

**WHEN YOUR TRUST IS BROKEN**

<https://fiercemarriage.com/when-your-trust-is-broken>

[00:00:00]

**Ryan:** So we have a saying in the Frederick household and it's this: slow is steady and steady is fast. And that same came from years back I was part of a Helitack crews fire crew and wildland firefighting. Remember those years, Selena?

**Selena:** Oh, man! It sounds really cool.

**Ryan:** Really exhausting work. *[both chuckles]* It was just kind of a summer thing I did.

**Selena:** Did you fly helicopters?

**Ryan:** No, I got to watch a lot of helicopters. I worked on the Helitack crews.

**Selena:** Just like do I like, "Yeah!" *[laugh]*

**Ryan:** Exactly, totally. The whole point of that saying that slow is steady and steady is fast is for disaster response. So if you've ever been in any sort of triage moment, any sort of disaster or crisis scenario, it's so imperative to be able to assess the situation accurately. And that means you have to slow down, don't panic, think clearly about the situation. And then you act steadily and decisively out of that slowing down. So in that way, slow is steady and steady is fast.

I'm bringing that up here because this whole series here, we're talking about trust and betrayal, and rebuilding trust and being trustworthy. So for the first part of this, we're talking about kind of that instance when you realize that you don't have the trust you thought you had. Maybe your trust was broken and there was a betrayal. And that can be a huge catastrophic thing or it could be a realization that, "Well, I don't trust my wife to listen well to me. I don't trust her..."

**Selena:** Huh? *[Ryan chuckles]* I'm just kidding.

**Ryan:** Or I don't trust my husband to provide for our family in the various ways that a husband should provide. Not just financially but spiritually and with love and with nurturing your family. So we'll be talking through what that triage moment looks like, and how as believers as Christian married people, how can we identify areas where our trust has been broken explicitly, implicitly, and how can we begin to assess situations so that we can continue on to the next

week, which we'll be talking about going into rebuilding trust? So it'll be a good conversation, we'll see you on the other side.

**[00:02:04]** <Intro>

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

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

**Selena:** Sex—

**Ryan:** Communication—

**Selena:** Finances—

**Ryan:** Priorities—

**Selena:** Purpose—

**Ryan:** And everything in between.

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

**[00:02:37]** <podcast begins>

**Selena:** I don't think I knew the whole "slow is steady and steady is fast" came from the Helitack training days.

**Ryan:** Yeah.

**Selena:** That's pretty awesome. Now, I mean, if you ask any of our girls, you say, "Slow is steady," and they'll say, "Steady is fast." It's ingrained into them. But it is so true. I just want to I guess set the stage for this conversation too, in that we are talking about betrayal and we are talking about broken trust. And not necessarily and not overlooking affairs. This is not an affair...

**Ryan:** It's not specifically about...

**Selena:** Specifically about affairs. Sorry.

**Ryan:** ...that type of betrayal. Yeah.

- Selena:** Yes. This is on a lot of different levels. But if you as a listener maybe are feeling like you're just riding the trust wagon parade, you guys are doing great, trust is not something you really deal with on many levels, or you're just kind of not in that zone, just be thinking about people around you that you can help because no doubt, you know someone who's dealing with the issue of trust at some level within their marriage.
- Ryan:** Yeah. I would push back on that if you're thinking that. Because as we've done...
- Selena:** Well, no, I was thinking that as I was saying that. I was like, "Eeeuu."
- Ryan:** As we've done this, I've realized that there are some areas where you and I are still building trust and repairing broken trust.
- Selena:** Sure
- Ryan:** And we've never had an affair or any sort of betrayal in that sense. But there are times where I've not loved you well and so you've had to learn to trust me and I've had to learn to be trustworthy to you by being humble and learning to communicate in more loving, more transparent ways, even though we're like the transparency people.
- Selena:** I guess all that to say like just don't limit this conversation to just in your marriage, but to be able to share it with others.
- Ryan:** Yeah. We're going to dive into that here in a second. Before we do that, if you haven't yet, please take 15 seconds, leave a rating, and review in your podcast app. That means the world to us, it helps others, so on and so forth. If you want to go deeper with us and be on a kind of a deeper partnership with us, we would love to have your partnership. We just asked two things: you pray about it. And then if God leads you, then you'd act on that. The way you act on that is you go to [patreon.com/fiercemarriage](https://patreon.com/fiercemarriage). That's [patreon.com/fiercemarriage](https://patreon.com/fiercemarriage). [00:05:00] There's all kinds of tiers there. You get some good free stuff, you get to be a part of our Gospel Centered Marriage learning ecosystem. But yeah, go there, check that out.

