

LAST THINGS (PRIORITIES, 2 OF 4)

<https://fiercemarriage.com/last-things-priorities-2-of-4>

[00:00:00]

Selena: It's easy for us to get consumed with the process of decision-making about priorities rather than be consumed with the eternal outcome of those choices to determine what our priorities are. It's so easy. I fall into the trap of, okay, how can I get through the day-to-day and honor God with it? Yes, yes, yes.

But when you think of it in light of eternity and you think of it like read the book of Revelation, look at the end and then start from there, it really will calibrate your perspective on how we should be living, the choices we should be making, and what should we be prioritizing, who, and how, in a way that honors God. But not just honors Him in the today but into eternity.

Ryan: Wow. Wow. So, yeah, starting at the end and living in light of the end. So, Christian, you're listening to this, believer, follower of Christ, disciple, the Book of Revelation is how it ends. And what is Revelation all about? People get, I think, intimidated by Revelation and they get confused when they read it and they think it has to-

Selena: How we approach it.

Ryan: It's not a Rubik's cube to be deciphered. The book starts out with... maybe those who read this understand. It's not meant to be a mystery. The theme of Revelation is this: that our God is sovereign over all of human history and He will bring it to its culmination and the return of Jesus Christ. The triumphant return. Once again, of our king, our war Captain Jesus is will return.

If we live in line of that reality, it changes everything. It changes everything about our priorities, everything here and now, realizing that it will be consumed and remade. It changes everything. And so that's what this episode is all about—last things. We talked about first things last week. Now we're talking about last things this week. And how does that inform how we live here and now today? So thank you for joining us. We'll see you on the other side.

[00:02:08] <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.
- [00:02:41]** <podcast begins>
- Selena:** If that doesn't make you excited, I don't know what will. *[Ryan laughing]* Oh, boy! Oh, boy!
- Ryan:** You say that you're joking, but you know what?
- Selena:** No, I am excited.
- Ryan:** If the book of Revelation scares you, there's two things: either you're not a believer or you're misunderstanding the book. Because it is a book of hope.
- Selena:** It is a book of hope.
- Ryan:** It's a book of hope for believers. You do not need to be afraid of the end times. There's a lot of that kind of chatter going around. Well, chatter to mean-
- Selena:** Always has been. Always has been.
- Ryan:** It's funny because there's always some prediction. It makes me laugh, because Jesus Himself said, "You'll know neither the day nor the hour," yet people think that they can know the day and the hour. And then they'll say, "Well, I don't know the hour or the day, but I kind of know like the week or the month." That somehow some sort of loophole.
- Listen, Jesus Himself said it. So the point of Revelation is to give us hope, is to remind us that He is sovereign over all of history and we can live our lives in light of that reality. That is a reality.

- Selena:** We don't have to forget. We quickly forget. We quickly get bogged down by our daily schedules, how to make our marriage better, how to determine our priorities, right? Well, yes. But we're saying let's lift our eyes to eternity, let's lift our eyes to God and His timelessness. He's outside of time. We can't even comprehend that medium. Not medium, but He created space and time, and yet He's outside of it.
- Ryan:** So good.
- Selena:** And so there's this whole aspect about revelation and end times and end things that we can't comprehend and we won't until Jesus comes.
- Ryan:** Until glory, yeah.
- Selena:** And that's okay. But we can live in awe and we can live in, I think, a healthy fear of the Lord and have the weight of eternity in our hearts as we are waking up each day learning how to prioritize our spouse, prioritize our children and what goes along with that, like educating them or loving my husband, stepping into that role despite whatever other voices in culture are screaming out at us that are contrary to the things of God.
- Ryan:** Thank you. *[chuckles]*
- Selena:** Sorry.
- Ryan:** I'm trying to get a word in. It's okay. It's all good.
- Selena:** He said I could lead this one. So here we go.
- Ryan:** I said you had to lead this one because you did the rundown. [00:05:00] The point you're making, I want to make sure I'm catching it and our lovely listeners are also tracking. They probably tracking. They're smarter than I am. We don't relegate responsibility for these important things because of eternity.
- Instead, we steward them better and more thoroughly and with more conviction, more joy but without the striving, without the stress, without the anxiety that somehow is dependent on me to make all things new. Now, Jesus will make all things new, not me. So that's what you're saying. Right? I mean, that reality changes everything.
- Selena:** Yes. I want to just read Philippians 3:20. We're going to be in Philippians for majority of this episode. I just want to start with this.

