

THE PATH TO REBUILDING BROKEN TRUST

<https://fiercemarriage.com/the-path-to-rebuilding-broken-trust>

[00:00:00]

Selena: Trust and betrayal are not only the most common issues but they are some of the biggest issues that married couples face today. We have decided to do a series and we are in week three of a four-part series talking about how to repair trust and begin the healing process.

So it's gonna be interesting conversation today. I think we were even surprised by some of the, I don't know, discussion around rebuilding trust and what that looks like as a believer and how much agency do we have in our healing process, and how much do we just let go and trust God, and what does that look like with our spouse who could very much betray us again, right?

Ryan: Yeah. Now, what we found is the lion's share of unbeliever's faith and trust have to be placed in God in the rebuilding process. After you're reeling from that car wreck, you've done the triage, now it's time to start healing in the hospital, so to speak, at that moment, the trust is broken between you and your spouse.

Again, you said it's one of the most common issues. It's not because every marriage has an affair, an emotional affair, physical affair. It's because there are small ways and medium ways that we damage and break each other's trust daily, just because we're sinners and we're not perfect.

So today, our hope is to give you a very clear kind of path toward healing in whatever area of trust you're feeling needs to be bolstered and strengthened and improved in your marriage, in your life. And as we'll see, that path has mostly to do with trusting God in profound way. So we'll see you on the other side.

[00:01:40] <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.

[00:02:13] <podcast begins>

Ryan: This one was a tough conversation because it can feel very, very prescriptive. All right? Even in response to the first two, trust and betrayal episodes that we wrote, I've gotten... I say I because I'm the one that monitors the email [*Selena chuckles*] that comes in.

Selena: You share, but yeah, it's mostly you.

Ryan: I share it with you. I've gotten a lot of messages from husbands and wives who have felt brokenness in this area. And it's always a really clear reminder that we're not in your life to be able to minister in the way that these issues often require for a true, circumspect, lasting healing.

Selena: Right. I think we're just trying to help people see kind of the peg holes to start hanging your hat on and start those conversations with people that are in your lives, the pastors, the Christian, Bible-believing counselors, guide couples, and mentor couples that love, you know, you and love God and know God and want to return you back to Him in that way.

So yeah, we definitely do not have all the answers. We are just trying to bring God back into the situation, give you some of those peg holes to just kind of hang your hat on, let's start here, and begin to walk forward.

Ryan: It was funny as I was doing some of the research for this and just reading kind of various perspectives, it became very clear that kind of the stark contrast between a biblical worldview and a non-biblical one when it comes to dealing with this very real interpersonal dynamic of building trust, repairing trust. It was profound to me.

Because you go to some of these articles, like for instance, I found one, it was on the HuffPost. Right? So Huffington Post, not a great [*laughing*] source of biblical advice.

- Selena:** Definitely not.
- Ryan:** But the very first thing that it says is to recover after broken trust is to trust yourself.
- Selena:** Which as a Bible-believing Christian, definitely cannot.
- Ryan:** Or it's deceitful above all things. Now, I want to be charitable. What they're saying is basically, recognize where you're actually at in your situation and some of the things I would disagree with. We could talk about honesty-
- Selena:** It's just very self-centered because the next one's like, "Your new best friend..." Oh, no. I thought it was saying "you and your new best friend." I was like, "I don't really care about that. I don't want to meet my best friend."
- Ryan:** But naturally it becomes a very human-centered or humanist, secular humanism, right? So it's very human-centered in the solutions to the things that [inaudible]. So like, create new situations in your life. In other words, change your environment, learn, start growing in your own heart and mind. Again, we don't want to throw out the baby with the bathwater.
- Selena:** No, they are not bad things but I don't think they're in the right order. It's like God is in the center and there's other things that can happen that can really or go outwards that can help us in the process. [00:05:00] But I can't start with myself. Because this is where the problem has begun clearly.
- Ryan:** I don't know if I could have made this point any more clearly without this article.
- Selena:** Oh, Lord.
- Ryan:** At the end, it says at the very end, the last thing, "Entertain the idea of forgiveness." That doesn't sound [*laughing*] like the Bible. That sounds like... did Jesus say that? The Parable of the unforgiving servant or to anyone who... He wasn't entertaining the idea of forgiveness on the cross. Anyway, I just find it ironic. Although understandable given the worldview.
- Selena:** You can accept an apology, apparently, but it's not the same as forgiveness. And forgive them, right?
- Ryan:** And we don't need to harp on this particular article because we could cherry-pick it to death. The point is, there's a stark contrast between kind of our

human tendency, our cultural direction when it comes to reeling in healing from broken trauma.

Selena: Well, and I think our actions and our behavior fundamentally can be tainted by these ideas of culture of, you know, "Hey, I gotta work on myself, I gotta clean myself up, or "I'll forgive you when I'm ready," or "I'm going to do all these other things until I'm ready to forgive you or whatever." I think, yes, the stark truth is an obvious thing. Nobody's arguing that.

I think it's when we start subscribing to the truth, sort of not... I feel like there's an order and but there's falseness to look into inside yourself for the answers in your heart. For sure, wrong, false. But like they say, you know, go for a run, start some new things in your life.

Ryan: Reconnect with yourself in these ways.

Selena: Or just like it's not bad to go running. It's not bad to say, "Hey, maybe this is an opportunity to start some new habits." However, those are results from first, knowing who God is, knowing who you are, how you're called to trust.

Ryan: The worldview is on full display here.

Selena: For sure.

Ryan: Because the foundational underlying premise is that reconciliation is almost impossible. That's the premise. Whereas the Christian view is reconciliation is the ideal and it's the thing we should be striving for in a broken relationship. I saw that last week when we talked through-

Selena: We pick it apart, culture picks it apart, and we want to justify it in ways that make us feel good and aren't necessarily obedient, submissive to the way God has outlined and instructed us to forgive and reconcile. So we should get to our...