And finally, speaking of Gospel Centered Marriage, *[Selena chuckles]* if you want to learn what a gospel centered marriage actually looks like, we have the course for you. *[both chuckles]* It's actually not just a course. It's one course that starts with six sessions. You can do them usually a week at a time. And then that kind of opens up the door to a whole ecosystem that we're building currently. I think there's like three or four mini-courses in there alongside that.

And the ecosystem of mini-courses are little things that you can go through with one or two sittings. And our hope is that once a month. That eventually when those things built out, that once a month, the couples that are part of the Fierce Marriage ecosystem, the podcast, would spend at least an hour a month. Is that a lot to ask? Spend an hour a month growing your marriage...

**Selena:** Yeah, that's great.

**Ryan:** ...and getting closer to one another, closer to Christ as the primary goal. So go to [gospelcenteredmarriage.com](http://gospelcenteredmarriage.com) to learn more about that.

**Selena:** So we are in this series of trust, building trust in our marriage. Last week, we kind of defined trust, we talked about cruciform trust, which I think we will redefine and kind of refresh anybody who maybe didn't listen to that episode. But if you haven't, I would encourage you to go back and listen to it. So this...

**Ryan:** We are building on last week. So if you missed it, go back to the philosophy underlying trust. Like what exactly is it? And as believers, how are we to view it? And then...

**Selena:** How do we function within those philosophies of trust. Next week, we're going to be talking about repairing trust, and the week after that maintaining trust. So peacetime activities and rhythms to kind of bolster or re-establish that trust. And at the end of each series, we're trying to do a final week of Q&As. So please write in or text us. That's the easiest way. 971-333-1120?

**Ryan:** Yeah.

**Selena:** Yes. Any questions about trust. So we'll kind of take some of those and answer them, or some trends.

**Ryan:** Real quick. Yeah, send us in your clear, concise questions, please. Texting is the easiest way because that way, we get it as an email. It doesn't have to get transcribed. Go to 971-333-1120. Just text that number your clear, concise questions, and we'll do our best to compile those.

So our goal for today is to kind of give you, listeners, permission to identify and deal with broken trust in your marriage. Okay? Give you permission. And we mentioned early on this is kind of a triage. It's a triage moment. And you can have one of two responses. Now, think about you're driving down the highway, and a massive car wreck happens. I'm using this because it's a really clear example in my mind. At the scene of that accident, there is trauma happening, and the people in that trauma may or may not be aware of what's happening. They're panicked, right? They're trying to figure the situation out.

There's all kind of instinctual things that are happening, and they're not thinking clearly.

And if someone comes onto the scene and misdiagnoses the issue, he says, "Hey, you just gotta scratch in your leg. You're fine," and another guy walks up and says, "His whole leg is off." *[both chuckles]* There's a different protocol there, right?

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** Scratch, band-aid, whole leg off, go to the hospital. You need to stop the bleeding, put on a tourniquet, do all that sort of stuff. And so the point is, you have to be able to identify where the trust has been broken so that you can actually deal with it and stop the bleeding, and get headed down a path toward health.

Now, in those instances, we can have a tendency... Again, we're not just talking about the really big kind of catastrophic things that would break up a marriage or damage your marriage, but any sort of... it's just that realization that you don't have the trust you thought you had.

**Selena:** Right. Right.

**Ryan:** Yeah. Anyway. That's where we're starting. And I want to... Yeah, you were going to go.

**Selena:** Just I guess to kind of paint that picture of, okay, not necessarily just affairs and sexual or emotional. But, you know, we talked about last week in a Gottman's article that he wrote for UC Berkeley, he mentioned trust is the number one most important issue that couples deal with. Trust and betrayal. So things like can I trust you to be there and listen to me when I'm upset? Can I trust you to choose me over your friends or your family? Can I trust you to work for our family? Can I trust you not take drugs? Can I trust you not cheat on me and be sexually faithful? Can I trust you to respect me, to help with things in the house, to really be involved with our children?

These are kind of the areas we're trying to help you see where trust could be broken on. Maybe not quite the massive level but it gets chipped away at I think in our marriage. We get familiar, we get into ruts, we get into just these default rhythms, and instead of building, reestablishing, [00:10:00] bolstering trust, we are just allowing it to kind of be chipped away. It's like water dripping on concrete. It's just, "that's fine."

**Ryan:** I want to go a little bit... This is a little bit off the cuff here, but let's talk about our marriage here for a minute because I feel like we have really profound levels of trust. I trust you to not cheat on me. I trust you to not have interactions with men online that are unhealthy in any... I totally trust you with that stuff. I trust you to not go and spend outside of our budget without us talking about it first. But where we've had to really build trust is around the more kind of day-to-day things. Because there are instances...

Our biggest issues around trust, and I mentioned earlier, is because I've not always been super gentle with my communication. And it's always a struggle. And it's not just saying the right things, but having the right heart and why you say the things. You've had to... we've had... How do I say it? You don't always trust me when you come and talk to me.