- Ryan:** We're in.
- Selena:** I'm trying. *[chuckles]* I'm just kidding.
- Ryan:** Bring it on. *[Selena laughs]*
- Selena:** "But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself." All right, let's just get that picture in our head. That we are citizens of heaven, we are awaiting our Savior, we will be transformed. Pin that there, friends. Pin that there.
- Ryan:** Got it. What verse was that?
- Selena:** Philippians 3:20.
- Ryan:** Philippians 3:20. Okay. They're in this destruction. Oh, wow. Can I read some of the other parts? *[both laughs]*
- Selena:** Well, since you want to go, any housekeeping before...? We're kind of jumping in the conversation here.
- Ryan:** Yeah, let's do housekeeping and then I'll read the parts before. Because I just want to kind of process it in real-time, if that's okay.
- Selena:** Yeah, go ahead.
- Ryan:** So this month, we're doing something that we've not done before. Maybe we'll do it in the future. But you can't know, so you have to jump on it now. *[both laughs]* Right? This is not in the book of Revelation. Now, the thing that we're doing is a special 20% off discount for our online learning platform called Gospel Centered Marriage.

The whole point of that platform is to help you, Christian couple, live in full light of God's truth here and now but also with eternity in mind. So the way it works, if you're not aware, gospelcenteredmarriage.com is the website, the way it works is there's kind of two parts. There's the six-week marriage core which is meant to get you on the absolute, like same page in terms of what biblical marriage is, what is the gospel, what is love, what is covenant, how do we live that out, and communication, and sex, and money and in our priorities. Hey, that's we're talking here today. *[Selena chuckles]*

And then we have many courses that we're encouraging couples to prioritize their marriage for once a month. About an hour or two hours a month. Maybe take like a Thursday night or a Tuesday night or whatever night works for you and you sit down in one sitting and go through a mini-course. And the mini-course has usually 20 to 30 minutes of teaching. And then there's going to be a 10 minute kind of connection guide video, and then you will typically fill out a connection guide.

Anyway, we've created this tool to help couples like you, and we're giving you 20% off. Use this code "priorities." Use the code "priorities" at checkout. Go to gospelcenteredmarriage.com. It's best if you use it on the annual subscription, because you'll get the better deal all the way through. Otherwise, it just applies in the first month. Anyway, go to gospelcenteredmarriage.com, go to check out, use "priorities" on checkout.

With that said, this podcast is primarily funded by Gospel Centered Marriage and also by our patrons. So if you want to lock arms with us and be on mission with the Fredericks, with Fierce families, that's Fierce Parenting, Fierce Marriage, go to patreon.com/fiercemarriage and you can see all the info there. Leave a rating and review on the podcast too.

Selena: Boom!

Ryan: Okay. So Philippians 3:17, you started at verse 20, right?

Selena: Mm-hmm.

Ryan: I don't know, I just want to read the whole chapter.

Selena: We're going backwards in Philippians. Because I thought we're going to start in 2 and then I saw 3. So we're going to go 3, 2, 1.

Ryan: Okay.

Selena: This is just how-

Ryan: We started in Revelation in the beginning. *[chuckles]*

Selena: You know what? Just keep that theme up. Yes.

Ryan: We're going to end in Genesis, and everything will be perfect. Just like in the garden. Hey.

Selena: Heyooo!

Ryan: How's that for Biblical theology? All right.

Selena: The gospel [inaudible]. Anyways.

Ryan: It is what it is. I don't know. "Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us. For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ." That should perk our ears up when talking about enemies of the cross of Christ.

"Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things. But..." And that's the pivot point. "But our citizenship..." We're not them. Our God is not our belly, our glory is not our shame and our minds are not on earthly things. "Our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself." And we started in Revelation seeing how all of human history will be brought to its culmination in Jesus Christ. If we believe that, if we believe that-

Selena: It'll happen whether we believe it or not.

Ryan: Yeah. Thank you. Yes.

Selena: He's asking us to believe.

Ryan: If we believe that, it will transform everything about how we live, or if we don't believe it. Because if we don't think Jesus will reign, we don't think God is God, we think that our God is our belly, in other words, our appetites, our desires. We talked about that. The primalness of those who are non-degenerate. Think about that for a second. Think about folks who don't have the Holy Spirit in forming their desires. They are led by their appetites and cravings. And it's very primal. It is very fleshly. And here we are saying that we have the Holy Spirit in us leading us, showing us, helping us live eternally. It changes everything. It's awesome.