Ryan: I'm just very interested by this. Sorry. We'll unpack it later. So yeah, our housekeeping. I'll make it fast. If you haven't yet... By the way, some people have left comments or ratings and reviews. I've been so encouraged by those recently. I always think I'm gonna get on there and read them here and I'll see if I can find them fast enough. Doo doo doo doo doo, looking really fast. Oh, got it. Fierce marriage podcast. It's loading. Bear with me. I want to read somebody wrote on here. "They're not married yet, just got engaged. But the guidance and wisdom that this God driven couple," thank you for the compliment, "has given is unquantifiable."

- Selena:** Oh, boy!
- Ryan:** You know, I love that. Thank you for that. That made me feel good. *[Selena chuckles]* "The honesty in how a marriage works in the highs and lows and how it can only thrive with the holy living water of Jesus is something I as a listener truly am thankful for. Thanks a ton, you two." Well, thank you.
- Selena:** Thank you.
- Ryan:** Thank you, J. C. P for that kind review on your podcast app. Really appreciate. If you haven't done that, that encourages us. It also helps people find this podcast. In fact, I was looking at listening to another Christian podcast, and the first thing I did without even thinking about it is I went to the reviews. What's the rating? Is it like less than four?
- Selena:** It's for sure reviews. If it's less than four, I don't even read comments.
- Ryan:** If it's over four, then I'm gonna go to some of these reviews and read them and see what am I in for? Is it worth the time? So thank you. I've harped on that quite a bit.
- If you want to join us and partner with us financially and in kind of lock arms with your hearts... *[laughs]*
- Selena:** So your arms seal our hearts. Like give with arms that's like... *[chuckles]*
- Ryan:** Yeah, yeah, sorry for that. You can go to patreon.com/fiercemarriage. That's patreon.com/fiercemarriage. The biggest benefit is you get to be on mission with us. The other benefits are things like books and rings and enrollment in our online courses all free of charge, other than being a patron.
- Selena:** Stop. *[Ryan laughs]*
- Ryan:** Finally... *[Selena chuckles]* Finally... What was I gonna say? What's the final one?
- Selena:** Gospel Centered Marriage.
- Ryan:** Oh yeah, go to gospelcenteredmarriage.com to begin learning how to have a gospel-centered marriage.
- Selena:** Just a quick thing on that because we were just debating like, should we be continuing to put out videos. Of course, we are on this track of doing that. We

know and understand that you are video inundated, like from the last year and all the things right.

Ryan: Screens. Screens. *[both laughs]*

Selena: They're magical. *[Ryan chuckles]* I was like, "I mean, should we be doing this [00:10:00] or should we just continue the podcast?" The thing about Gospel Centered Marriage is that we want it to be a tool that you carve out time together to sit down and start finding places to have these conversations. We're hoping that it promotes conversations, it promotes unity, it promotes purpose in your marriage.

Because otherwise, if you're going there for entertainment, you will be sorely disappointed. Let me tell you. Maybe you're entertained on here and you laugh at us a lot. That's fine. I have no problem with being laughed at. But we're not-

Ryan: I mean, it's not boring. We try to make it engaging.

Selena: Yes, but it's us having conversations with pastors and people that have worked out some of these hard things. and they're giving us their wisdom and they're saying, "Hey, you can have these hard conversations" And they're giving you permission to go into those hard places that you wouldn't go without somebody leading you or prompting these questions. So that is the whole point of it.

I don't like more videos, but here we are. And if that's what God's calling us to, to help, say, "Hey, here's some places to have conversations."

Ryan: And if we're honest. I'm interrupting. I'm sorry. Go ahead. I was gonna say if we're honest, we spend a lot of time on videos anyway. Whether it's Netflix or whatever.

Selena: Yeah. No, good.

Ryan: And we're just saying like, divert some of that video time to building your marriage. Anyway, that was longer than we planned.

Selena: Have less video time, and just do Gospel... I'm kidding. *[chuckles]*

Ryan: If you're still with us, thank you and welcome to the side of that. So we're talking about rebuilding trust.

Selena: And beginning the healing process.

Ryan: Yeah, beginning the heal healing process. Let's do a quick recap of where we've been, because we're going to build on where we've been. The biggest component is comes from the episode that-

Selena: The first week.

Ryan: The first week, which is two weeks prior to this episode. We talked about this concept of cruciform trust. And what we meant by that, in brief, is that there are certain aspects of our trust that can only and should only be placed in God. That's the vertical piece of the cross. Okay, cruciform means cross-shaped.

So you have the vertical component to the cross, that's the man trusting in God. Bottom to top. Then you got the horizontal component, which is kind of the interpersonal. This isn't a biblical thing. It's just an idea that we've been working out in terms of the cruciform shape.

So there's some trust that is right and good to be placed in your spouse. But I can't trust Selena for my identity. I can't trust her for my security, eternally speaking, even in this life. We rely on each other and we trust each other for our... like you trust me to take care of our finances, you trust me to do the work that I do. I trust you to do the work that you do. I trust you to... so many things. And some of that trust is good and right placed in each other.

However, when it comes to the deep issues of an identity, of who you are, or your worldview, we talked about that a lot today, that can only be placed in God. If it's not placing god it becomes idolatry, because you're trusting someone else to be what only God can be. Okay? That's what cruciform trust is. And we're building on that today.

So without that understanding, some of this stuff is gonna sound ridiculous because we're not operating from the same script that a non-biblical worldview is operating from. So from there, we did talk through the philosophy of trust and what it means to trust, and what betrayal is.

Then in the next episode we talked through how to deal with trust in the moment when you realize it's been broken. Now, bear in mind we're not just talking about big breaches of trust, things like affairs, emotional affairs, physical affairs, you've realized that your spouse has been texting an ex-girlfriend or an ex-boyfriend for the last three months behind your back. That's huge. We referenced the Gottman article. I forget the publication.