**Selena:** Right?

**Ryan:** You don't trust that I'm going to be listening to you, and hearing you, and responding from a place of loving husbandship. *[both chuckles]* Right? Is that accurate?

**Selena:** Yes.

**Ryan:** So that's been an ongoing struggle for us. That's a huge issue. Because if you can identify and really articulate and own the fact that I don't trust my spouse to care for my heart, well, that's a marriage-changing realization if you deal with it in a godly way. We're going to talk about what the Bible says about being offended against. And so we'll go down that path here in a minute. What's the other one that we've talked about? I'm putting on the spot here, but...

**Selena:** I think we're talking about intimacy, and we're talking about how when you're affectionate or whatever, you don't feel like it's received, you don't trust that it's received I think in the way that you're intending for it to be received.

**Ryan:** I'm going to say it in a maybe clearer way. *[both chuckles]* I'll sometimes put out the vibe, *[Selena laughing]* and you don't always pick up the vibe.

**Selena:** There it is I guess. Yeah.

**Ryan:** I don't trust that when I put up the vibe that it's going to be returned.

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** I mean, you're very... I'll use this word and I hope it doesn't grate on people. But you're pretty dutiful with that because you want to be available...

**Selena:** I want to honor God in our sexual...

**Ryan:** And that's one way that you've said that you want to love me well is that we... and that's biblical. We never want to withhold ourselves from each other. And that goes in our marriage.

**Selena:** It's not always clear sometimes.

**Ryan:** Yeah. Or I get kind of gun shy, because I'm like, "If I approach her and I'm feeling the vibe, and she's not, then that's going to hurt me." And so I'm not trusting.

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** And so I just won't.

**Selena:** You definitely get gun shy, and it's hard to get you to kind of come back around sometimes. You know what I mean?

**Ryan:** Yeah.

**Selena:** Sometimes I'm like, "Why can't you just try again?" And you're like, "Because I put my whole heart and soul into trying this one time." And I'm like, "Ohhh."

**Ryan:** And now I just like, "I don't trust your motives now." I feel like you're just doing it to avoid an argument as opposed to actually have a closer marriage. So we've had to work through those trust issues. I want to keep with this car analogy because I find it helpful. But in these instances when we have these realizations of our trust isn't what we thought it was, our marriage isn't... you're not who I thought you were in that type of... and I'm realizing that our communication is bad or whatever.

You have one or two kind of common categories of responses. You can kind of have the passive sort of response. That denial reaction, like, "Oh, we're good. He doesn't mean to communicate that way. It's just we just have been missing each other. We just haven't had a chance to connect." That I think is true in a lot of cases. But it can be a mechanism for denial. And not actually dealing with the fact that your communication is pretty bad in your marriage. That's on the denial side.

Or even if you do have like a big... say, a husband, you get caught watching pornography, and the wife is devastated by it, but the problem doesn't go away. You know, it's years down the road, you know that he's still struggling with it and it's just too hard to deal with it. So you don't want to keep having to police him, you don't want to keep bringing it up, keep having those late-night conversations, having to deal with going to the pastor. That's just too much work. So I'm just going to pretend it's not there and we'll just have sex once a month or whatever the frequency is, and I'll just pretend it's not there. And then eventually, when our kids are older and when life is a lot further along, we might deal with this thing. And all the while you're not actually trusting and flourishing in your marriage.

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** That's the denial side. The other side would be complete and utter panic and chaos. It's like the opposite where you're muting the emotions on the outside. On that panic [00:15:00] side is you've heightened the emotion to the point where...

**Selena:** It's hyper aware. You start moving quickly, you're harsh in your movements, and you're just like, "I'm done. I'm not going to deal with this, and we're not going to do this." And you know, just, I think, the loud, the quick, the harsh, the not slow and steady.

**Ryan:** Yeah. Yeah. And so you tend to make really brash decisions as opposed to not making any decision at all.

**Selena:** Emotionally driven decision, I think.

**Ryan:** And we're here to say like we want to give you permission to feel the pain of betrayal, of being sinned against. Feel it and deal with it. But you have to feel and deal with it in a healthy, biblical way. And that's what we want to deal with today. It's not enough just to stop the bleeding. Like if you stop the bleeding by stopping the person's heart, that's killing the person. You stop the bleeding by applying a tourniquet correctly or the bandage correctly or whatever. So you have to do it in a biblical way.

**Selena:** And you have to keep it there. We use a funny phrase of like, "Don't jump ship. If the ship is your covenant, don't abandon it either way in this panic or denial, sort of passive state." We can talk about that in a little bit. I think you wanted to hit some scripture on betrayal and this idea of getting... When we're giving you permission, I think we're just trying to say like, see it clearly. You have this permission...

