First one, surprise, surprise, is all around in-laws.

**Ryan:** I mean, by a landslide. *[chuckles]*

**Selena:** By a landslide, yeah. I think there's different types of questions within that. But I was kind of surprised at the following one. Well, not totally surprised. Can you name the following real quick?

**Ryan:** Number two?

**Selena:** Yeah, the two, three, and four, I think and then we can talk about some housekeeping. But I think it's just good to hear where we're going today.

**Ryan:** I think the number two theme had to do with opposite sex relationships. Right? Friendships. Opposite sex friendships. So if you're a wife and you have a co-worker that is a guy, like, where's the line in how you interact with that person?

**Selena:** And then the third one was screens, right?

**Ryan:** Phones.

**Selena:** Phones, okay.

**Ryan:** Namely, phones? Yeah.

**Selena:** Namely, phones. Okay. Which is not surprising, either. But it kind of just puts a name to the battles there in the boundaries. And then the third... was there a third?

**Ryan:** That was the third. The fourth... it kind of starts to fade out and go in various directions, but probably around, you know...

**Selena:** Oh, TMI?

**Ryan:** Yeah, dealing with kind of the interpersonal boundaries as a husband and wife.

**Selena:** Okay, gotcha.

**Ryan:** You mean TMI in terms of like a wife sharing too much information with her girlfriends about their husbands?

**Selena:** Right. Sorry, that's one of the questions that we're going to address.

**Ryan:** That's one of them. But I think it has to do with this fourth kind of general category, which is how do we interact with one another in these gray areas of life and where do we draw the lines in a lot of different ways? That's very vague, and that's for a reason, because there's going to be more variety in that part of it. So we did break this conversation into those... Well, in-laws was the big one. We also broke it into kind of within marriage and then dealing with others, so people that are outside the marriage that were still in your life, not including in-laws, and then kids. Kids is another one that we had some questions around that too.

So we're actually going to start this episode, the Q&A part with some questions from our patrons. And the reason we're doing that is because our patrons are those who have jumped on board with us or are explicitly on mission with us. That's not to say you're not on mission if you're not a patron. I'm just saying that these people have said explicitly, "We are here to throw our hat in this ring and join forces with Ryan and Selena, with Fierce Marriage, this podcast to keep this content coming, keep it biblical, keep it Christ-centered.

We would never change that. By God's grace, we don't ever want to change from being biblical, Christ-centered podcasters, whether it's about marriage, and someday about kids, and someday who knows about other things. But the point is that we do that because it keeps us focused. Because the temptation... I won't say temptation. That is a kind of a pejorative negative connotation. There's a tendency for podcasts to be funded by advertising.

I bowed out of that rat race for a number of reasons. I think the main one is it's a distraction from the core of the content and it ends up being... And I'm not going to lie. We've had some offers that are pretty compelling. We turned one down that would probably be half of [00:05:00] what we would make for the year. Because I just was like, "You know, I don't want to talk about your thing. I'd rather just talk about God and marriage." And that way people will hopefully jump on board.

**Selena:** And it gives more opportunity to lock arms with more people, I think, too.

**Ryan:** Yes. And I'd rather have an army of like-minded believers behind this as opposed to one or two kind of well-funded advertisers. We drew a boundary there.

**Selena:** Yeah, we drew a boundary there. So if you would want to join us on this mission of talking about Jesus, talking about the gospel and marriage, you can join our Patreon at [patreon.com/fiercemarriage](https://patreon.com/fiercemarriage). We answer questions, we share some inside information, and we just kind of are pretty active there. So pray about it, get an agreement. If that's something that God is leading you to do, please, we would love to have you.

If you haven't left a rating and review—I feel rusty, because you always do this part—on your podcasting platform of choice, please do so. After you've listened to one or two full episodes, I would argue, *[chuckles]* go ahead and leave a quick rating. A review is always super helpful. Do you have one you want to share this week?

**Ryan:** Yeah. I wanted to share some reviews. We had one that was... I mean, so many of you have been so...

**Selena:** So encouraging.

**Ryan:** Yeah. I don't want to read any because you guys are so kind. I don't want to read it and it sounds like we're giving ourselves like Pat's on the head here. But the point is, is that one of the things... Allan Reynolds left a rating. They said, "I love this podcast. Their saturation in the word is invaluable, and they've provided lots of help and encouragement for my marriage. We receive practical tools to move us along the path of providing a testimony, the gospel for our marriage. We're so thankful." That to me is like music to my ears. We want you to hear Christ in this. We don't want you to hear Ryan and Selena and how awesome we are. We do want to be...

**Selena:** Nice to listen to. *[chuckles]*

**Ryan:** We want to be nice to listen to and want to have interaction that I think is endearing...

**Selena:** Helpful.

**Ryan:** ...and encouraging and helpful. And that's just kind of us, our relationship on display. But more than that, we don't want you to think of how great we are. We want you to think of how great Christ is.

- Selena:** Way more than that. We want you to think how...
- Ryan:** Way more than that.
- Selena:** ...great God is.
- Ryan:** These kinds of things can become kind of a little mini cult to personality and that's just...
- Selena:** Try and stay clear of that.
- Ryan:** How many use the word repulsive?
- Selena:** Okay. *[both chuckles]*
- Ryan:** I don't know. I just feel like... Yeah. Anyway, I won't even *[inaudible]* with that.
- Selena:** All right. Gospel Centered Marriage, that is a new course that we have. There's a lot of new courses that we've released.
- Ryan:** Oh, you mean that thing I've spent the last six months of my life working on? *[chuckles]*
- Selena:** It's fine. It's fine. *[chuckles]*
- Ryan:** It's fine. People don't seem to be signing up. No, they are actually. I'm encouraged by the response.
- Selena:** Yes. No, I think it's affordable, it's valuable, it's helpful. It gives you a place to start with your marriage if you're just kind of wanting to improve some stuff, or you want to dive deeper into understanding. You know, we've talked about way more in-depth about in-laws and about setting boundaries and what that looks like. But we also have just kind of a flagship course called Gospel Centered Marriage that talks about all the things that we talked about and more.
- Ryan:** Mmmm.
- Selena:** Go ahead.
- Ryan:** You are getting it wrong.
- Selena:** You're remembering it wrong.

**Ryan:** You're remembering it wrong.

**Selena:** go.

**Ryan:** The main course is called the Six Week Marriage Core course. It's all part of Gospel Centered Marriage, which is an honor. It's a growing suite of marriage enrichment content.

**Selena:** Oh, guys, I just show up and I try to teach and be funny. *[chuckles]* I don't try to be funny...

**Ryan:** That's okay.

**Selena:** ...I guess by default.

**Ryan:** Selena is the home run hitter and I'm just here putting the ball on the tee and she just cranking it out of the park. *[Selena laughs]*

**Selena:** You're right. You're right.

**Ryan:** So ladies and gentlemen, are you a frangioni fan? Do you drink Starbucks?

**Selena:** No adds. Get out of here.

**Ryan:** I'm saying all you got to do is skip one of those Caramel frangionis a month and you can afford Gospel Centered Marriage. *[laughs]* We call them frangioni in our house. Don't ask why. It's a really long-running joke that's probably not that funny.

**Selena:** I don't even remember where it came from.

**Ryan:** I remember.

**Selena:** All right. So you got some caveats you wanted to say here?

**Ryan:** Yeah. As we approach this conversation, I was going to be really careful. We didn't mention this in the intro, is that it's really tempting to be like, "Hey, it's Q&A, ask us these questions, and Ryan and Selena will swoop in. We've got the answers." There is a sense of that in that we spend a lot of time thinking about this stuff, studying writing, and we have spent the last eight years doing this. So yeah, there is a sense that we have some answers to things.

But I want to more so address these questions. And the reason is, it's really hard to answer specific questions without specific knowledge. And it's really

hard for you as question askers to ask specific questions in the mediums that we've given you namely text, phone call. There's no context of relationship between us and you. So what [00:10:00] I really want to do is frame these things through a biblical context. Think about them biblically, ask the questions of the text of Scripture, and to the best of our ability, be faithful to it in addressing the question. So that's the first big caveat.