Selena: It was UC Berkeley. Just can I trust you to be there and listen to me when I'm upset? Can I trust you to work for our family, to not take drugs, to respect me,

to help with things around the house and be involved with our kids? I mean, these are issues that we face in marriage because they are questions of trust.

Ryan: Are you a reliable person? Can I put my weight on you in these areas of marriage when I need to and will you fail or will you withhold. What's the word? Will you withstand? There it is. *[Selena chuckles]* So when I go to you and I'm emotional wreck, Selena, and I'm frustrated and angry with something and I just need to process with you, will you love me well?

Selena: Or can you trust me to respond in a way that's not just going to make it about me or going to start attacking you? Can I trust you to be anchoring in that situation and deal with me and grace and love? And that is not always automatic. We idealize it and desire it but it's not automatic.

Last week, I think it's just important to reference that we talked about broken trust. And this is the triage moment of, okay, [00:15:00] the wound has been exposed. It's hurt, it's happening. We've given you now permission to kind of be hurt, to experience the anger. And there's going to be some distrust. So we're recognizing that situation for what it is.

We talked about Matthew 18 and Luke 17, and how the Bible instructs us to deal with sin. Because betrayal is sinning. And when we're sinned against, how do we deal with it? You had three Hs. Do you want to talk about those real quick?

Ryan: Yeah. And you touched on the first one. The first one's honesty. So you call it what it is. Deal with it. That's the rebuke component. You're not glossing over it, but you actually say, "This is sin, this is disorder, this is wrong. You need to stop." I'm lovingly calling you out. It's not a self-righteous thing. But it's say, "I'm not gonna lie about this thing." It's honesty. That's the first thing.

The second one is humility. It's doing that knowing that I'm not perfect either. That I can probably deal with this situation in ways that are sinful. So I want to be humble knowing that we need Jesus to help us here in this space. I need Him, you need Him. Let's work together. But we're not perfect.

The final one is help. So honesty, humility, and help. Help being get someone to walk alongside you. Get a pastor, a counselor, a mentor, a guide couple, a friend, friends who are advocates for your marriage to help you not jump ship to say... and that was the final piece that we ended with is you can fall on two sides of this equation when you are reeling from discovering that you don't trust your spouse as much as you thought you did.

You can either deny it, that's the I'm not gonna be honest about it peace, or you can panic and say, "It's over. It's over."

Selena: We are... what does he say?

Ryan: "We're finished. We're through." *[both laughs]* That's an Office reference if you're wondering. You can have that kind of panic, knee-jerk reaction that just throws everything to the wind and you flush it all and it's done. And we're saying, don't do that. We're saying there's a better way. It's in the middle somewhere. Don't lie about it.

Also, stand strong. Trust in where you're at. Trust God. Remember that He created covenant. This marriage is not an idea that you had. You got married with God's ideas in mind. Whether you knew it or not, this is something that he created for your flourishing. So trust it, don't jump ship. And here we are now saying, if you've not jumped ship, you've decided to walk this path...

Selena: You decide to stay.

Ryan: ...how do you start walking down this path?

Selena: You've committed to staying on this ship. The storms are rough. Betrayal is hard. This journey now is requiring faith and obedience. And you said at the beginning, this part of beginning to take steps towards healing and this is the lion's share of our trust is in God at this point. We are not necessarily trusting our spouse out of faith. We're trusting God out of faith and we're submitting ourselves. There's going to be an aspect of humility that we'll talk about when we have to obey His instructions.

Ryan: I have an analogy that keeps coming to mind and I just think it could help. It helped me just in the immediate past here.

Selena: Go for it. *[Ryan chuckles]* Just now.

Ryan: So you've built the bridge, right? You're crossing over the bridge. That's the trust. And say, this bridge fails you and you fall into the ravine, and you're injured, whatever and you realize this bridge needs to be rebuilt. So now you're going through the motions of rebuilding the bridge, all the while not actually trusting the bridge to let you cross it. But what are you trusting? You're trusting in the physics that if you follow bridge engineering conventions, if you follow physical laws, that over time, after you build that bridge according to those laws, that bridge will hold your weight again. It'll even be stronger than it was before.

So there's still trust in that moment. That's what we're saying is that you perhaps have a broken bridge in your marriage. We're saying, yes, you might not be able to walk it onto that bridge anytime soon, but you can start building it in faith.

Selena: Well, you can trust God-

Ryan: You can trust that as you build it...

Selena: Yeah, as you build it. Yeah.

Ryan: ...it will be crossable.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: Because you're trusting in His principles. And that's the principles of reconciliation, of forgiveness, of biblical love, of covenant, of the gospel, of what it means to be saved by grace. I'd say that's the cornerstone of today's conversation is that the lion's share of our trust in repairing trust is going to be placed in God. It's necessary. It necessarily has to be placed in Christ.

Selena: Right. I want to read kind of a longer quote. You know how I like Got Questions.

Ryan: You love it.

Selena: It's talking about faith. Because you and I were talking a lot about faith. We don't have to get into it right now, of what we were debating and discussing. But faith is obviously a huge part of the Christian life and we can't, I think, stand at the door or engage in this path of reconciliation [00:20:00] and healing without faith, without eyes seeing that. Again, like you said, "I will be able to put my weight on this bridge and it will not collapse." That's the ideal.

Again, you've committed to that. If you're here, you're listening, you're wanting to repair trust, you're taking those steps, and I commit to this process. It's not I've got one foot in and one foot out. No. There's got to be commitment here. So, quote-

Ryan: Can you build that out a little bit? Where is that coming from? Because that's coming from some very real conversations that you and I have had around couples.

Selena: Yeah, that have experienced betrayal. So I guess the idea behind that was, we know people, we have friends that we've walked through some the big

breaches of trust, emotional affairs, physical affairs, and we have come on the other side with them as well. Like we have seen God do miracles. Again, their bridge and their covenant is stronger than ever. Their full weight is able to put on... they can trust. They can trust each other.