**Ryan:** And it's not to throw it in your spouse's face either. It's to actually start dealing with the reality.

**Selena:** Yeah. Because I think we question, at least I would struggle and question, whether or not I'm seeing the situation clearly. Am I just being insecure and not trusting you because of whatever reasons, X, Y, and Z, or are you not acting in a trustworthy way? You know, there's that whole dynamic of that you have to sort through. So I think just saying like, "This is where I feel like we are, these are the problems we're having," and giving yourself permission to be hurt and angry and understand that, yes, this is a sin." Like, we just need to call things what they are. And then that enables us to be able to deal with it. I think, at least take that first step.

**Ryan:** Yeah. There's a lot of gray area in there. So hopefully, you'll have the discernment here to hear what we're saying and look at your own marriage and say, "Okay, that's what I can see more clearly and I can learn to articulate around that clearly."

**Selena:** I think it's also an opportunity to bring in others in your church community, right? Pastors, guide couples...

**Ryan:** And we will get to that. Yeah. That is part of how the Bible instructs us to deal with this stuff. We're only going to touch on two passages here. But as on a broad level, part of seeing this clearly is seeing sin for what it is. Not just sin in your life but sin for what it is as an offense and an affront to God. It is act of rebellion against the Creator of the universe, the sovereign, Holy God of the Bible. And in that, sin is... I'm convinced we never see our sin for how wretched and putrid it actually is.

**Selena:** No, because we're sinful and we try to justify ourselves. *[chuckles]*

**Ryan:** But we can, by God's grace, look at it as the distortion of His created order that it is, and repent of it and turn from it. That's the first kind of clarifying calibrating piece is that we are sinners, and we need God's grace to be sanctified. 1 John 1, "We walk in the light, as He is in the light so that we can have fellowship." That's been closer together We know we can be cleansed of our sin.

So that's seeing clearly. Walking in the light, being able to shed the light of the gospel and of God's holiness on our lives truly for what it is, without sugarcoating, without hiding, without obscuring, but actually truly seeing the situation for what it is. Now we can start to walk in that, we can start to move forward, be sanctified, and to have deeper greater fellowship with one another and with God.

So with that big caveat here, we're going to look at two specific passages. One from Matthew, one out of Luke. Again, as we read through these, the key here is to see clearly. Again, I'm giving you permission to identify it for what it is, to be hurt, to feel hurt, and to feel anger. Anger is not a sin. Sinning in anger is sin. But to feel kind of the effects of sin, and to feel the effects of having a lack of trust. So just think through that as we read this. Selena, do you want to read the Matthew passage?

**Selena:** Matthew 18:15-20. "If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth [00:20:00] about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them."

**Ryan:** It's a bit of a minefield in terms of proof texts, but those last few verses are always proof text out of context. We won't get into that. I want to get into, real quick, Luke 17:3-4. It says this, "Pay attention to yourselves! If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him, 4 and if he sins against you seven times in the day, and turns to you seven times, saying, 'I repent,' you must forgive him." Again, Luke 17:3-4.

Oh, man, we don't have time to get into all the little nuances of the passage, but I think there's some big themes that we can get out of this. So the question here I'm hoping to see God's answer to is: when we're sinned against, how do we deal with it? When we're sinned against as people obviously reading the Bible and you're asking God what He thinks, probably a Christian hopefully, how do we deal with it in a Christian way? I came up with three H's. I like alliteration, I feel.

**Selena:** I like alliteration.

**Ryan:** It helps you remember it.

**Selena:** It does.

**Ryan:** So the three H's are this. You can deal with it with honesty, with humility, and with help. So the honesty piece is you call it what it is. Right?

- Selena:** Right. We've been touching on that.
- Ryan:** I mean, look at the passage from Luke. Pay attention to yourself. Okay, you're looking at it clearly, pay attention to yourselves, perk your ears up, open your eyes, head on a swivel, if your brother sins rebuke him, call it what it is. Call it what it is.
- Selena:** Oh, man.
- Ryan:** Call it what it is.
- Selena:** My stomach goes in knots already. Rebuking people is not fun, especially your spouse.
- Ryan:** But rebuking is a loving thing.
- Selena:** I know.
- Ryan:** We think of rebuke as like, "You sinner!" Like we're on [inaudible] box
- Selena:** But rebuking anybody just causes pride to rise up. It's never easy. It's never like, "Thank you, Ryan for rebuking me. I'm so grateful for that rebuke." Not in the moment. It's always heated. It's always emotional and passionate and crazy and full of, you know, everything, angry and whatnot. It's laying out, like if your brother sins, rebuke him. "Okay, you're doing this wrong." And if he repents, forgive him. So, the time between the comma after rebuke him comma and if he repent can feel like a long time.
- Ryan:** Well, there's "if" in it.
- Selena:** Yeah, if. If he repents. And that's hard to do, especially in those moments. And so rebuking is not easy. But as Christians, we're not called to do easy things. We're not called to just sit in comfort and love from afar. Part of the Christian life is this calling out a sin.
- Ryan:** And we can see the motivation behind that in the Matthew passage. It says, "If your brother sins against you go and tell him his fault." Okay, seeing it clearly, again, calling it what it is between you and him alone.
- Selena:** Right.
- Ryan:** Okay. And then here's the motivation. If he listens to you—that's the "If" piece that you're talking about—you hope he does, he might...