The second one is that there are a lot of questions that we aren't able to get to. So the hope is that by addressing them thematically that you will be helped by it in the various kind of nuanced circumstances that you're facing. Does that make sense?

**Selena:** Mm hmm.

**Ryan:** Do I dive in?

**Selena:** I'm right here. Let's do it.

**Ryan:** So the first question comes from Christopher, and he is a patron. Christopher, by the way, if you're listening to this, which I know you are because you're always so interactive with the early posts that we post in Patreon, man, I can't tell you how encouraged I am by your consistency and your response, but also your wisdom. The comments that you leave, Chris, if I can call you that, you've only use Christopher in Patreon, the comments that you leave are extremely elucidating for me and helpful. I wish you would write some sort of marriage resource.

**Selena:** So we just set that out there.

**Ryan:** That's just my selfish desire. *[Selena laughs]* But this one comes from Christopher from Patreon. He says this: "I'm always curious in hearing stories. So Have there been any boundaries you have personally experimented with that didn't go as planned? And how did you know when to pivot or stick it through? It can be easy to either get stuck in a plan just because you planned it or give up too quickly when it doesn't work right away? How have you found the right balance?"

I'll start with this one. Covenant Eyes. That was a software. A while back, we helped do a church plant. As part of the church plant, they give me a laptop. I was the worship leader. And pre-installed on that was a software called Covenant Eyes. And it's fine. It's basically an accountability software. I'm kind of agnostic toward those things. I don't think they're really that... If you want to find a way around them, you can, but they are helpful if they're like a first kind of roadblock.

Point if it didn't work for us, because that's not the kind of... I don't know. You never really... what happens is I'll browse the internet and do work and that kind of sort of thing and it'll send Selena a list of things that they've deemed questionable. And they can sometimes be kind of false flags and things that are actually questionable, but they hit the keyword. We just never found it useful.

**Selena:** It just felt more like I was policing instead of just having a relationship and asking... the communication part, right? Having those questions just being asked and saying, "Hey, how's your day? Was there anything questionable? Or do you feel like there's a need to share?" It wasn't a daily check-in honestly. But you know that for your relationship, right? There are seasons possibly where you have a daily check-in or multiple times a day check-in.

**Ryan:** Or you need software.

**Selena:** Or you need software. And that's okay. But for us, we kind of were like, "Well, this isn't really..." That was not super hot right now.

**Ryan:** I think part of it was we didn't set up the boundary. It was set up for us.

**Selena:** Yeah.

**Ryan:** We tried it, but we found it be much more fruitful to just...

**Selena:** It wasn't for us for any purpose. It was because it was a church computer. So we wanted to make sure that was just...

**Ryan:** Accountability is absolutely necessary in marriage. Our boundary for accountability is in our honesty with one another. And the fact that I know that I'm going to talk to Selena about this at some point, that's by God's grace, it's given away to this just fierce desire to honor Him and honor her with every interaction I have.

**Selena:** And I think starting with some sort of boundary and then realizing, "Oh, this works," or "it doesn't work. How can we maybe modify it to work better for us?" So we were like, "Uh, this software check-in thing is not great? What if we just had like a weekly check-in or a monthly check-in? You know, let's talk about this. What would this look like and how frequently should we do it?"

So sometimes, it's just realizing things are not working. And if it doesn't work... I like to give things a chance at the beginning. That's just kind of my MO because usually at the beginning you're fumbling through something new. It's



not going to feel great, it's always going to feel awkward, and you want to just give up. But usually, once you have some repetition, and enforcing such boundary, and you start to see kind of the fruit will be able to grow. But it takes time.

So I don't like to give up immediately. If we're trying something new, I'm always like, "Let's try it for a few weeks and get it into our rhythms and see how it works." If it just keeps failing, falling flat, okay, then we can talk about it. We can't just the first time it fail say, "It doesn't work." You got to give stuff a chance.

**Ryan:** Okay. And that goes in general for boundaries. Another one we tried had to be around friendships. I remember you had a really toxic boss. I mean, he was toxic, toxic. And we tried to create boundaries around kind of your heart [00:15:00] in that don't let him talk to you in this way, because he was pretty demeaning how he spoke to you.

**Selena:** And manipulative and just very... I mean, it was just a whole office like...

**Ryan:** Culture.

**Selena:** Yeah. And people probably know.

**Ryan:** It didn't work. What ended up happening is you just kept kind of... you had turned kind of inward and that you were trying to deal with it through like going to the gym really early in the morning or going to the barn. I mean, like these outlets for your angst and your frustration. And it wasn't working until you came home and you're like, "Ryan, please, please let me quit this job." Because we needed the money. We thought we did.

**Selena:** We were refinancing our house at a certain point. right?

**Ryan:** Yeah, that's right.

**Selena:** And so it was just like, "You had to show employment for like two more weeks." And I was like, "I'm going to die. I can't last two more weeks."

**Ryan:** At some point I went down there and confronted him.

**Selena:** You did. *[both laughs]*

**Ryan:** It was a spectacular train wreck. But I was like, "You can't talk to my *[laughing]* wife that way." I wasn't that confrontational. I was just basically like, "Listen, this won't work. No jokes. No swearing."

**Selena:** I think if that happened today, there would be humongous lawsuits because of just everything that is going on in the world in terms of like race and color.

**Ryan:** That was a solid 13 years ago when that was going on.

**Selena:** It would not happen today.

**Ryan:** I'm pretty sure he'd be fired?

**Selena:** Well... Anyways, moving on.

**Ryan:** Let's get in some of these questions.

**Selena:** Hopefully, that just kind of gives you a picture of sometimes we have found ourselves in places we didn't want to be or we've tried to instill boundaries that just didn't quite work. But the key there I think was just giving it some time, talking about it, being relational, being transparent, and communicating just through the whole thing to know when to pivot.

**Ryan:** Pivot! Pivot! *[both laughs]* "Friends" reference.

**Selena:** All right.

**Ryan:** There's another question. This comes from Lindsey W. This is another patron. So Lindsay, thank you for your partnership on Patreon. We really appreciate it. Here's the question. "When married to a non-believer, what are healthy boundaries about church attendance/involvement?" This is one of those ones I really want to look at—we want to look at all of these this way—but biblically. What does the Bible say about church involvement? It says, "Let us not forsake the gathering of the saints." In a lot of other places, it puts a lot of emphasis on the need for Christian community. And I mean, true Christian community with a true gospel-centeredness.

There are a few differentiators when it comes to Christian community. Gospel centeredness being one of those, true transparency, discipleship, and forward progress as we walk in light, He'll give us fellowship with one another and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. That's 1 John. Fellowship with one another has to do with walking in the light. Walking is a forward movement, forward motion. That's what the Bible has to say about Christian community, and that's what I think you mean by church attendance and church involvement. Did you have something you want to add to that?

**Selena:** Yeah. I was just thinking about 1 Peter 3:1 that talks about, like, "Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives..." And also about Philippians 2:14, do all things without grumbling or disputing. So being that example of Christ, having his light shine through us. Part of that is not forsaking church involvement. I mean, you're going to need support. So what does that look like? I mean, not a lot of churches are doing I think big activities or programs right now. It's more kind of a small group gathering. And so what does that look like for your family? I don't know. I mean, I just feel like if they're a non-believer, then they probably are not going to value that as much. But the door's always open, obviously.

**Ryan:** So it's all the attitude here.

**Selena:** Right. I just don't want there to be division promoted.

**Ryan:** Okay, yes. But when the rubber meets the road...

**Selena:** There's already is somehow divide.

**Ryan:** ...your husband starts saying, "I forbid you." I couldn't see that really happening from a secular standpoint. Like that's so unheard of unless the husband's just really controlling. You tend to see that sort of "I forbid you" behavior really honestly in believing households where the husband is using his headship as dominance. And that's another version of sin. It's sinful to do that, to domineer as opposed to serve lovingly into that sort of Christ-centered servant model of headship.

But when the rubber meets the road, your loyalty is to Christ first. Now, that doesn't mean you walk away from your husband. It just means that in this area, I'm submitting to Christ and His truth. And you can do that as lovingly as you can. You're not going to throw it in his face and make him resent you for it. But instead, you can say [00:20:00] you could show him. "Listen, this is something that I need to do because of who I believe Christ is. I want so badly for you to believe. You don't. So I'm going to go, I'm going to worship as I know I need to..."