The thing about it is, is that they have all gone through a season of testing kind of like, "Well, if you're not gonna act the way I want you to or you're not going to behave the way I want, then I'm gonna hold it over your head, hold the betrayal over your head, and I'm just gonna leave."

Ryan: That's the provision.

Selena: Yeah. And the rebuke there is, "No, if you're staying and you're committed, then you can't live in that space of holding it over their head or using it as a threat."

Ryan: Right.

Selena: So I guess that's kind of just the foundation of where that conversation happened of you-

Ryan: Because you're not actually rebuilding the bridge at that point. You're just staring out at it and saying, "look, this bridge is damaged."

Selena: Right. Right.

Ryan: It takes a commitment to the laws of bridge-building to go about the actions of building that bridge. If you're just on the sidelines criticizing or you just not actually engaging in the work, that's not faith. That's not actually saying like, "We want to reconcile." That's half-hearted. And I think you're cutting yourself off at the knees at that point.

So you kind of have to step out in faith. That's what led us to this conclusion is that the beginning ironically is the lion's share, the biggest portion of our faith has to be placed in God in this moment. We have to trust that as we live in the covenant, and we let the covenant of marriage stand, and we stand by this covenant that we've made with God and with our spouse, that's an act of faith. That's an act of trust. And it's radical. It's radical.

Selena: It is. It's often gonna clash with your emotions and your feelings and things that you don't like, things that are uncomfortable. But again, it's trusting God. It's trusting God saying, "I'm going to trust Him despite how I feel in this moment. This moment will pass. These feelings will pass. I recognize that I have these feelings. I'm not going to ignore them. I will get tools to deal with

them. However, I'm committed to this process. I'm committed to God's Word. I'm committed to knowing Him in His Word and through His Word."

And that is something that is not optional, that I am committed. And so because I'm committed, I am going to learn to respond humbly, I'm going to learn to respond in faith, and I'm going to respond out of obedience, trusting that the fruit God is growing, the Holy Spirit is growing fruit within me, within our marriage.

I mean, look at the trees in the winter. You don't see anything on the outside, but the inside, things are happening, things are growing.

Ryan: It always blows my mind every year. *[chuckles]*

Selena: Every year. *[chuckles]*

Ryan: Like, "Those trees aren't coming back to life this year. It's been a hard winter." *[chuckles]*

Selena: Puuuf! Back to my quote on Got Questions real quick. Again, it's a little long, but I think it's worth saying. So according to the Bible, faith is essential to Christianity. Without demonstrating faith and trust in God, we have no place with Him." Kind of a bold statement. We believe in God's existence by faith. Most people have a vague, disjointed notion of who God is but lack the reverence necessary for His exalted position in their lives." Stop.

I would argue the vague and disjointed notion is because of a lack of knowledge of who He is. And if we don't know God, then we obviously have not been spending time with God. What is spending time with God? It means being in your Bible every single day. It means praying and talking to Him and communing with Him every single day. And not just reading the New Testament, I'm going to push this. Even the Gospels because man, I learned more about God in the Old Testament, and some of the... Is it Old Prophets? I'm saying old, but-

Ryan: Major, minor prophets.

Selena: Thank you. That's where I've learned the most about the holiness of God, the justness of God, the power of God.

Ryan: I'm going to add to this because you said that basically not knowing God by not going to [00:25:00] His Word, not submitting yourself to that teaching will lead to a lack of reverence, a lack of-

- Selena:** Listen to other people's espousing of God and not...
- Ryan:** But I would say that it is possible to know the facts and still rebel against God.
- Selena:** Sure.
- Ryan:** That's plain scripture. And I see it all the time where I know people in their hearts they... and we do that in our own sin.
- Selena:** We do. We do. Yeah.
- Ryan:** We know better but we rebel. So you're talking about faith. Let's finish the quote.
- Selena:** It says, "These people lack *[giggles]* the true faith needed to have an eternal relationship with the God who loves them." That's just what we're talking about. That's the only reason why I giggled. "Our faith can falter at times, but because it is the gift of God, given to His children, He provides times of trial and testing in order to prove that our faith is real and to sharpen and strengthen it. This is why James tells us to consider it "pure joy" when we fall into trials, because the testing of our faith produces perseverance and matures us, providing the evidence that our faith is real."
- Ryan:** Let's read James 1:2-4 real fast. "Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds..." Could betrayal and lack of trust in marriage fall into that? Perhaps. I don't know if that's what James is talking about. But various kinds. He gives us some room there. "...for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing."
- Selena:** Let's just talk about that for a minute.
- Ryan:** All right.
- Selena:** The testing of your faith produces steadfastness. Typically a test like that that produces something like that, I imagine would take a long time. In our minds, maybe again, our view of time is very skewed, thanks to the internet, and all of just clocks and all those kinds of things. *[laughs]*
- Ryan:** It's funny. On that note, I received an inquiry recently. It was for some sort of online event, and they had a bunch of questions that they were going to ask. It's for husbands. I don't mean to throw this person under the bus. But one of the questions was, "If your wife has given you divorce papers and you have 30

days to win her back, what do you do?" My first response was "pray for more time." *[laughs]*

Selena: For sure.

Ryan: Thirty days is not enough time. Don't sign the papers. *[laughs]* Hold out and pray for more time because, you just said it, it's a long process to get... Like you spent your whole marriage ruining it... *[laughs]*

Selena: Don't laugh.

Ryan: I'm sorry. I'm not laughing at the situation.

Selena: What are you laughing at?

Ryan: I'm laughing at the request. Because it seems silly to me to say that you've spent your whole marriage going off the rails and now in 30 days you're supposed to somehow fix it.

Selena: Sure.

Ryan: That's too tall an order for any man. And so I would just say, pray for more time, pray for God to work a miracle.

Selena: That's a good answer to the question.