Selena: Right. Yes.

Ryan: We should have talked about that one last week. When was that verse when I was doing my research?

Selena: When was that verse when I was doing my research? *[both laughs]* Last week, a quick recap, if you haven't listened to it, go back and listen to the first things

about priorities. First things in how do we determine what are the first things in our marriage in our life, the truths that can't be reduced down anymore, you call them axiomatic truths. They can't be reduced anymore.

So what are the first things and priorities that we are building our lives around? We have to kind of step outside of our lives, I think, and look in and ask. And you said two of the determining factors are your bank account and your calendar. So check-

Ryan: That's how you're able to kind of self-diagnose your true priorities.

Selena: Yes. And then we went through a lot of Scripture. I'm going to go with one of them from last week, possibly two. We're going to dive into a little bit more. Hebrews 12:1, we kind of put a peg in that last week. It says, "Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God."

We talk more I think about the laying aside of every weight and sin to be able to figure out what our priorities should be, what that weight looks like, what sin can look like, and how can kind of poison our priorities in some ways. And then let us run with endurance.

This week, I think more so we're trying to focus on looking at Jesus the founder, perfecter of our faith. He says, "Who for the joy that was set before him." What is the joy that was set before him? Eternity. Us with him in eternity. He endured the cross, despising the shame. He was wrongfully accused, all of that. The despised the shame that went with it, but he endured it because of the joy set before him.

And I think we can take note of that. We can take note of how he endured things that even He may not have been guilty of. We're maybe we're wrongly accused by our spouse of something or a friend, or we're feeling guilt has been piled onto us or shame or something because of some issue that's sort of maybe outside of us, and we're trying to just navigate it. But we can still walk in a way that can say, "Okay, I'm thinking about eternity. If I respond this way to my husband, this is not going to like go well for us in eternity." Not that we're going to be married in eternity. That's a whole nother sidebar. "But I am going to give an account to God of how I loved my husband, how I stepped into that role of wife and woman."

So am I responding to my husband and his needs or his frustrations in a way that is God-honoring and that has eternity in mind. Sometimes even just wrongfully accused is not always about getting justice and being... I don't want to go too far with that. I'm saying that sometimes we just have to die to ourselves and our own cravings, like he said. Like, I want to get angry in this moment because I want to defend myself.

Instead, sometimes as a wife, sometimes I need to say, "Maybe he is right. Maybe there are things that he is saying that are true. I don't like hearing them and I'm having a really hard time with that, but maybe he can help me. Maybe God did give him to me for a good reason." *[chuckles]*

Ryan: Maybe.

Selena: It's hard to hear those things in those moments. Trust me.

Ryan: Wow.

Selena: You're looking at?

Ryan: Yeah, I was looking at 1 Corinthians 9 because I just think about this race. You're talking about living in full line of eternity and how [00:15:00] it informs us, gives us hope, gives us fuel, gives us endurance. You mentioned justice. And you said, we don't always have to have justice.

Here's what I wanted to add to that is there will be justice. There will be justice. The difference is what side of the justice are we going to be on? And who will dole it out? I am not the arbiter of justice. And I think we can oftentimes take on that role as arbiters of justice. I'm talking in an ultimate sense. I'm not talking in like, yes, if there is a sin perpetrated in our household, in the sense I am an arbiter of justice, and that I would dole out the punishment, and I would make sure that there is-

Selena: Execute consequences. *[both laughs]*

Ryan: Yes, make sure there is retribution. I mean, not retribution. What's the other one?

Selena: Restitution.

Ryan: Restitution. *[both laughs]*

Selena: Oh, boy!

Ryan: So there is that sense. But there will be justice. And the difference is, are we hoping for justice here now or is our justice in Christ? And even though-

Selena: Thank you.

Ryan: Our justice is to be found in Christ. That's what we mean is that we can place our hope and our joy, knowing that all wrong things will be made right, all crooked paths will be made straight, all mountains and areas will be laid low in the name of justice. In other words, that everything will be made right.

But thankfully, my ledger of sin has been made right by the blood of Christ, and I've been justified. Justice. There's that word. Justice has been served through the person and work of Christ on the cross. He was perfect, I was not. He died a sinner's death, so I don't have to. Thank God for grace. That's what grace is. So I live in light of that here and now. And now I can live in light of that there and then already not yet in eternity. And that takes faith because I can't see eternity, I can't touch it, I can't feel it.