**Selena:** And be built up by other believers.

**Ryan:** ...and then watch as I love you better because of Christ." Yeah. And then - is it 1 Peter that says, "Let your witness kind of..."?

**Selena:** Yes. Win them over.

- Ryan:** Win them over by God's grace. So I think the quick answer is finding those healthy boundaries has to do with recognizing the place of Church and the place of being a wife in that instance, finding that balance, and knowing kind of where the scope of authority lies in those places. But then also, within that, the healthy boundaries piece means it's probably not a good season for you to be volunteering three nights a week at church. You can still be faithful to the congregation. Don't forsake the gathering. But that doesn't mean you have to be involved to the nth degree. At that point, you need to start exercising Christian discernment liberty in loving your husband in a way that is going to lead him to Christ.
- Selena:** I guess I'm seeing like, okay, a Sunday morning and then a community group in the middle of the week would be...
- Ryan:** You have to discern. If it's something that he's really up in arms over...
- Selena:** Sure.
- Ryan:** ...then you have to find that balance.
- Selena:** I just think something that a person should walk away with that hasn't non-believing spouse is you need to have that church support, some sort of encouragement, whether that be a guide couple, or a mentor, or pastor, or someone that you can connect with, not just attending church, and not being connected with the community of believers. So being poured into so that you're able to pour out better. Not better but just in a more bright way, I guess for God. All right, next one.
- Ryan:** We're going to start going thematically now. So those were our patron questions. Hopefully, those are helpful to our patrons but also to anyone listening. Thematically that speak to these. In terms of in-laws, again... this is the biggest theme. So we did do an episode last week on in-laws. Go back, if you haven't, listen to that. We go into some deeper kind of theology... I'll say like theology of the household. What is it...?
- Selena:** [inaudible] maybe?
- Ryan:** Yeah. How are we to... I don't know. It's a doctrine of the household or something. But how are we to relate to those who are not our spouse but are still part of our family? We talked about that at length, so we're kind of building on that here. But just to kind of give you a sense of how visceral this topic is for all the people who ask questions, these are keywords. Disrespectful. I'm talking about in-laws. Disrespectful. I'll put it this way. If your in-laws are being disrespectful, judgmental, passive-aggressive, they're sharing TMI

with their friends, degrading to your spouse, they're too nosy, they're interjecting unwanted opinions, having wrong but strong opinions, overbearing of difficult personalities, political differences, they can't seem to let go or not bring up, they're controlling, they're loud, and they're everything else and just generally smelly... *[both laughs]*

**Selena:** Someone like that? Are you saying your parents don't take a shower?

**Ryan:** No, it wasn't. I added that in there. I had to add something for posterity. I mean, there's a lot here. And so we have to kind of think thematically. You can start to see, especially if you listen to the last week's episode, you'll start to see how the Bible does really help us in this instance. Like, what's the purpose of those relationships? What is the role we are to play in fulfilling the purpose of those relationships? So let's just get into some of the nitty-gritty questions. Hopefully, we won't butcher it too much.

Okay. First one. And Selena if you look through these names and they jump at you, just feel free to interject. We'll probably do three in this vein here because we're getting already low on time. Boundaries with in-laws who intentionally do things to hurt your significant other or children. This comes from an Instagram user. I'm not going to share their handles.

**Selena:** Yeah.

**Ryan:** So you got somebody, you've got your mother-in-law, your father-in-law, who, for whatever reason, they're just kind of a toxic person and they're seeking to intentionally hurt your spouse or your children. What do you do?

**Selena:** Well, I guess you have to define hurt. If it's physical, get out of there. Be safe. Emotional or I guess there's probably some intellectual spiritual sort of ways that people can hurt you, the first thing that we do talk about when we want boundaries is we have to talk about them. Sorry, we don't talk about them because they are either unclear, unsaid, and then they're unforced. So how can we get clarity around this type of boundary? How can we begin to define, you know, "Okay, this hurts. What is this? [00:25:00] Why does this hurt? How can we discuss these things? When these things hurt, I feel this way or this is not contributing to the unity of our marriage. This is hurting our children in this way." And then being able to kind of defend them and enforce them.

"So if this kind of talk continues or if this kind of attitude or behavior continues, then we are not going to be able to be around you until this is resolved, until you don't do these things anymore, this behavior stops. We want to be around you, we love you, we don't love this behavior."

**Ryan:** Right. When we talked about this last week is you're inviting them into understanding and agreeing with you in that boundary and then enforcing that boundary. And you give them a chance to do that. Then we talked about this. The first time you come back, say, "Remember that boundary I talked about, you crossed it. And here's why that's not going to happen. If it happens again, we're not going to see you for a little while until you show us that you want to help us and enforce this boundary." I will say this. Here's the trick. You have to be in agreement as a husband and wife on this because it...

**Selena:** Right. The wife can't just go to her...

**Ryan:** If you're partially in agreement, or the wife says, "Hey, we need to get your parents to stay out of our life," and I'm thinking, "Well, what about like..." and I'm not in agreement with you...

**Selena:** "It's not that bad. I mean, it's fine." Just kind of you don't see it the same way.

**Ryan:** And that's the clarity piece is you have to be really clear about defining what the boundary is and why the boundary is necessary, and what is the good you're protecting with the boundary and what is the bad you're trying to keep out, and why is it bad. So do the hard work of discovering that.

**Selena:** Just defining it. You need to define it and I think be clear what hurts. Why does it hurt? Why is why would you label this as something that's hurting? We're not interrogating you. We're trying to understand, okay, what is hurting you? Let's talk about why it's hurting or a hurtful behavior towards you or your children? And then is there a way we can defend this, and we can invite them into understanding why this is a hurt. Maybe they just don't see it like that, and it's just been a rough road. Because sometimes I think people act a certain way and until they're called on it, they don't really see it as the way we see it. They don't see it as hurtful. They see it as just poking fun or having a relationship some way.

**Ryan:** I like this question first because I feel like it hits a lot of those keywords we touched on. Like disrespectful and judgmental. It doesn't mean someone could be being judgmental, passive-aggressive or they're sharing too much information with their friends or gossiping about your spouse to their friends and it's embarrassing to you and it's dishonoring to your spouse. A lot of that harmful behavior, the first piece is understanding with clarity what it is that's happening to you with you and your spouse and then articulating that to them, saying, "You can't breach this." And that has to do with not just intentionally hurting like calling my spouse names. It's intentional but it's not known.

- Selena:** Taking a biblical perspective on this, we have to know that just because it... I think like you're saying, we have to define what is hurting. We have to define our convictions around this. What does the Bible say of how we are supposed to treat each other? What does the Bible say on how I'm supposed to be loving and kind and patient? Okay, I'm supposed to be this way, but I'm also not supposed to just intentionally put me and my family in harm's way. We're supposed to steward and look out for, defend, and protect our family.
- Ryan:** I mean, another piece of Scripture to that in terms of defining the convictions is maybe they speak ill of you because of your convictions as Christian.
- Selena:** Right. They could be unbelievers, for sure.
- Ryan:** And that's where you say, "All right, well, that's just a burden that we have to bear with Christ because they hated him and they're going to hate us too. And that's not something that I can ever really fix in them." And does that mean, we now start shunning them because they're just mean to us? And we went over this last week. But no, it doesn't mean that. It means that there's a sense of protecting your marriage from harm. And we're not just saying protect your marriage from discomfort. There's a difference. The toxicity will get in there and start to kill you. That's harm. But people that just aren't nice and you just don't want to deal with...
- Selena:** Or those you don't like.
- Ryan:** That could take some... you know, there's maturing that needs to happen in that relationship. And you can maybe be a part of that process.
- Here's one that came up. This is from Taylor. I'm not going to share the whole handle, but Taylor on Instagram. "In-laws are constantly telling you that you shouldn't get pregnant yet. We've been married for two years. What should we do?" As I was reading this question...
- Selena:** That's a hard thing.
- Ryan:** ...my knee-jerk reaction was that's none of their business. *[laughs]*
- Selena:** I know. I know. I think that's a knee-jerk reaction. [00:30:00] But as I read this more and more, you know, maybe their parents know them, and we don't know the whole situation. Maybe there's something there that parents are trying to protect or instill wisdom. I don't know. It's a hard one to answer. I mean, yes, the knee-jerk reaction is like, "How dare you tell me when I should get pregnant or not if I'm married?"