Ryan: And try to be a good husband. Try to love her well, try to show her that-

Selena: Well, understand what that means, though. Because not everybody shares the same meaning on what that looks like.

Ryan: I'm not trying to make light of that situation. So I apologize if that...

Selena: He giggles in hard things sometimes, guys. And he's gotten hot sandwiches thrown at his head and he's...

Ryan: I'm laughing at the request.

Selena: He laughs at the wrong time. This is our marriage sometimes.

Ryan: Maybe you just don't understand me.

Selena: Mmmm, probably not.

- Ryan:** Just try to keep up.
- Selena:** Because you make me so angry sometimes [*chuckles*] in your moments of laughter. So James 1:3, "...for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness." Again, steadfastness, just look at the word. I mean steadfastness, it has no other definition besides long-suffering, right? It's going to take time to be able to deal with things resolutely and firmly and in the face of adversity. It's not going to be something that is just "Oh, yeah, I'm steadfast like, it is something that is shown over time."
- And he says, "And let steadfastness," verse 4, "have its full effect." So don't cut it short. Stay in this place of humility, stay walking in faith and obedience. Stay on that ship. It's rough, but it's not always going to be rough.
- Ryan:** That statement is a statement of faith.
- Selena:** Right.
- Ryan:** Because you can't really make your spouse change their heart. You can't make them repent because of the rebuke. We talked about last week because of the sin. That's standing in faith. That's a testing of your faith. Do you trust that this covenant can withstand this? You said the bold statement last week that your covenant can survive, your marriage can survive betrayal.
- And then you had the caveat: but not all do. Why? Because sin is still there. It takes two. It's not because God's design is flawed, it's because we failed to execute it in the way that-
- Selena:** And it's this lack of repentance.
- Ryan:** I want to call attention to one more part of this. James 1:2-4. And it's this: count it all joy. Can you count it joy where you're at right now? And like to think I've just discovered that... I mean, I've discovered this bomb in our marriage, or I've just realized that our communication is not great. Do I count that a joy [00:30:00] or is that just a huge wreck? Because, as believers, James is saying, "Count it a joy, because..."
- Selena:** How do we count it?
- Ryan:** That in itself is a faith statement saying, you're counting this terrible thing, it's a trial, it's terrible, it's bad, it's hard, you're counting it good, not just for yourself, but you're counting good, trusting that God will make it good. That's Romans 8. That God will somehow... I don't know how it works. Somehow, the leaves will come off the branches when the spring comes. Somehow the fruit

will come in the harvest. Somehow. I don't know but I'm in faith I'm trusting that it will return. Why? God is faithful. I can trust His faithfulness in the seasons.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: We talked about that. Like we don't really know if the sun is gonna come tomorrow ontologically speaking... I mean, epistemologically speaking.

Selena: Put your big words right. All right? *[laughs]*

Ryan: Sorry. We don't really know. And that was Descartes. I think it's was the one that said, "I think, therefore I am." That was the one statement that he could say certainly. *[Selena chuckles]* Because he can't really know something. We trust more than we realize. That's what I'm trying to say.

Selena: Right, right.

Ryan: And we trust God in the moment and counting the joy, and saying, "This is hard, it's terrible, but I'm gonna count it joy in faith."

Selena: I think it's a call to humility and obedience, to be honest. It's not just an exhortation of to count it all joy. I think if you can't count it as a joy, then how do you get to that place of being able to count? And is that something that I can do on my own? Probably not. Probably not.

Ryan: That's a really good question. If you can't count it a joy, how do you get to that place? And that actually leads us to the next kind of talking point.

Selena: Well, I don't even know if that's a good point of saying, "Can I...?" Okay, go ahead.

Ryan: The next talking point is this: how can I be obedient to God in this situation? So again, you're walking out, you've decided you're going to stand firm. That in itself is an act of faith. So good job. Now, how can I be obedient to God in walking out this process of repairing our trust and healing from this brokenness that we're experiencing? How can I walk that out in faith? When I don't feel like I can count it joy, how do I do that?

I think the first step is, again, the cruciform trust—realizing that the bulk of your trust right now is going to be in God. If you can look to God and say, "You are faithful and I'm not," that to me is 99% of the equation. I don't mean to be overly simplistic, but standing and trusting in God in that moment, even if

you're just sitting and kind of basking in the ability to trust Him, I think that's the first step down the How can I count it all joy?

Selena: Well, yeah, I think we just try to rush it all through. Just our idea of time just forces us to kind of push through and make it happen. And if it doesn't happen in the time that we think it should happen, then it's not going to happen. And then we just write it off instead of just... I feel like... I don't feel like. I know that God has been teaching me to just be still and wait, quiet and wait.

Like when you and I were having some struggles these last couple weeks, I prayed for you. I sat and waited. I didn't have to be afraid. Usually, I want to resolve it. Usually, I want to make it right as soon as possible, and I want to fix it. But God, it's like He said, sit and wait. And I said, okay. And He was so good and faithful to show up in your heart, in your actions, in your words.

That wasn't anything I did. It was all of His doing and His response in you. And I had to give that time. I needed to be just steadfast in knowing that things were going to be resolved. I know there's caveats to that. I know that.

Ryan: Little did you know that I was trusting God even harder, *[both chuckles]* and waiting even longer. *[laughs]*

Selena: You see! And God is so faithful. We want to rush this whole healing and repair because it hurts and it does hurt, and it's frustrating, and we're angry, and we don't want to be that anymore. But we need to be steadfast in our faith and allowing God to show us how to count these trials as joy to know that the testing of our faith is going to produce steadfastness. Why do I want steadfastness? Because then you'll be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. That's what steadfastness brings: perfection, completion, lacking in nothing.

Am I going to be a perfect Christian? No. Does that mean I'm going to be feeling no lack anywhere? No. It just means that in Christ, my perfection... I am perfect in Him, I am complete in Him, I lack nothing in Him.