That gets me all the way around to this 1 Corinthians 9. "Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize?" Here's the imperative. "So run that you may obtain it—the prize." Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath," that's a crown for winning, "but we an imperishable wreath. So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified." So he's just calling people live in the context of a victory. And a victory in a Christian life is obedience to Christ and faith in Christ.

Selena: Right. And that determines your priorities: obedience, and understanding of what God values and how He wants you to value those same things, and how to steward those things rightly and in a way that glorifies God, not just things, people, relationships. The Justice part of it, I think it was it... Thank you for clarifying that. Because I think sometimes we can just... I crave-

Ryan: Oh, you love justice.

Selena: ...justice when I'm probably not going to get it this side of heaven. However, if someone views me badly for a reason that I can't really control-

Ryan: Or you're misunderstood.

Selena: ...or misunderstood, I have to just let that go to Christ and know that I am being obedient to Christ. He said that we would endure rejection and trials and tribulation. And so how am I going to endure that in a way, again, that

brings glory back to God and that will shine into eternity? Not just me living out of my cravings and for my belly, the earth? I'm not living for the things of this earth. What did you say in Philippians? But living in a way-

Ryan: I don't have it in front of me, sorry.

Selena: Philippians 3. With their mind set on earthly things. So living in a way that it echoes that I am a citizen of heaven, so therefore, I'm going to live this way. Therefore, my priorities in this life are going to look like this. I'm going to prioritize the things of God. He instructs us. Jesus in Matthew 6 talks about seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things will be added unto you. If you go to verse 19, right before it, it says, "Lay up treasures in heaven..." So again he's outlining not just priorities but the way to live.

And then he follows it up with "Don't be anxious." He's telling us the way to live. And then telling us "Don't be anxious." Because what would we tend to do of following a new path or the people that he's talking to and teaching? This is very contrary to culture and always has been. Like, "Don't lay for yourself treasures in heaven," verse 17, "where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal. But lay up for yourselves..."

Ryan: You mean treasures on earth.

Selena: Thank you. [00:20:00] Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, not on earth, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves break in and steal. For where your treasure is. there your heart will be also."

Ryan: And we mentioned that last week. It's almost like the authors of this book were being inspired by the same Holy Spirit. *[chuckles]*

Selena: Imagine that.

Ryan: Or the authors of the Bible, I mean. Because I'm reading Colossians as you're talking, it says, "If then you've been raised with Christ..." Paul dog you that. "Raised with Christ." "If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Yet set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died..." Have you died though? "For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears..." That sounds similar to what we were talking about in Revelation. "When Christ who is your life appears," that is Paul's statement, "then you also will appear with him in glory."

Now, this verse, I think, encapsulates so succinctly and clearly the depth and breadth of Paul's theology. So if you did a study on Paul, most likely you'd come to the conclusion that at the core of Paul's theology is the resurrection. Three-fold doctrine of the resurrection.

So the resurrection of Christ. If He didn't raise from the dead, it all means nothing. But He did. Since He raised from the dead, He was God, He is God, and He's reigning in heaven seated at the throne. That's the first resurrection.

The second resurrection is the resurrection of the believer. It's the new birth that he talks about. So I put my faith in Christ the resurrected King, resurrected Lord, now I am a new creation, I am resurrected spiritually. And he talks about this in Ephesians. "I was once dead, I've been made alive in Christ, I've been resurrected in Christ. Now I live by the Spirit, not by the flesh." We have a new life.

And the final resurrection then is the bodily resurrection of the saints at the return of Christ.

Selena: So good.

Ryan: Again, see how that gives us complete and utter context? That my very history has been defined by the person and work of Christ on the cross, that my past has been forgiven of me, my debt has been paid. That's my past. Now, my present, I live as a new believer, I live being sanctified, being made new.

Selena: Being raised with Christ.

Ryan: I've been raised with Christ. That's Colossians 3:1. If you've been raised with Christ, then seek the things that are above. So I'm here below, now I can seek the things that are above. That's my context here now. Then he says, "When Christ who is your life appears," that's future, "then you also will (future) appear with him in glory."