What are the parents' belief system? Do they subscribe to the same truth, our truth, the truth, not what truth? Do they value God and His Word? And if not, then I'd probably be pretty leery of what is their agenda? Why are they saying these things?

**Ryan:** I struggle with that because I don't see in Scripture any sort of that language. I see in Scripture that children are a blessing from the Lord. I see in Scripture a call to stewardship, a call to mindful household management and loving our children well. I don't see a call...

**Selena:** And I agree with you. I agree with you.

**Ryan:** ...in Scripture to hold off on having kids until your in-laws say so. And I know that would never be that like over. But you know what I'm saying?

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** That's where I struggle. If we're going to look at this biblically, biblically speaking, it's outside of the scope of your in-laws to really...

**Selena:** Right. So you're not dishonoring them by not taking what they say.

**Ryan:** Right. And they're not God. They're not the ones that are going to tell you like, "You can't have a kid at this time because I'm sovereign. I don't think it's healthy for you or the child." They might have wisdom in that. I'm not saying that there's not...

**Selena:** I'm saying wisdom in maybe is there some sort of like mental health issue that needs to be dealt with? Not dealt with, but worked through. Again, children are a blessing, God is sovereign. So again, we have to, I think, just trust God in that situation. I don't necessarily think that in-laws should have that big of a say. Again, the dynamics and the relationship is so I don't know anything about that.

**Ryan:** So speaking generally to it, that's very true. We don't know, Taylor. We don't know your specific situation. Of course, you're asking the question. We don't have any other perspective around it. I just want to be really cautious around the commoditization of childbearing and childrearing. Children are not a commodity. They're not something we add to our lives when our life is good and ready. Children are a blessing from the Lord. They are a gift from God.

Honestly, one of my regrets in life is not having kids sooner. I know God's gracious, and that He's used our own kind of attitudes. We waited 10 years to have our first child. We have pretty strong convictions around contraception,



and so we used methods that are non-chemical in contraception because you don't want to accidentally conceive and then abort an embryo. So there's a lot of conviction there. But the point I want to say is we can claim too much agency over this, but the far side of the spectrum, this was one of the questions is like, should we in any way try to regulate how many kids we have? Or should we just trust that God's going to give us all the kids we need?

We interviewed a while back Adam and Chelsea Griffin on here, and that was one of the questions we talked through with them. He's a pastor in the Dallas area. And I love how he approached it. The first question was you kind of has to ask yourself why. Why are we asking this question of should we control the release of kids into our lives? If that makes sense.

And is it comes down to like is God sovereign or is He not? And He can be sovereign in your decision to hold off. He can be. There's a different call to fruitfulness in the Old Testament, childbearing than there is in New Testament. There's a different purpose there. Well, I'm opening a lot of cans of worms today.

**Selena:** I'm going to say there's a lot of theology. We can't just, I think, ask questions and expect easy answers because these are big questions with a lot of sub-questions for a lot of sub-sub-questions, I think. So generally speaking, God is sovereign. Children are a blessing. If there are parents in your life that are exercising some of this authority, I would say pray and seek wisdom and ask: is there a way we can honor them in this conversation? Is there a way we can honor them in setting a boundary? Are they seeing something that we are not seeing?" And be humble in that approach, because it's so easy for us to kind of want to rail against that authority. Our pride can just kind of... at least mine would probably rise up and just defend [00:35:00] it to the ground. But let's not be blind, let's not just act irrationally because we feel like it like. Let's explore this reason for them constantly telling us this. Why?

**Ryan:** I'm honestly really surprised by your take on this. And that's good. It's helpful. I think it's adding more nuance to the conversation. In general, I agree with you. Here's kind of where I think we can leave it is all other things considered, your marriage is in a good spot, your relationship is healthy and strong, and you have a desire to have children, and you feel the Lord leading you in that desire, and your husband and you are in agreement on that, and you're trusting Him with that and it's a wonderful thing, and for whatever reason, they're saying, "Hold off" because maybe you're not financially ready, you're finishing school or you don't have the right job, whatever that thing is, if it's anything other than I think what Selena has described, and if you feel a conviction from the Lord, I would be fairly confident to say like obey God in

that. Hopefully, that was helpful. That's really hard not to get prescriptive on those because... yeah.

We'll shift gears a little bit. These questions are really intense. So I want to get through to some of these within marriage boundaries.

**Selena:** Yeah, we can spend some time, oh, yeah, here and others. The kids one we did have a whole conversation, like a whole episode on that. The one within marriage and with people of opposite sex would be really beneficial.

**Ryan:** This is a general question but I think it's helpful to do upfront here. "My husband believes that boundaries in marriage aren't biblical. Where do we go from here?" Well, go listen to the boundaries episodes to start. There's four of them. The first one is all about boundaries and kind of establishing the philosophy or even the... what was the word we used? Kind of a physics... I used that word. The physics of boundaries and what they actually are and the purpose they serve.

**Selena:** Well, because we have the same sort of almost disagreement, just knee jerk reaction. I was like, "Well, there's no boundaries in marriage," and then you're like, "Well, actually, there are." And I was like, "What are they? Give me examples." Examples are always very fruitful.

**Ryan:** This is an Instagram follower. Her first name is Lindsey. Her husband believes that boundaries in marriage aren't biblical. "Where do we go from here?" I'm wondering now what she means by that in that boundaries in marriage aren't biblical in the sense that I'm fully known and fully loved by you. In our covenant there's nothing separating us. Where boundaries, I think, do become necessary and biblical marriage is around our own behaviors and sins. And there's a certain level of decorum. "I'm not going to ever call you names. I'm not ever going to talk about divorce flippantly or seriously." Divorce is a boundary that we have well established. That's out of bounds.

Even around our sex life, there's certain boundaries. We talked about this at length. There are certain boundaries that are in place for our health and for the expression of individual desire that are there... They're bridled by our love for one another. So there are boundaries within marriage that are healthy. And so I think what Lindsey is getting at is I think it's probably the... I'm confused, honestly, I don't know.

**Selena:** Yeah. What area? What do they mean? What does she mean "my husband doesn't believe in boundaries, that boundaries in marriage are not biblical"? What does that mean?

**Ryan:** Maybe she needs more personal time, because that's how she connects with God or that's how she's able to clear her head. And maybe he's saying...

**Selena:** Well, boundary is such a...

**Ryan:** "You shouldn't want to be alone. You should want to be with me all the time."

**Selena:** ...such a weird word, right? Because there's so much. You have to define what that means and talk about that. You need to probably listen to the episodes, because I think they would illuminate and define things, just add more clarity. And so then you can start having that conversation of saying, "Husband, what do you mean you don't think boundaries are biblical? What are you saying here?" I definitely think just diving into that question more would be helpful. Next question.

**Ryan:** Here's one that's helpful. I think it will lead into the next view where we're going to talk about relationships with the opposite sex, like friendships of the opposite sex, and even texting and phones around that topic. But this one's helpful as a jumping-off point. "While speaking the truth in love, how do I have less fear in delivering a boundary with possible backlash?" I think what the questioner is asking here is how do I set a boundary in place without being afraid that my husband, my wife is going to lash out at me because of it.

**Selena:** I have definitely... I'm not trying to throw in the [inaudible] but I definitely have wrestled with something like that of "how do I speak the truth in love here because I know my husband and I know tendencies and I know his ability to argue and I know his ability to kind of have that backlash and come back at me?" [chuckles] You're not boiling yet, are you? [Ryan chuckles]

**Ryan:** I'm Just thinking like... [both chuckles] [00:40:00]

**Selena:** I think a lot of it just kind of comes from asking questions, saying, "Hey, I love you, I care about you. Have you struggled with this at all?" And asking that. And if they say, "No, everything's great," then say, "Okay, well, just as your wife, can we talk about X because I don't feel like this has been a very healthy thing. I've observed some attitudes and behaviors. Again, I'm not policing you, I'm with you on this and I want to help. Can we talk about this subject? Because it's... I don't know, something is stirring around in my heart. I can't seem to shake it. I've been praying about it for a long time."