- Selena:** You pray that they do.
- Ryan:** He might not listen now, but hopefully he listens at some point. If he listens to you, what's the result? You have gained your brother. That's the motivation.
- Selena:** That's the motivation.
- Ryan:** It's not just to be right. It's because you want your brother back.
- Selena:** Right.
- Ryan:** You've gained a brother. You've not gained the ability to say you're right; you've gained a brother. In the marriage case, you've gained your spouse, that kinship, again... go ahead.
- Selena:** The "if" just takes time sometimes. Because I can rebuke you or call you out or say, "Let's talk about something that I see is kind of hurting me or hurting us." And typically, there is always a response. And then once the emotional response has kind of calm down, then it's like I'm just praying and waiting for God to move in your heart, and then we can come back and actually sort through this. "Okay, yeah, I see what you're saying, I repent of this. I'm sorry."
- That gaining of a brother is the goal, but it's hard to see that sometimes when you're in the middle of the rebuke. I guess clinging to that "I'm praying for the heart of my husband that I will gain a closer relationship with Him, that we will be able to be unified through this and not just separated and angry." But also not be surprised at like, there's kind of sometimes a bomb that goes off and you got to deal with it and let time pass and that's okay. As long as again, you're coming back to the reconciliation.
- Ryan:** So, again, the reason we're reading these is we're trying to answer this question: when we're sinned against in marriage by our spouse, how do we respond to it? If you're here listening to this, and you're thinking, "Wow, my spouse has been sinning against me in this way," and maybe you identify with some of the stuff we've shared, like, "My husband doesn't listen to me well," or "he doesn't communicate in a soft... you know, he's..." whatever that thing is you feel like you've been you're being sinned against, I would hope that you pray about that, you would make a clarity around it because you don't want to just take everything you don't like about your marriage and call it sin.
- Selena:** Right. *[chuckles]*
- Ryan:** Right? That's not sin. [00:25:00] It might be, but it's not necessarily.

**Selena:** Sin might be involved in some of those. I think it's like what you said the motivation is you're wanting to gain your brother. You're not wanting to gain "I win." It's not a competitive thing

**Ryan:** And you want to get to the bottom of it so you can begin to heal. Remember triage. There's blood spilling out, stop the bleeding. Address this in for what it is, be clear.

So the first way we deal with being sinned against is with honesty, that's the first H. The second one is with humility. This actually comes up in the Luke passage, when he says, "If he sins against, you rebuke him, and if he repents forgive him. And if he sins against you seven times in the day and turns to you seven times, saying, 'I repent,' you must forgive him."

Part of that is rooted in the converse of this, which would be like around Matthew 18 in the parable of the unforgiving servant. The whole point of that parable was God has not held your sin against you. How could you help hold someone else's sin against them? So there's an amount of humility that has to be here. And whole seven times they repent and forgive them seven times, that's not saying like count to seven, and that's after seven.

**Selena:** It illustrates the multiple times that somebody will sin against you.

**Ryan:** It's just like just do it on and on and on.

**Selena:** It's the Christian life, right?

**Ryan:** Right.

**Selena:** That is that Christian life is repent and believe, repent and believe.

**Ryan:** Yeah. And forgive when you are repented to. If someone sins against you, don't ever withhold forgiveness. How could I? So there's a certain amount of humility that comes from that realization. So if I go to Selena and say, "Listen, I don't trust that when it's time for us to be intimate that you're going to actually be available to me. I don't trust that. And that hurts me. And I've been hurt so many times that I'm having a hard time engaging in that, and I want to avoid it."

If I come to you with humility in saying that and saying like, "I'm not holding it against you, but I want you to know it so that we can work through it. I'm not saying lik you're a terrible wife, I'm just saying that this is how it's been, how I've perceived it, can we work through it together? Because I'm not perfect

either. Maybe I missed something." See the humility piece changes the whole script and it diffuses those bombs.

**Selena:** Yeah. Full disclosure, this was our conversation like three nights ago. *[Ryan laughs]* And it's been life-changing for us. I mean, our last few days have been great because you said these things. I mean, we called things what they were. You approached it with humility. I kind of let the dust settle. Usually, I want to like reconcile and deal with it in that moment, which I think has been a wrong habit of mine for a long time. I kind of just took a step back and let some things get finished and transpire.