Ryan: I was looking up some other resources that we're going to share with you later on that will kind of get you down this path. You'll notice we're not speaking overly prescriptively. We'll get to that. But we really want to address the heart orientation in this moment, in this journey of walking out healing. You notice the heart orientation is trusting in God. And that's-

Selena: Eyes fixed on Him.

Ryan: Honestly, every podcast episode could some way like turn-

Selena: For sure.

Ryan: That's essentially the Gospel is we trust God with our souls and with our salvation. [00:35:00] So trusting God, which takes humility. And we talked about that. It takes honesty. We're not glossing over the things. We talked about this last week.

Selena: It's recognizing who God is and who I am and who I am not.

Ryan: And there is where I wanted to go is that in recognizing who God is, the way we do that as we look to His word. And so what do we see in His Word in terms of betrayal? What this will do is will open our eyes of faith. Selena, you had said, as you've been reading scripture this year, it's like you've stopped looking through the keyhole of the door, and the door has swung wide open. And the wonder of God's nature, God's character, God's grace, the story of salvation is just blowing your mind on a daily basis. That's what looking at scripture does to us.

Now, when we're in a place of pain and healing and reeling, like we're talking about, we can look to Scripture to see and know that our Savior is not a savior who's without experience like this, who doesn't understand us. He understands. Jesus Himself was betrayed with a kiss by Judas. That's Matthew 26. If you need to kind of understand that Jesus knows what you're going through, go read Matthew 26, ask Him to help you understand the depth of what was happening in that situation.

Judas wasn't just like tagalong. [*Selena giggles*] He was close with Jesus. He was the treasurer of all these disciples. He was entrusted in a lot of ways to guard Jesus. Instead, he went outside of that relationship and sold Him out. And then he sold them out saying, "I'll take 30 pieces of silver, and by the way, I'm going to show you where He is.

And He didn't just say, "He's over there," he's pointing at Him. Instead, he walked up to Him in a really kind of sly way and came up to Him as if to embrace Him as a brother. And that embrace was the very act of betrayal. How profound is that?

And you think in terms of marriage, when betrayed, you feel like all this while... We got a message from a spouse—we're praying for you, by the way, the folks who sent this message in. They've been married for over a decade and she has found out that her husband had an affair five years prior. It's over, but she never knew about it. That's devastating. That is devastating. And this

poor wife is devastated. We're here to tell you that Jesus knows what it feels like to be betrayed. God Himself is the betrayed one. In the garden-

Selena: Every time we sin.

Ryan: Every time we sin we're betraying. It's an affront to God's love and His mercy and His justice, and His holiness. And it's a betrayal of Him. I think of Joseph and his brothers, being sold into slavery by his own brothers because they were jealous of him. They betrayed him. Now, go read in Genesis... Was it 37, 38? Around there. Go read the story of Joseph. I've got it in front of me. 45. *[both laughs]* I got it right here.

Selena: That Bible is really helpful.

Ryan: I was putting my hand on it not even looking. Yeah, Genesis 45. All right. It says in verse 1, "And Joseph could not control himself. For before all those who stood by him, he cried." Again, he's in the Pharaoh's chambers. He's a higher up in Egypt at this point.

Selena: He's second to Pharaoh.

Ryan: He's second to Pharaoh. He says, "Make everyone go out for me. So no one stayed with him when Joseph made himself known to his brothers." So he said, "Everyone leave except for these other men." And they were his family. You got to go read. It's like 10 different chapters. But he responded in a way that was... it tells us something about how to deal with betrayal and walking down the path of healing and forgiveness and stepping down this path with faith and with compassion, compassion that it comes from being humble before God, and knowing that His design is good and His covenant is there for our flourishing and for His glory.

Selena: So good.

Ryan: Another one, just a quick example, is Peter denying Christ three times. What did Peter end up becoming? The cornerstone of the church. He's the rock. Christ is the cornerstone, excuse me. But Peter is the rock. Like, "Peter, you're the rock upon which I will build my church." That's profound. That is not that Jesus just said, "You betrayed me. You're out. We're done." Like, "I told you. Three times, Peter."

Selena: "We're over." *[chuckles]*

Ryan: "This is over. Get out. You're not invited." *[chuckles]* No, Jesus still used Peter to build His church. And because of that, we now can know Christ.

- Selena:** And look at Paul. Apostle Paul.
- Ryan:** So we serve a God who is merciful, a God of reconciliation, a God of forgiveness, a God of grace, a God of love, a God of just second chances. And that is why we're talking about this attitude of humility. We're not trying to say, "Get over it." We're saying, stand. Stand in faith. Not in your covenant... [00:40:00] Excuse me. Not in your spouse so they're gonna be perfect. But stand in faith in your God and stand in faith in the covenant He has designed for this.
- Selena:** Sorry to interrupt. Don't stand in your self-righteousness either-
- Ryan:** Wow.
- Selena:** ...in your view of yourself thinking... And maybe you are right. But we're saying you need to lift your eyes from you and look to God and you submit to God. And you need to understand that even though you may be right and you were wronged, and there's brokenness and sin there, you still don't have the right to hold sin over someone because He's forgiven us. So how can we not forgive? Again, this journey of forgiveness is not immediate. It's not one and done. It is a constant revisit of repenting and believing, and hoping, right?
- Ryan:** I just want to make a distinction because forgiveness and trust aren't the same thing.
- Selena:** Right. Thank you.
- Ryan:** So just because you forgive your spouse doesn't mean you automatically trust them.
- Selena:** To the level that you... Yeah.
- Ryan:** To that same level.
- Selena:** Absolutely.
- Ryan:** And we're talking about here rebuilding trust.
- Selena:** Right, right.
- Ryan:** So the very act of rebuilding to an extent is built upon that forgiveness. Saying like, "I'm not holding it over your head. Therefore, let's move forward

together. I get it. We're broken right now. Let's get unbroken. Let's look to the one who can actually heal us.