You got to give some things time, right? And you have to say, okay, is this something that really needs to be brought up? Is this a boundary that we need to set in place? And God is so, I think, clear and convicting us and leading us. And we can't be afraid. That's the thing is you can't be afraid to go to battle

because the battle is not for you to win versus you... It's not you and your husband. It's for your spouse's heart. It's for their whatever, their purity or their sanctification. Again, you're a co-traveler with them; you are not somebody lording it over them. There's a huge humility piece that I think is kind of the pathway you have to take.

**Ryan:** I'm going to take another angle on this question because I think it's centered around the fear, like knowing the boundary, but being afraid of enforcing it or articulating it because just you're afraid. The question I read it was, how do I have less fear and delivering a boundary? With that angle, I would go to Proverbs 14:24, The crown of the wise is their wealth, but the folly of fools brings folly. A truthful witness saves lives, but one who breathes out lies is deceitful. In the fear of the LORD one has strong confidence, and his children will have a refuge. The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, that one may turn away from the snares of death. In a multitude of people is the glory of a king but without people a prince is ruined."

So I just want to contrast the fear of the Lord versus the fear of man. There's a difference between saying something in a sloppy, kind of lazy, haphazard way just because you have to get it out. That's not what we're talking about. We're saying if God has convicted you, and you see a clear boundary that needs to be drawn for the health of your marriage, for the health of your relationship with God, whatever that boundary needs to be, then you don't have to fear man in that. You need to fear the Lord in that.

**Selena:** So in other words, trust in the Lord with all your heart, lean not on your own understandings, but in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.

**Ryan:** And that takes faith.

**Selena:** Yeah. You don't have to be afraid of the backlash because I think oftentimes there is backlash. And you can kind of just expect that. But then as you move forward, the backlash was just what it was.

**Ryan:** You have to be able to separate the backlash because of your delivery and the backlash because of the conviction God's given you. Because sometimes there's other inner relational dynamics at play that caused the backlash. Maybe you've not spoken with respect to your husband in years, and he feels like everything you do is tearing him down. Well, then that needs to be kind of addressed, And honestly, something like that can be addressed as easily as "I know that I've struggled with showing you honor and respect in the last few years, I know we've had a lot of issues but I feel like this is a boundary that we need to talk about. And here's why I feel that way. Because the Lord has shown

me how this is unhealthy for you. It's unhealthy for us. And if we enforce and articulate this boundary, it could lead us to a greater place of health." Let's move on to the next one. Hopefully, that was helpful.

**Selena:** Doing the screens and tech.

**Ryan:** Oh, yes.

**Selena:** We need to talk about that and we need to talk about people of the opposite sex. It's going to be a longer episode here. *[chuckles]*

**Ryan:** It's okay. "Is it okay to ask your husband who he's texting even late at night? He always gets upset at me."

**Selena:** I would say any spouse, not just husbands. I think wives can easily fall into this as well. So is it okay to ask your spouse who they're texting even late at night? Absolutely. *[both chuckles]*

**Ryan:** Well, okay...

**Selena:** Yes! *[chuckles]*

**Ryan:** I will say this. I think there's absolutely no reason... there should be no reason for your husband or your wife to not tell them who they're texting at night. That's the big blanket thing. There's a few reasons you might be asking this question. You might be asking this question because you don't trust him. Maybe has a track record of kind of going off the rails in this area..

**Selena:** Or you have an attitude of policing, which could get...

**Ryan:** Yeah. So the trust could be either...

**Selena:** ...that's why he's getting upset because he's just like, "I'm just texting my co-worker or something."

**Ryan:** And he's just so tired of you asking him and nagging him. I'm not saying you are, listener. But I'm saying that that could be the reason why you're asking because there's that tendency to [00:45:00] police and to not give him your trust, even when he deserves it in a way. Or he's broken it and he doesn't deserve it and now you're asking because you genuinely don't trust him. So those are some of the reasons. Another reason is you could be asking because he's disengaged and you want to know like, "Why are you disengaged here?"

**Selena:** "What so pressing right now?"

**Ryan:** And that's kind of what ends up being our argument at night is you'll be pecking away on the phone... *[laughing]*

**Selena:** How dare you? You are the one always texting know your guy friends...

**Ryan:** You are the one.

**Selena:** ...and I'm like, "Who is so important right now that you cannot talk to me?"

**Ryan:** No, you do it. You do it. You can't triple standard double standard. *[laughs]*

**Selena:** Don't!

**Ryan:** The point being we'll get—and you just heard a little bit of it. But we'll get after each other because I'll be like, "What are you even doing right now? We're hanging out and you're..." And you do the same thing to me. And we will have to work on it. Selena more than me. *[chuckles]*

**Selena:** I feel like we've gotten a little more bold. At least I have. I'm like, "Why are you on your phone right now?" There's no prerequisite. I'm just kind of like...

**Ryan:** And then I'll say, "Why are you the way that you are?"

**Selena:** And then I know that I'm right. And I win.

**Ryan:** And I say, "Because I'm just bored right now." *[Selena chuckles]*

**Selena:** Stop.

**Ryan:** "Because I'm bored with this?"

**Selena:** How dare you?

**Ryan:** Man, never.

**Selena:** So boundaries with screens. Did we do...? This is so bad. Did we do an episode on it or was it pulled into the intimacy piece? Because I think we did boundaries and intimacy.

**Ryan:** No. I think we're going to do a full text series at some point around this because it's such a big topic and how to navigate this area of technology.

**Selena:** And there's where you can take on the offense and not just enforce boundaries and feel like you're on the defense. There's a whole... go to Gospel Tech. Go find them. There's a whole way that we can just... how can we live on the offense in a way that is God-glorifying?

**Ryan:** Here's one around social media. "How do married couples set boundaries with the people they follow on social media and how they can set healthy boundaries around social media/phone usage. There's another one in the same vein. Boundaries around posting on social media. In other words, like what they wear and how they dress when they're posting. I'm just going to say if you're on Instagram and you're posting... Like if you, Selena, if I saw you posting things that were... I'll use the word sexy. Like, if you were purposefully being sexy... and women you know when you're doing this. Am I wrong in that?

**Selena:** Sure. I don't know.

**Ryan:** Am I wrong in that or no?

**Selena:** No, you're not wrong. Sorry. I'm following. Yes.

**Ryan:** I feel like women know when they look good and they like to flaunt it. Is that right? I'm asking honestly.

**Selena:** Yes. I'll answer honestly.

**Ryan:** I don't want to attribute...

**Selena:** No. It's like if you're going to a wedding and you look nice. Like if I look nice, I usually want to take a picture with you. But there are the occasions I think when women can fall into like, "Oh, I got this cute outfit, or I'm in the sunshine in my swimsuit and I'm so excited" and like can just pretend... I'm not arguing. I'm saying, yes, they are being... the motivation is...

**Ryan:** I think it's more than that. I think it's like, "...and I also worked out all winter and I want everyone to know. I also want some validation that I get through likes and follows and things."

**Selena:** Sure.

**Ryan:** Again, we're attributing motives. Maybe we are projecting. I don't know.

**Selena:** Because we didn't work out at all. Just kidding.

**Ryan:** Chocolate Bod chocolatebod.com. Check it out. *[Selena laughs]* It's easiest diet you'll ever do.

**Selena:** No.

**Ryan:** Just eat a bar of chocolate a day. *[chuckles]*

**Selena:** So what are you saying here? Because we're running out of time. What are you saying? What are the boundaries?

**Ryan:** I think there needs to be conversations around it. Again, looking biblically at it, what does the Bible tell us? Now, this is a whole different episode. But we've lost an ethic of modesty in Western culture of what it means to be a modest person, to be a chaste person.