You had a lot on your schedule this weekend, and with school, and just a bunch of things. And so I was like, "You know what, I know that we're missing each other. We're not connecting. It's very obvious. So when we get time, then we'll deal with it. And I know it's coming and I'm not going to get up in arms. And I'm not going to feel like we're living in sin. I'm just going to say..."

And I prayed for you in those moments, too. And I'm not saying like, "Whoa, yay, go Selena!" I'm just saying I prayed for you because I knew that your heart was struggling, and I knew that my heart was struggling. And I needed to pray for you. I needed to pray for myself that I would see clearly whatever your response was. I prayed that you would have a soft heart and that you would see things clearly because I really do trust how you see things.

So I think that's probably part of when trust gets broken with us is that I trust you so much to see things clearly, that when I feel like they're foggy, or they're foggy for you, I kind of freak out a little bit because I'm like, "I just trust you to see things clearly." And when you don't, I'm like, "Ah, I don't know how to..." And I start questioning myself. And so I get insecure in those areas.

**Ryan:** It's the blind leading the blind over here.

**Selena:** It really is. It really is.

**Ryan:** Because I'm like, "I feel like I never see things clearly." So I want so much clarity. I think the patience peace comes from that humility. You know, "I don't have to figure this out today. I can wait. I can hope and trust in the Lord and I hope and pray." Praying is hoping and trusting in the Lord like that He will show up, He will intervene and He'll respond.

**Selena:** And He always has. I gotta tell you, people. It's 100% of the time I pray and I wait, and I ask and I don't worry. And God is just so faithful. And I don't have to prompt conversations. I don't have to... I'm not saying that that's not... I do when the Holy Spirit leads me. Let's just say that. But God is so faithful. And

all glory to be to Him for the response in your heart, when my prayers have been heard and answered. And I can trust that.

**Ryan:** And I don't know, we might be harping on this point a little bit. But these conversations were not easy, folks. It wasn't like we're just like, "I prayed and now [00:30:00] I feel great."

**Selena:** It was a rough 24 hours or so.

**Ryan:** It was like, "I'm going to bite my tongue right now and not say what I want to say and I'm going to trust that God is doing something. And then I'm going to be humble enough to admit when I'm wrong, and I'm going to have a hard conversation when I want to run away, I want to panic, I want to I want to disengage." That is hard to do.

**Selena:** Or when I want to throw your offenses in your face. I'm going to not do that.  
*[Ryan laughs]*

**Ryan:** Okay.

**Selena:** You know what I mean?

**Ryan:** No. What did I...? What?

**Selena:** No, no. When you're sitting here apologizing and saying these things...

**Ryan:** Oh, oh, I'm [inaudible] do it right now?

**Selena:** Sorry. No, it took all of me to not want to just be defensive in that moment. Again, not all of me, I really do think God... I apologize. I should take that back. The Lord Holy Spirit definitely led me into, "He's repenting. You don't have a choice. You can't hold anything against him. You can't call him out for these things. You won't and you shouldn't, and you're not going to." So it was like, "Okay, this is where we're at." And so we were dealing with this with honesty. And now comes the humility piece on both our parts.

**Ryan:** Yeah. Yeah. There's a lot that can be said on that. Let's go to the next one. So how do we deal with being sinned against? What do we do? You get help. So, if we've said with honesty, call it what it is with humility, recognize that you're also a sinner. Christ's same blood saved you just like it saved your spouse. And then with help. And that's the piece we see in Matthew 18. We talked if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. That's the first course of action. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you.

And what that means in the marriage context... Now, this is talking about I think church discipline in the church discipline context, this passage. But the truth is and principles I think can be applied here, because there's a lot of reasons. I'll only make a case for it. But the point is, in a marriage context, you can say, "we're going to bring in a trusted advocate and a trusted friend who we know believes the gospel and we trust to speak into our marriage." That can be another couple.

And then I would say escalate it from there. That would be our first course of action. There's a number of friends that we would approach, a number of guy friends, I'd say, "Listen, I'm having this problem in my marriage...

**Selena:** "Selena is acting real messed up towards me."

**Ryan:** "Selena is acting so messed up towards me. [*chuckles*] And what do I do?" He honestly would probably smack me inside the head. "Quit acting like a boy. Be a man." In other words, "Love your wife well." Because that's usually what it boils down to is I'm being a boy, not a man.

**Selena:** No.

**Ryan:** And so he would do that. And then if that's not helping and we need more help, then we would go to a pastor, an elder at our church, we'd go to a counselor and bring help in to confront the sin. Now, this passage is talking about confronting an act of sin. I do want to be clear. Like getting your feelings kind of your feathers ruffled isn't necessarily a sin. Okay, because you could chalk up everything to like my spouse doesn't love me perfectly.