It's complete and utter circumspect context for the Christian life. I love it. So if we're able to live in light of that, if we think and remind ourselves, and by the grace of God, by the power of the Holy Spirit, we were able to remind ourselves to live out this thing called marriage in light of that past, present and future reality, everything changes. Everything changes. Sorry, I didn't mean to take over the-

Selena: I will allow it. I will allow it. *[both chuckles]* No, it's so good, babe. It's so good. In Matthew 5:6, we talked about last week, blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. The call this week is, do our

priorities flow from a place of hungering and thirsting after those eternal things, those right things of God? Do our desires reflect those cravings for eternity with Him? I think that's kind of a call to look again at our life and what we're prioritizing and why we're prioritizing it.

Ryan: I want to speak to that. So hunger and thirst. I don't know, there's something profound there that I don't know that we'll get to the depths of it here. Do you make yourself hungry or does it just happen?

Selena: It just happens. It depends on what's in the cupboard. *[both laughs]* I'm just kidding.

Ryan: So true. You can buy some of the smaller things from Costco and I can make myself hungry real fast.

Selena: No. But a true hunger... not true, but just hunger. Hunger is something that happens to us when we have been deprived of food or whatever.

Ryan: It's so physiological and it's so innate. We need, we need fuel.

Selena: Yes.

Ryan: Do you make yourself thirsty? No, it just happens because you need to be hydrated.

Selena: That's how God created us. Right?

Ryan: Right. [00:25:00] So I'm wondering when Jesus is saying this, it's the Sermon on the Mount, "blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, they shall be satisfied." I don't know. That new creation aspect changes your very desires, it changes your very cravings, your very needs. And now as a new creation, you have these new needs. Now you're hungering and you're thirsting.

It doesn't say, blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, then they cook up the right amount and drink the right amount of righteousness, then they'll be satisfied. No. It just says, "Have the hunger, have the thirst, be satisfied." And he's saying "in me." That's just unreal.

So when we try to live in light of this, but a lot of times a couple... This is where I wanted to get with this. A lot of times a husband or wife will hear, "hunger and thirst for righteousness and live in light of eternity," but you just you don't have any desire for it, you don't want to love your spouse well, you don't want to listen with charity-

- Selena:** Because you always talk. *[chuckles]*
- Ryan:** Are you talking about me right now? *[chuckles]*
- Selena:** No.
- Ryan:** You don't want to do whatever needs to be done. There's just not a hunger and a thirst for that type of righteousness in your life. And I'm saying maybe it's not something you need to muster. Maybe it's something need to ask God for. You need to stop and pray and say, "Lord, help me to hunger and thirst for righteousness in this area so that I can love my spouse from a place of genuine love, not just manufactured rotten love." I use that word because it's rotten fruit of a rotten root.
- Selena:** Oh, baby, nice!
- Ryan:** That'll tweet. It won't because it's too verbose. *[both laughs]*
- Selena:** I don't know. I trust you on that.
- Ryan:** But the point is I can love with genuineness from a place of regeneration, not from a place of my own strength.
- Selena:** Right. If we look at John 12... I said, we're going to stay in Philippians, but we're just in the... I don't know, all across the board in the New Testament right now. John 12:25 says-
- Ryan:** "Whoever loves his life will lose it-
- Selena:** Sorry. I was getting to the whole verse because I wanted to get the context. "Jesus replied, 'The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.'" Oh, man. That's just so good. "Whoever loves their life will lose it, but whoever hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life."
- I struggled with that verse for a while as a young person living in a prosperity gospel kind of culture. Because I was like, "Well, I really do like my life, though. I don't want to lose it."
- Ryan:** Well, the whole prosperity gospel message is your ultimate life is here and now.