**Selena:** Well, to have chastity.

**Ryan:** Chastity, purity, and modesty. The point I'm trying to make is that there is a sense that we've been swimming in this water for so long that we've forgotten just how far from a biblical ethic of purity we've come. So there needs to be a calibration around this. If we're going to think biblically, if we're going to act and respond to the biblical text and be obedient to what it says, we have to calibrate ourselves and say, in terms of our phone usage, in terms of our level of distraction, in terms of how we frivolous we're being with our time...

**Selena:** Yeah, and what we post and what we are consumed by.

**Ryan:** There's two sides of this conversation. There's the how often I'm on social media and letting it consume my heart, soul, and my time. That's one conversation. Then there's how am I participating in this thing that is social media? Am I doing things that are edifying to the church and honoring to [00:50:00] my brothers and sisters in Christ starting with my husband and my kids, and people that follow me. Am I honoring Christ here?

**Selena:** Yeah. Or am I creating envy and [inaudible]?

**Ryan:** That's where the conversation changes. It's not just "Hey, I don't like you posting those photos, because it makes me feel like you're out there for the world to see." That's true. But the truer thing is "God has called us to honor Him here. And here's how I feel like maybe you're posting things," this could go either way, "that aren't honoring to Him."

For husbands, I see a lot of guys posting, like, you're so proud of your accomplishments. It's all about material success, material status, or whatever.



What that does is create envy in other people, it creates this sense of missing out and other people. If everything you post is this idealized moment in your life, that I would argue, Christian, that it might not be the most edifying thing that you can be posting. It depends on your heart and your motives. And I'm not...

**Selena:** I know. I mean, just posting in general I think is very questionable.

**Ryan:** I post very little.

**Selena:** Even me. I mean, all my posts are about our kids basically. I'm in some of them but I'm typically always taking the picture because I just see moments and I just want to share. But it's like, "Well, do I have to? Do I need to?" Probably not. I have so many photos that we just don't share. But I think there has to be boundaries around that. Again, what is the offense here? Where's the clarity? How can we communicate it and defend it? Our relationship is between us. If I'm trying to attract other types of attention in different ways, then that's something you need to talk about. I would call that sinful. Like attracting someone of the opposite sex or getting that sort of attention intentionally is not valuing your covenant.

**Ryan:** I think it turns of the corner on siphoning off some of God's glory for yourself at some point.

**Selena:** Sure.

**Ryan:** The clearest example I can think of on this, and it's tragic, is maybe a young woman on social media who is trying to get a following. And to help gain the following, she is exploiting herself by wearing things that she knows will garner attention and will get likes and interaction. And some of that interaction is going to be from some really unhealthy young men or old men, creepers online. But it's kind of part of the game. And here's the scary thing is we're not inviting God into that conversation often enough. We're not saying, "God, how can I honor you with this post?" Before I hit submit, post, send, and whatever, am I inviting God into that conversation saying, "How's this going to edify the church? How's this going to glorify You? And how is this going to give ultimate Glory to You and not siphon some of that off for myself?"

**Selena:** So good.

**Ryan:** That's a deep conversation. But to me, that's the foundation for all of these things around social media. Who am I following? How am I interacting with others? How am I posting? If we're asking those big questions, I think a lot of the little ones will be solved at the outset.

**Selena:** Yeah. Do you want to move into just friends of the opposite sex and then talk about sort of some of these things? The girls and the guys' night types things. Where do you want to go? A lot of good questions here.

**Ryan:** I think it warrants a little bit extra time. If you want to, you can kind of fast forward through these. But let's talk through friends of the opposite sex because this is a big one.

**Selena:** I think it can easily start through social media, right? Like it feels so innocent, and everybody can see your interaction, and it's fine, and you can tell your husband or whatever, or you can tag them. It seems all fine and good until it's not.

**Ryan:** Exactly. Here's a kind of generic version of it was asked by an Instagrammer. "How do y'all deal with friends/co-workers specifically of the opposite sex?" There's another version of that question. "Friends of the opposite sex, are they okay or not okay? I feel my husband isn't setting proper boundaries." Let's see here. There's a few more of those. Okay, solo night out. This one was grating to me. "Is it okay for my husband or wife to have a solo night out with a co-ed work friend?" You know, they're one on one with co-ed, with the opposite sex person.

Unequivocally, no. That's not good. I'm just going to say no. Why would you do that? There's no need for that. And even if you're just friends, I just think you're putting yourself out there to start kind of putting a wedge between you and your spouse. In other words, when you're out with somebody at night having drinks, eating food, enjoying an atmosphere, you know, whether you're on a business trip or whatever, it's even more, I think, inappropriate if you're not on a business trip because you're leaving your house, you're leaving your wife to go have dinner with a...So, no.

**Selena:** Let's talk about what people are probably dealing with because I think it's a big one.

**Ryan:** I think you'd be surprised, to be honest.

**Selena:** Okay. Wow.

**Ryan:** But friends of the opposite sex are they okay or not okay? Yes, they're okay. God has [00:55:00] given us men and women, and they're complementary in terms of they have different gifts and different ideas and ways of thinking, attitudes of being that are different and they're gifts to the church.

- Selena:** Yes.
- Ryan:** We have friends that are of the opposite sex.
- Selena:** Yes. But...
- Ryan:** How do you interact with them?
- Selena:** Exactly. I was like, friends of the opposite sex I guess would be all of the husbands of the wives that I hang out with? I don't have any friends that I don't first hang out with their wife or know their wife or... there's no just nobody like that.
- Ryan:** There's no need to have a one on one relationship with these people.
- Selena:** No.
- Ryan:** I have a friendship with them, but our friendship is based in a context. Our friendship does not have a context in itself. I'm thinking of... I don't want to name any specific people. But the point is, there's an appropriate level of interaction. And so how do we identify what's appropriate, what's not appropriate. That's where the Bible doesn't give us a lot of really explicit thou shalt nots or thou shalt...
- Selena:** ...text someone of the opposite sex on their own.
- Ryan:** Yeah. "Don't hang out with a friend of the opposite sex for longer than an hour." You don't see that.
- Selena:** We have rules of thumb that have served us well in terms of preserving our purity, keeping us above reproach, and making sure everything's on the up and up and clarity around. So interactions...
- Ryan:** Maybe we share those.
- Selena:** I don't text any other guy without, Ryan on the texts or that person's wife. It's never one on one.
- Ryan:** My good buddy, Jeff, longest friend, best friend...
- Selena:** I knew Jeff before you. No, you knew Jeff before me.
- Ryan:** How dare you! *[Selena chuckles]*

- Selena:** Jeff and I went to school before you.
- Ryan:** Jeff and I have climbed mountains together and we've crossed borders together, we've hitchhiked... we didn't hitchhike. We actually rode a bus from southern Mexico to Costa Rica.
- Selena:** There's lots of crazies on that.
- Ryan:** We've done a lot of fun stuff together. But there's reasons why Selena might need to interact with Jeff one on one. And this has to do with work because Jeff does a lot of our video stuff. He does a lot of kind of kid coordinating stuff and I'm terrible at text. But Selena still every time you text, Jeff, unless it's a surprise for me...
- Selena:** ...then Elise his wife is on it.
- Ryan:** Yes. That's one of our rules of thumb is you never text one on one with an opposite sex.
- Selena:** No matter how familiar it is. Yeah.
- Ryan:** Another one is I will never be alone in a room without the door being open. Now, a lot of the people who work with us on Fierce Marriage are women. Well, most of them are women, not all of them. Kyla, she's like our right hand person, does all the...
- Selena:** All the things.
- Ryan:** ...nitty-gritty stuff. We have a lot of reasons to meet, but we're never in the room with the door closed.
- Selena:** Right.
- Ryan:** And that's not anything against her or anything that I'm afraid, I'm going to do or say. It's just that's above reproach. We never ride in the car alone. I think it's the same category.
- Selena:** And I think also if you are in a situation, right, if you somehow find yourself in a situation with somebody of the opposite sex, one of the first things that you always do is you talk highly about your spouse or you're always talking about them and making it known. Not like in like...
- Ryan:** Selena is greater. Oh, this burger is delicious but not as delicious as my wife.  
*[both laughs]*