Selena: And there's going to be those humility moments I feel like are like teeth-gritting moments sometimes, right?

Ryan: Oh, my word! They're hard.

Selena: It's just white-knuckling, teeth-gritting, "I hope I'm going to make it because I really don't feel like it. I just want to walk away. I want to call it quits." And God just bear with us, and He's saying, "Trust my word. Trust my word. Trust my word. Stay humble. Recognize who I am, know who I am. Trust me, trust me, trust me." And again, that's where our lion's share of trust is got to be in Him. And he's-

Ryan: Sorry. Doesn't the Bible say that we are to walk by our feelings and not by sight?

Selena: How dare you! [inaudible] once again.

Ryan: No, it says, walk by faith and not by sight.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: Again, it's easy to see that here recording a podcast. We've had a great afternoon you and I talking. It feels fine. But in those wee hours of the-

Selena: Yeah, those moments.

Ryan: ...in the morning when we're fighting or we're... you know, that takes faith.

Selena: And you're wrong and I'm just so right.

Ryan: This episode of the Fierce Marriage Podcast is— *[both laughs]*

Selena: No. But again, it's this taking the step of humility of laying down your own passions and emotions that would rage or kind of show their ugly head and self-righteousness. It's embracing self-control and watching the Holy Spirit's start to develop the fruit of love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, kindness, self-control, goodness, and faithfulness in you and then in your marriage and towards your spouse.

Ryan: So we've addressed kind of the headspace up till now, right? Again, using the analogy of car wreck, triage, now you're in the hospital. When you get to the

hospital, it's time to start healing. You've reset the bones. You've said like, "Okay, now we can actually start the healing," what do you need at that point?

Years ago, I had heart open-heart surgery. Four months after that, I had to go in and talk to the hospital... or talk to the doctor. Hospital said I need medicine. *[both laughs]* Army mother...

Selena: Stop.

Ryan: So I had to go in there and I had my cardiologist, and he had to do kind of a rundown on my health and say like, "Your heart's sounding kind of bad. You need to get this medicine to make it sound better." *[chuckles]* That's what he said. I just didn't have word for it.

Selena: Well, you had to relearn things like how to take deep breaths. You had to like retrain-

Ryan: Yeah, there's training your body.

Selena: ...your body and your lung.

Ryan: There's trusting in that because it's terrible at the moment and trusting for the healing.

Selena: It hurts. It doesn't feel good.

Ryan: But here's the thing that I want to draw attention to is that it wasn't Ryan and Selena deciding, "Hey, you need to work on your breathing." It was a doctor prescribing that to me. Somebody was there. Somebody who knew the path ahead could hold my hand and walk me down the path.

Selena: One that understood the depth of the problem.

Ryan: Yes, yes. And understood the consequence if I didn't make steps toward progress. That's huge. Now take that into this scenario with your marriage. That's going to be your pastor, that's going to be a Bible-based counselor, somebody who knows the lay of the land, who knows the consequences of not walking out the steps of trust-building, and who can not just tell you where to go, but to walk alongside you. That's huge.

Because you don't want someone else to give you an app or a map and say, "Go here." This is not that sort of thing. You need to be taken there by somebody. And that's hard because that's where... Like it costs money, it'll cost time but-

- Selena:** [00:45:00] We did the road to Hana when we were in Maui. And there's this interesting app that our friend told us about. Maybe many of you know about it, but it was like Shaka brah app, right?
- Ryan:** Shaka Guide.
- Selena:** Shaka Guide.
- Ryan:** Shaka brah is a breakfast restaurant near us.
- Selena:** It's really yummy. I'm hungry too. This Shaka Guide. So-
- Ryan:** Shaka is like the hang loose sign.
- Selena:** Yeah, and Hawaiian. So we bought the app. We're like, "Okay, it's probably gonna be worth it. We're going to trust that it's worth it." Not just like this map and app like you're saying. It's like taking all the pieces of everything. Because we've done the road to Hana before. We did the whole thing. Well, guess what, folks? We missed a lot.
- Ryan:** We missed 9% of it.
- Selena:** Trying to do this on your own, you're gonna miss a lot of things, a lot of things that you would not see, places you would not understand the history behind...
- Ryan:** Tell them about the-
- Selena:** Are you the volcano thing? Yeah.
- Ryan:** Yeah, tell them about the volcano thing.
- Selena:** That's the one I'm thinking of. So we're driving and this app is like all GPS and whatnot and it says, "Hey, on your left, you're going to take this pull out if you want to see the volcano caves," or whatever-
- Ryan:** So pause. When you say volcano cave, I'm picturing in my head like some massive cavernous... I'm picturing something that it's not...
- Selena:** Right.
- Ryan:** And he said what?
- Selena:** He said, "So pull off to the side of the road on your left. Now look to your right-

- Ryan:** And we both looked over there.
- Selena:** He gives you like a pause. And there's this hole. He says, "There you'll see a little hole kind of in the wall in the ground. It's not very big, but that is the entrance to the volcano caves. Don't worry, it opens up a little bit when you get in there. It's kind of dark, make sure you have a light on your phone or something." And we're like, "Whoa." You know, it's something we never would have seen. It was one of our best memories.
- Ryan:** We would have blasted right past it.
- Selena:** Well, we wouldn't have understood the history behind it all and appreciated it I think, as much as we did, having this guide with us.
- Ryan:** Very good analogy. Because, I mean, I everything that we saw on that drive was because someone had known the path already.
- Selena:** We missed 8% of it, 9% of it the first time we did it on our own.
- Ryan:** And they were able to, by the wonder of technology, to tell us, "Hey, in a quarter mile, you're gonna see cars pulled off. It's a waterfall. But don't worry, it's not that great. Don't feel like you have to like..." It gave us permission to pass some things that were worth passing and then it gave us knowledge to not pass things that weren't with us.
- Selena:** And it gave us the tools and the actual signposts and guideposts to where certain things were. So that's what we're trying to say here is the Fierce Marriage Podcast is not going to give you [*chuckles*] all of those things.
- Ryan:** Unless we know you personally.
- Selena:** Well, we're not counselors. You're in seminary. That's about as close we can get. But we're here to share-
- Ryan:** Counselors have a toolset. They have a toolset that they can get down into the very core of what is affecting you.
- Selena:** And they can equip you.
- Ryan:** And they can equip you. The whole point of this is they will walk with you. They will take you down this journey. They're not just going to give you instructions. They're going to take the journey with you. And that's the biggest piece of advice I can give is aside from trusting God with the journey itself,

trust him. Now, here's how you take those tangible steps. Unfortunately, there's not 10 steps to repairing trust. That just doesn't exist outside of-

Selena: Oh, they does exist but it's not great. It's not going to take you on the journey.