**Selena:** Oh, that's true.

**Ryan:** Is it a sin to not...? I mean, yes, it is a sin to not love exactly as Christ loves, but there's also this whole human dynamic of miscommunication, or maybe you've misheard them, or maybe you don't understand the situation perfectly. There's a lot of reasons to think that they might not have sinned against you. And so I don't want to misconstrue this passage to be like this is the biblical call to go get counseling the second that your feathers are ruffled. It's you're addressing an actual sin that has been committed against you, and you rebuking walking through each step.

So with that said, I think there's another side note to talk about the nature of sin and temptation, but I'm going to skip that because we're short on time. Temptation is not a sin. But leaving someone in temptation is pretty harshly rebuked here in Scripture later on in Luke.

**Selena:** Yeah.

**Ryan:** What do we have here?

**Selena:** So we were talking about kind of the strength of our covenant, being able to deal with the betrayal and the triage. We were talking about this before we got started, but this idea of not jumping ship. Like don't just panic and respond and don't just ignore and respond. There's this other way, this godly, gospel centered, get in the word, listen to the Holy Spirit, have others around you, pray, stay the course. Our covenant can handle and survive betrayal. Will every couple survive betrayal? Unfortunately, no. But our covenant...

**Ryan:** The marriage covenant.

**Selena:** The marriage covenant...

**Ryan:** ...is strong enough.

**Selena:** ...is strong enough. Yes.

**Ryan:** And there's a few caveats in there. It takes two.

**Selena:** Yeah. [00:35:00] The sentence after that, the thought after that was like we can't do it alone. Which it plays into both. We didn't get here alone and we can't get out of here alone. So it took two to get here. It also is going to take probably more than two to get out of here.

**Ryan:** There are instances where you've got just one spouse that goes completely off the rails and they are not playing ball, they're not wanting to come to conversations, they're not repenting. There's not repentance. That's a big huge "if" in Matthew 18 and Luke 17. If he listens to you, if he repents. Those are two massive big "ifs".

That's where this marriage covenant becomes complicated, because in a church context or if somebody... I forget how he says it. Let them be as tax collectors and basically like Gentiles to you. If they don't come back to the communion, and the saints are not repenting of their sin, then you don't have any other recourse than to just like, say, "Then you're not welcome here." [Selena chuckles] That's how church discipline works.

**Selena:** Right, right.

**Ryan:** And it's sad when that happens in your marriage...

- Selena:** And I'm not laughing at that because you can't do that in marriage.
- Ryan:** That's why it's different. *[Selena chuckles]*
- Selena:** Yeah.
- Ryan:** "Sorry, you're not welcome here."
- Selena:** "You're not welcome here anymore."
- Ryan:** "I'm finding another bed to sleep tonight I'm going to change the locks." We're joking. Hopefully in your marriage is not in that spot. But the point being that there's this different dynamic, it's this other dimension that is unique to a covenantal marriage. And so they can't be easily discarded and isn't to be. And that's where you're saying it's strong enough to withhold this, but it does take too.
- Selena:** It takes two and it takes work.
- Ryan:** And it takes work.
- Selena:** It's just a continual process of going back to God's Word of God, of being prayerfully evolved...
- Ryan:** And recognizing that covenantal marriage is His best design for the flourishing of male-female relationships.
- Selena:** Absolutely. Absolutely.
- Ryan:** That's the big premise here is that an intact reconciled marriage is always going to be God's best design for your flourishing. However, the question that always comes up, are there biblical grounds for divorce? Yes, there are. However, it's never the best option. And it's not only not the best option, but it's not something that we will ever prescribe from a podcast, because you always have to have somebody who knows you, who is going to pastor you, who's going to lead you...
- Selena:** Face to face conversation.
- Ryan:** Somebody who's accountable for your soul that's going to walk with you. Teachers are accountable for the people they teach. That's why we are so afraid to teach on this topic on this podcast. So you need to have somebody

to walk alongside you if that is on the table because there's a biblical ground for divorce in that case.

So with that said, conflict does have a little bit of different timbre when it comes to marital reconciliation. It's always easier, it's always better if there's repentance, there's forgiveness, and there's reconciliation. Not always possible, but that's always best.

**Selena:** Yeah.

**Ryan:** So big kind of message here is again looking at this trauma that's happened. It's triage. We have a tendency to either brush it under the rug, sweep it under the rug, or we tend to panic and we make hasty decisions, or we deny it's ever happened. You either have a passive response and you have a panic response. And what we're trying to say is there is a middle road. That you don't have to deny the offense. You can recognize that you've been sinned against, whether that's a massive, catastrophic betrayal, or it's an ongoing kind of low simmer that's been happening for years.

You don't have to deny the anger, the feelings of mistrust, the hurt that you feel, but don't jump ship. And don't go the hasty decision of saying, "He sinned against me. I have biblical grounds for divorce. I'm getting papers drawn up this week."