- Selena:** Yeah, I guess maybe that...
- Ryan:** Just bring her up. Tell us...
- Selena:** Yeah, you know...
- Ryan:** Your wife, of course.
- Selena:** ...just being aware of the dynamic there and being clear about where your devotion lies. Again, if you're married, there's no reason for you to be engaging with somebody of the opposite sex one-on-one. I'd put that out there clear through and through.
- Ryan:** Yeah. Great, great. We're going to wrap it up here. Oh, what about...
- Selena:** Which one we do? TMI or the...?
- Ryan:** Yeah, let's talk about this.
- Selena:** Okay.
- Ryan:** Okay. So talking to your girlfriends about their sexual experiences. A girl asked this. "Is it appropriate to talk to your girlfriend's about their sexual experiences and vice versa? Yes or no?" That was from Instagramer Lauren. I'm not going to say her last name. What do you think?
- Selena:** I mean, what's the purpose is my next question. If we're talking about it just to kind of talk about it, I don't think it's appropriate. But if I'm a young wife and I'm struggling with something sexually and I don't know if it's wrong or right or I just don't feel right about it, can I go to my Christian girlfriends that are married and say, "Hey, have you guys ever experienced this? Obviously, this is very personal, but how can... you know, finding some wisdom there?" Again, what is the purpose? What is the desire? What is the objective here? To just talk about how to best experience sex and all that? [01:00:00] I don't think that's a place for it.
- Ryan:** Well, I mean, you had two really important qualifiers in there that I don't want to gloss over. The question was phrased: can you talk to your girlfriends about their sexual experience? And you said, "If I go to my Christian girlfriends who are married..."
- Selena:** Okay.

- Ryan:** There's a context there.
- Selena:** Right.
- Ryan:** If you're just shooting the breeze about sex in general and you happen to talk about... if they don't have the same worldview as you, they don't have any of the same values as you, and they're not married, they're not in that context of a covenantal sexual experience, and they're telling you about some other sexual experiences they've had that are not in that context, I don't see how that's going to be really helpful. Once you get past a really basic mechanics of things, which to me they're highly interesting, I think, for a podcast like this to talk about the mechanics of like, "Hey, what do you do in bed?" I do think it's very surfacey. Because honestly that's between a husband and a wife. And you guys should be having those steamy conversations. Like, "What can we do that's fun or different?" Or here's my desire, here's what your desire is. How can we meet those desires?" And have fun doing it and honor God in the process?" To me, that's good stuff.
- So I don't see how it's really fruitful unless you have those shared contexts: Christian, married. And then I think you can actually put on some filters and say, like, "This is a very private thing. Our sexual experience is private. It's just for me and you." I'm talking to Selena now. "It's just for me and you. So if I'm talking to a friend, let's say we're having a hard time we're not connecting, I can go to that friend speak generally to it without getting into the specifics.
- Selena:** Yeah. You can identify the problem without diving into all the specifics of everything, I think.
- Ryan:** And I'm thinking very, very specific things. Here's a general rule of thumb I just came up with. You never want to describe something in a way that would anyway conjure a visual image of your spouse. How is that going to be helpful? It's not going to be helpful. And I hesitate to even give an example here because I feel like that's just so easily goes down that road.
- Selena:** I think people can gather for themselves.
- Ryan:** Okay. Okay. Let's talk through these really quickly. Separate bedrooms. Is that okay to have separate bedrooms as a boundary?
- Selena:** It's so funny because I think back in the 50s you would see those kind of beds, right?
- Ryan:** Separate beds.

**Selena:** Separate beds. I thought I saw separate beds and separate bedrooms.

**Ryan:** Thinking biblically about this, we don't see a lot of language in the Bible about bedrooms in terms of marriage. We do see things about the marriage bed, but that's usually about keeping it pure, keeping undefiled before God, I think. I forget. Is that in Hosea? I forget where that was. We do see Paul talking about how we give one another and we don't belong to ourselves—talking about sex. We see Song of Solomon, which is a beautiful exchange between a husband and a wife. We don't see a lot about bedrooms. So we have to be careful not to take upon ourselves these arbitrary boundaries.

Here's the deal. You have some spouses... Okay, you wouldn't want to give someone a moral imperative that's not there in Scripture. When you do that, you start becoming a legalist, you start becoming somebody who's more an advocate of cultural norms, and you want biblical norms. And so you have to be really careful there.

I think that in general, it's a good idea to be together in bed because that's a beautiful thing and it's good. But there are instances where you're not able to. So one clear example is you have a husband or a wife with severe sleep apnea, and the other person can't sleep at all. For health reasons, you would make that decision. Now hopefully, you're finding a way toward getting rid of the sleep apnea, you know, and other decisions and getting healthy doctors and things.

**Selena:** And being able to have intimacy.

**Ryan:** And hopefully, your intimacy is not suffering or the husband's not in the bedroom by himself now with his phone and a laptop and he's succumbing to all sorts of temptation now, because there's no accountability there. So all there's all kinds of other things to think through.

Another instance is if you've got a young child or young children that need to be snuggled with, or they're afraid or whatever, and there's a season in your marriage where you need to...

**Selena:** Be in the bedroom or have them in the bedroom with you. I mean, when we have sick kids, depending, one of us is with them. We try to quarantine. We just let's try to avoid anybody else getting sick. So that usually means they go down to another room or they go somewhere else with one another parent and we just kind of stick with them, make sure they're not alone and all that. But yeah, there's seasons with little kids and it's not forever. I think the big thing to protect is just your intimacy.

- Ryan:** And your integrity.
- Selena:** Your integrity, yeah. I don't know if there's more to say to that because...
- Ryan:** The big key here is not heaping on yourself an arbitrary burden that is not given by scripture. So if for that season you have to be in a separate bed, [01:05:00] don't think that you're somehow a terrible person.
- Selena:** I'm setting the precedents, even I mean, understanding this is a season.
- Ryan:** And if it's a problem, then...
- Selena:** Talk about it.
- Ryan:** ...talk about it and say, "Let's figure this out so we can get back together in the same bed. In the same vein, here's another question. How do we set up bank accounts? One account or separate? Again, not a whole lot of biblical clarity, although I will say from the themes in the Bible, in the spirit of marriage of the one flesh union, if we are called to be one flesh, like our very being is sewn and knit together, how could we not do everything else together?
- Now this is funny because we just talked about how you can sleep in different beds. Hopefully, you can see the nuance there. But my first question is, why do you want separate accounts? And if you want separate accounts, I can't think of a good reason why you'd want separate accounts. Like you have your groceries, I have mine. I pay my half the mortgage, you pay your half of the mortgage. Like where's the spirit of unity in that. You got the kids' soccer shoes, so I'll get their basketball shoes. Like, you paid for that last vacation so I'll pay for this vacation out of mine.
- Selena:** It just sets up a whole pressure on performance and work and...
- Ryan:** And there's no accountability.
- Selena:** There is no accountability. And it's just "Well you know, I don't have to answer to you for what I spend." Well...
- Ryan:** There is that sense of like... I just can't think of a good reason to separate bank accounts thing. But I can't say biblically speaking you have to do it. I think the spirit of wisdom and unity would compel you to join your bank accounts as quickly as possible All right. Quickly there's three on kids we'll do.
- Selena:** Do you want to talk about kids or do you want to talk about this whole light girls night out and guys night out?



- Ryan:** We'll finish on that one.
- Selena:** That was an interesting one to me. So biblical view or thoughts—this is from an Instagrammer—on girls' nights and guys' nights.
- Ryan:** What do they mean by girl night, guys night?
- Selena:** That's what I'm saying, I mean, because I think we all have our different ideas and definitions. For some it might be going out to the bar, getting drunk, having fun, just letting all things go, and doing whatever. But for others, it could be getting together, eating food, reading the Bible, talking about scripture. There's a big spectrum here on girls' night and guys' night.
- Ryan:** Some guys I know, mainly my good friend, Nathan, his guy and I idea is like...
- Selena:** Board games.
- Ryan:** Board games. I was like boarding to tears. It's what it is. I love Nathan and he and I have a relationship that goes really far back. But yeah, don't invite me to that guy night. *[laughs]*
- Selena:** Stop. Our kids love...
- Ryan:** Nathan if you listen to this, I'm sorry, buddy. *[Selena chuckles]* I do love you.
- Selena:** Games are so interactive and fun. They can be with the right people, not you. *[chuckles]* Anyways.
- Ryan:** You play the games that Nathan plays and then you come talk to me because you couldn't play that dragon game with the girls. Not Dungeons and Dragons. It was like How to Train Your Dragon. And you're like, "I cannot stand this game." *[both laughs]*
- Selena:** Well, because it wasn't fun.
- Ryan:** Okay.
- Selena:** There are fun games to play. Anyways. I think what we have to question here is we have to find the context, we have to find the purpose behind these guys nights and girls nights. What are they for? What are they trying to achieve? Is it just to burn some steam? Is it to actually grow and connect with each other? As a woman of God or as a man of God, is it a time of sharpening?