Ryan: Outside of biblical counseling, I don't see how you can walk down the steps and expect the best outcome. Anyway. And we do have a savior who is not without knowing what it's like to be betrayed, and to lose trust, and to love in the middle of that. And that's the gospel, ladies and gentlemen.

Selena: So good.

Ryan: We do have some more resources for you that kind of take what we've talked about and go through them from different angles. They're interviews. So look up these two things. It's Episode 100. It's Out of the Dust. That's Chris and Stephanie Teague. They have an amazing story of they got a divorce and betrayal and then walking away and then God's redemption and His reconciliation. Look that up. It's called Out of the Dust on the Fierce Marriage Podcast. Again, Episode 100.

Another one is a woman by the name of Tina Konkin. She wrote a book. It's very controversial. I'm confident that it still points people to Christ in this struggle. It's called how God Used the Other Woman. [*chuckles*] I mean, Selena, you gave me a little look. That's a little grating title and she knows it. Tina does. We had an interview with her. Go listen to that interview, Tina Konkin. Its K-O-N-K-I-N. She shares her whole story and she's very sweet.

Her husband's actually passed away. So she's carrying on her ministry of telling their story of reconciliation after he actually cheated on her with her best friend. So it's an amazing story of reconciliation, walking out what it looks like to trust. She comes out from a very different angle and that how God used that to humble her, [00:50:00] which, again, it wasn't her fault. And she says that "it wasn't my fault my husband cheated on me. But it was my fault and how I was holding it over his head."

Selena: Yeah. How I responded, yeah.

Ryan: So if you want to have your feathers ruffled a little bit, go listen to that. In a good way. So for couple's conversation challenge, let's do this. If you've listened to this episode and anything has jumped out at you and you've got an area of trust that you know you need to rebuild, take that bridge analogy and talk about how your bridge needs to be rebuilt, and what it means to continue the actions of rebuilding the bridge without actually putting your weight on it yet.

And so knowing that you can walk in faith without actually trusting it. You're building the bridge in faith that it will hold your weight at some point. So what is that issue? And then talk about what that means to begin rebuilding that broken bridge. For you that could look like really regular, intentional rhythmic conversations on whatever that topic is, say, "For every night for the next two weeks, we're going to talk about this thing. And we're just gonna check in. We're just gonna check in."

Selena: Okay.

Ryan: How are you doing with x? How are you doing with y? How can I love you well? How have I not loved you well? Just asking those four questions or those three questions is going to be revolutionary if you're walking down this path.

The second couple's conversation challenge, if that's you, who is going to be your guide in this journey? Who's going to be that guide? And then initiate contact with them, get walking on that step, take that step of faith. And don't let another day pass before you take one step down that road. Does that sound alright?

Selena: So good.

Ryan: Okay. Why don't you pray us out, if you don't mind? Actually, you just took a bite of something so I'm going to pray us out.

Selena: Why do have to be like that?

Ryan: You made delicious cookies. I want a cookie.

Selena: You know what? My blood sugar is real, my love.

Ryan: Okay. So are you gonna pray?

Selena: Go ahead. You can pray.

Ryan: You can pray.

Selena: Lead us, head of the house.

Ryan: Okay.

Selena: Spiritual leader.

Ryan: Lord, I thank you for your grace in that, though you have been betrayed and though we have not earned Your love, You give it to us. And You are trustworthy. You are faithful even when we are faithless, You are trustworthy when we do not place our trust in You. Lord, I pray for the couples listening to this, that they would, first and foremost recognize just Your goodness, Your faithfulness, and Your love for them. And I pray that that would be a fuel for their journey.

God, I pray that you give them just that same faith and fuel them with faith that is from You to take steps down the journey of rebuilding trust. And I pray that you would make their journey fruitful, Lord. And if they need someone in their life to help them, I pray that You'd give them somebody in their life. Show them somebody that they may not have thought of before, bring somebody to mind that they... or a new contact or any way that you would choose to work that you would just provide perfectly for them for their healing as they take these steps of faith as they trust You. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Selena: Thanks for betraying me and my cookie bite.

Ryan: I genuinely didn't think about it.

Selena: I will forgive you.

Ryan: I wanted you to pray because I love hearing your prayers.

Selena: I would have prayed I was ready.

Ryan: Okay, well.

Selena: I was ready.

Ryan: It's in the past. It's the past. We're moving forward. I'm walking in faith.
[laughs]

Selena: You need to be more humble. I'm just kidding. I love you.

Ryan: All right. Ladies, gentlemen, this episode of the Fierce Marriage Podcast is—

Selena: In the can.

Ryan: We'll see you again in about seven days. Until next time—

Selena: Stay fierce!

[00:53:36] <outro>

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

PODCAST NOTES

- **[00:25:54]**
 - Scripture references:
 - James 1:2-4

- **[00:36:05]**
 - Scripture recommended:
 - Matthew 26
 - Genesis 45

- **[00:48:43]**
 - Episodes recommended:
 - [Out of the Dust \(Chris and Stephanie Teague\) \(Replay\)](#)
 - [Surviving Infidelity \(Tina Konkin\)](#)

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