**Selena:** Slow and steady. Slow and steady..

**Ryan:** Or "she'll never turn around. Our intimate life is doomed to be frustrating for the rest of our marriage."

**Selena:** Or "I can never count on him to be emotionally supportive" or...

**Ryan:** "I can never count on him to provide so I'm going to just jump ship. I got to take care of me. I got to give our kids." That's a panic response. And we're saying, like, deal with it... There somewhere in between where you can deal with it biblically without denying the problem, and that walk that harder road. Yes, it is harder, but we're telling you. Trust us that God's design is great, and it can withstand it. The covenant can withstand it.

Now, pray for softness and repentance and forgiveness to be the exchange of your marriage. There's going to be at constant rhythm of repentance and forgiveness and repentance and forgiveness and reconciliation and closeness. That's your lot as a married couple under Christ's design.

**Selena:** That's good. That's good. It's more than you could I think ever anticipate or try to even understand at the beginning. It is a lot of kind of head knowledge, it's heart knowledge and it's also experiential, [00:40:00] which I think God is so gracious in allowing us to go through some of these hardships.

**Ryan:** And the big, big underlying caveat is this idea of cruciform trust, which we talked about last week. We won't rehash it. But the basic thing is this: you cannot trust your spouse in the same way you can trust Christ. That's just He alone is your Savior. He alone is your identity. He alone is the one who calls you righteous. He alone can love you perfectly. You can't trust your spouse to love you perfectly. And so there's a certain type of trust that only can be placed in Christ. And then there's another trust like that we placed on each other. So if that seems foggy, you don't understand that, go back listen to the last episode. We get into that in greater detail.

For this week's couple's conversation challenge, what do we have?

**Selena:** Spend some time on your own thinking about some of the tension points in your marriage? And then ask like, how does trust play a role in that? So you all know your marriage, you know some of the points of tension. Think about trust and idea of trust within those tension points. Think about those... And, of course, take it that next step and start having those conversations with each other.

**Ryan:** Yeah. Those tension points are your clues. Follow the clues. Because wherever you're fighting the most, that's going to be a spot where probably there's some trust that's been lost, degraded, or broken in that area. So treat it with the triage that you know, like, look at the symptoms, follow the clues, and then have that conversation around it. We hope that that's helpful conversation. It's been helpful for us. Hopefully, we've modeled that because the struggle is real. *[chuckles]* And here we are going on 18 years married. Seventeen and a half years, something like that right now.

**Selena:** Something like that.

**Ryan:** So it's been a lot of time at this one.

**Selena:** Still building trust and still learning how to communicate.

**Ryan:** You know what? I love you and I like you. So that's a win in my book. I still like you. *[both chuckles]* All right, let's pray, and then we'll call it an episode.

**Selena:** Same. *[chuckles]*

**Ryan:** Wheew! I got kind of worried you didn't reciprocate. *[both laughs]* Lord, thank you so much for just your word and how just steadfast it is and how faithful you are to lead us as we read your word to speak to us. I pray for the couples that are listening to this. If they're experiencing anything we've described, any sort of degraded trust or betrayal, or just not being trustworthy in their marriage, I pray that first and foremost, that they would find their ultimate hope in you. That they would trust you alone to love perfectly, and then to trust you to lead the way He would lead, and that they would find all the joy and hope that they need in you.

Secondly, I pray that you would give them wisdom and discernment and stepping down this road toward dealing with whatever the hurt is, whatever that betrayal or mistrust is. God that you would give them discernment to identify and see clearly how to begin the path of stopping that bleeding, so they can step down this road of rebuilding trust, Lord. We love you. We love you, Jesus. In your name, amen.

**Selena:** Amen.

**Ryan:** As you mentioned, next week, we're going to be talking through what that actually looks like stepping down that path of rebuilding trust, what are some really tangible steps that you can take toward rebuilding that trust. And we trust that it will be helpful. A lot of trust going on here.

**Selena:** A lot of trust going on here. *[chuckles]*

**Ryan:** Final Word here, check out [GospelCenteredMarriage.com](http://GospelCenteredMarriage.com). We talk through topics like these but really get down to the biblical foundations for all the big underlying truths that enable this kind of ongoing dialogue. Because without the gospel at the absolute center of your marriage, these types of dialogues are going to be really hard, if not impossible, without a common understanding of who Christ is to you, and what he's done for you, and who He is according to God's word. So make sure to go to [GospelCenteredMarriage.com](http://GospelCenteredMarriage.com). We have some really affordable ways for you to hop on board with that.

So with all that said, this episode of the Fierce Marriage Podcast is—

**Selena:** In the can.

**Ryan:** And we'll see you again in about seven days. So until next time—

**Selena:** Stay fierce.

**[00:44:04]** <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**

- **[00:19:26]**
  - Scripture references:
    - Matthew 18:15-20
    - Luke 17:3-4

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