For us, once we had kids, it was, well, I just can't take time away from my family for an arbitrary girls night out, right? There has to be a greater purpose of God is filling our hearts, we're praying together, we are talking about scripture, we are talking about eternal things. And we are having fun, you know. We're probably eating food and maybe having a glass of wine and being women and adults. And that's okay. I don't think there's a biblical view.

I mean, the Bible talks about getting drunk and how that's a sin and overeating. Just overindulging and all these things can be a sin. But I think for the health of my own heart and my own ability to know God, I think that having a girls night once a quarter that I think we try to have as in my community of ladies, to read our Bible, to talk about the struggles and to pray with each other and to point each other back to Jesus. And that's usually around food.

**Ryan:** It's a celebration and it's a fun time. It's not just this intense Bible study.

**Selena:** No.

**Ryan:** But it's a celebration of your womanhood and God's goodness and how...

**Selena:** To smile and laugh and just kind of joke about the things that we understand as wives and mothers that you just track with each other. So I don't think there's anything against that. But if it's kind of an escape, that's a whole nother conversation.

**Ryan:** Well said. If it's an escape, if it's somehow [01:10:00] just a way to blow off steam, then you got to take a close look at how often it's happening and what that actually looks like.

**Selena:** Because there are consequences.

**Ryan:** And sin is sin. It doesn't change just because it's a one-time thing. Sin is sin. But there is a sense of marital charity in there too. In that it's okay to want to spend time with your guy friends. You can do things with your guy friends you can't do with your wife and vice versa. And that's okay. It's just when it becomes a point of contention, like, "I deserve this and you can't fight it. You said I gave you a girls night, you got to give me guys night." That's against the spirit of marriage and generosity toward one another and giving.

Let's get the kids one. I have a question here. *[both chuckles]* We talked about kids last week or two weeks ago. I'd like to talk about this. Where is it? It has to do with alcohol? Because you mentioned it.

- Selena:** Oh, alcohol in the home. I saw that one.
- Ryan:** There it is. So family boundaries with alcohol, not having it in the house, etc. Again, thinking biblically about this...
- Selena:** Jesus' first miracle. I'm just kidding. *[chuckles]*
- Ryan:** A lot of people for a long time had a lot of people convinced that it was just a sin just across the board to drink alcohol. Now, we don't see that in Scripture. It's just not there. So if you're saying we don't want alcohol in the house, because it's a sin, in and of itself, I would just challenge that and say, it's not actually a sin. Now, where the Bible does call it a sin is when we overindulge, when there's drunkenness, when there's a loss of sobriety there. That becomes a sin.
- So that gets in the next part where if you want it out of the house because of a propensity toward drunkenness or toward a struggle, toward a stumbling, it's a stumbling block for you, or a stumbling block for somebody in your family, an in-law, somebody who comes by often enough to take into careful consideration, then yes. Then you need to wrestle through that with your spouse and make a decision that's God honoring and edifying to each other.
- Selena:** It's a way you can love your spouse and love whoever might have that struggle. So yeah, I think that's good. I mean, you can put anything there for the boundary of how do we... if this is a struggle...
- Ryan:** Cheese puffs.
- Selena:** Cheese puffs. Ryan just can't...
- Ryan:** Keep them out of the house. It's a stumbling block for me. You know this. How many times have you come downstairs and I'm just passed down on the couch covered in Cheese puffs. *[both laughs]*
- Selena:** Oh, man.
- Ryan:** Anyway, sorry for that. Hopefully, this was helpful. We answered quite a few questions, I'd say probably around 12. It doesn't matter. I just put a number in there. Did you want to do the last one?
- Selena:** Well, I was just thinking about that one that we talked about with husbands and wives. We had a question from someone saying that her husband right didn't believe in boundaries in marriage. So it kind of begs this question about privacy. Do we have privacy in marriage? And what does that look like? And

privacy between one another... I don't really know if that exists. Like, we're thinking, why would you need privacy? I mean, to use the restroom? Sure. Great. I just think of like, why do we need to be away from each other in those moments?

We have weekly women's meeting and a guy's meeting separate. The question here is how do you honor your spouse's privacy while also confiding in trusted friends to pray for conflict? So there's two things here. So should you have privacy within your marriage between each other. I don't think there's any reason for that. Maybe there is and I'm missing it. But there usually should be transparency and honesty with each other.

However, when you are trying to honor your spouse, like say your spouse is going through a struggle, you don't really want to acknowledge that struggle, but you want to share with friends... not acknowledge it, or you don't want to label it or maybe expose your spouse, but you want people to be praying for them or for you guys, I think that you can just be generally vague, or you can say, "We're struggling here. I can't share details. I don't want to expose my spouse right now. But could you just be praying for us?" Maybe it's in this area, again, you don't want exposed. Just say, "We need prayer. We're struggling through some really hard stuff right now. I hope to share soon, but right now we just really need your guys' prayers." I think that's okay to do. And that's honoring to your spouse.

**Ryan:** Yeah.

**Selena:** And getting their permission in advance to say, "Hey, can I just share we're struggling and that's it?"

**Ryan:** That's one of those things. I would very highly encourage whoever asked this or if you're struggling with this to go find a pastor, a counselor, somebody you can trust kind of with the details. And that's going to be a trusted, a very specific relationship. They're not just friends you've had [01:15:00] but a specific pastoral setting. And then they can start walking through that with you. Because at some point you need to shed the light on it and there needs to be repentance. And sometimes that necessitates a more public sharing... not public, but bringing more people in that conversation, I'll say.

**Selena:** Okay. I think we've probably exhausted this.

**Ryan:** Yeah.

**Selena:** For those of you that are still with us, thank you so much. *[chuckles]* I hope this was helpful. We hope this was helpful.

**Ryan:** Yeah. I think we'll do these Q and A's with each monthly theme.

**Selena:** With each series. Yeah.

**Ryan:** And then we'll close it out like we're doing with this. So if you want to ask a question, you can always do that. 971-333-1120, you can call or text. Text is preferable because then it's usually more legible that way. Instead of the audio transcription or whatever, text is usually better. Keep your questions short and succinct. That helps. And if you want to join us on Patreon, we would love that, we'd be honored. Go to [patreon.com/fiercemarriage](https://patreon.com/fiercemarriage) and you can learn about the different tiers and ways to join there.

Let me pray for us. Father, thank You for Your Word. Thank You that we can understand it, that Holy Spirit, you've illumined it in our hearts. You've allowed us to not just read the words, but to know what You mean and to then apply those words to our lives. And Lord, help us, Selena and Ryan here. As we, in a sense, teach through this weird podcast medium, I pray that you would help us apply your word faithfully and understand it truthfully. I pray for the husbands and wives who are struggling, that you'd give them hope and peace and every bit of joy that is theirs as an inheritance in Christ. Lord, we need you, we love you. We're thankful for you. We worship You. In Jesus' name. Amen.

**Selena:** Amen.

**Ryan:** All right, this episode of the Fierce Marriage Podcast is in—

**Selena:** In the can.

**Ryan:** See you in about... Well, it's a Thursday episode. So we'll see you in like five days. Until next time—

**Selena:** Stay fierce.

**[01:17:01]** <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**

- **[00:18:05]**
  - Scripture references:
    - 1 Peter 3:1
    - Philippians 2:14
  
- **[00:41:40]**
  - Scripture references:
    - Proverbs 14:24

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