- Selena:** Exactly. Right.
- Ryan:** You just exist to make your ultimate life real here and now. And that's the promise of God.
- Selena:** No. He says, "If anyone serves me, he must follow me and where I am, my servant will be as well. If anyone serves me, the father will honor him." Sorry. That part of this conversation leads me to just question all of my priorities. Because our priorities are what make up our life, people. So if we love these priorities, if we love the things that... I got to take that back. Because I find contentment and satisfaction in the things that God has called me to. But could and would I lay it down if Christ said to? Absolutely.
- Ryan:** And that's it. That's what I think what Jesus is getting at is that it's not about-
- Selena:** Sorry, I'm going to cut you off. But also, those things that he's called us to are covered in eternity. It's just like dripping with eternal work. The things that he's asking of me typically are going to force me to die to myself and my desires, like that grain of wheat. Until it dies, it will not multiply and be fruitful. But when we die, we have this promise.
- When I get rid of those cravings and desires before Christ, it feels like just death. "Oh, I'm just giving up what I want, my me time or whatever." But when it's in Christ, the dialog changes of "Okay, I know I have these.. I would like some time alone or whatever." And that's not a bad thing. But I'm also saying, well, God's called me to love and steward these little souls right now. And so this is what this looks like. It means doing some things I don't want to do, and finding a good attitude and heart orientation around it because God has called me to this. And this is eternal work. It is a priority.
- Ryan:** And you could substitute kids for your spouse-
- Selena:** Sorry.
- Ryan:** ...because God's calling you to love your spouse. I know you.
- Selena:** I always go there.
- Ryan:** You love your chiltlins. *[both laughs]* So I just want to make sure that we're staying on the marriage page for that one. But the point being that you can [00:30:00] do that with gladness when you're dying to yourself. I love that you said, when it's something I have to do I don't want to do just feels like death. *[both laughs]* Well, that's what it is.

- Selena:** It is.
- Ryan:** And Jesus is saying here that he dies so that can bring forth new life...
- Selena:** And new fruit.
- Ryan:** Paul wrote, "Be a living sacrifice." What a beautiful picture of a living sacrifice! By your death, life. By Christ's, life. Then we're called to emulate Christ's death.
- Selena:** So our priorities in our marriage should be ones that probably have a big ask us, a big, hey, this part of you is going to need to die in order for it to be a priority. And it's a priority because God's word says it needs to be a priority. Therefore, lay aside every sin and weight. We talked about that. Sorry, it's hard to talk sometimes, because I think there's just so much about eternity. And in God's instructions and the words of Jesus in the New Testament, and just His covenantal nature in the Old Testament, it speaks to eternity.
- Ryan:** Absolutely.
- Selena:** He's not just like one-dimensional talking in just one moment. It's very otherworldly and outside of our own time and space. There's just so much more to it than we can begin to explore even in a lifetime, which is just encouraging to me to always be in the word because there's always new things and there's always things you can dive deeper into. But it helps you see the world rightly, therefore, your priorities become ordered, right in a God-glorifying and honoring way.
- But again, I can't just figure out my priorities in light of my week. There has to be first the eternal. When I'm on my deathbed, what do I want to look back and see? What do I hope? What is my heart going to be overflowing with? Will there be regrets? Will there be things that I wish I would have done quicker or knew before I knew it? Yeah. Those are the moments that kind of helped me just see things more clearly and more viscerally I guess.
- Ryan:** So having an eternal perspective and keeping that top of mind. It's not that we live kind of always trying to decipher the book of Revelation.
- Selena:** No.
- Ryan:** It's that we are living knowing that the end is inevitable in that Christ will reign. I am just thinking, okay, how does that affect us here now? And we're going to get into the specifics of marriage a little bit today, for sure. In two more weeks, when we go through how to tangibly live these things out. We're not

getting as tangible for these couple of weeks. I couldn't help but think of Stephen, the first martyr.

Selena: Oh, yeah.

Ryan: I mean, just this epic speech, this summation of the history of God's people and then just us. Stiff, hardcore rebuke in that moment. This is how it ends. How this ends says volumes about how he lived in light of this eternal perspective. "Now, when they had heard these things..." This is Acts 7:54. "Now when they heard these things they were enraged, and they ground their teeth at him." That's a pretty outrageous just thinking they're grinding their teeth.

"But he, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. And he said, 'Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.' But they cried out with a loud voice and stopped their ears and rushed together at him. Then they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul. And as they were stoning Stephen, he called out, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.' And falling to his knees he cried out with a loud voice, 'Lord, do not hold this sin against them.' And when he had said this, he fell asleep."

Okay, how can you possibly say that without an eternal view of justice? You can't. You can't. And that is contrary to everything our culture would say that the recompense has to happen here now or it will never happen. Now, take that okay out of the culture into your marriage. How many people will say like, "You deserve to be happy, girl."

Selena: Yeah, girl. *[laughs]*

Ryan: I'm using that-

Selena: I love when you're a girlfriend.

Ryan: "He's trash, he hasn't been kind to you, he's not loving you the way he should." While those might absolutely be true statements, but this idea that the only way to have justice is for you to abandon the covenant that you've made with him, to abandon the love you've promised to him, if that's your version of justice, I'm here to tell you that that is a shallow version of justice.

I'm not here to make light of your pain. I'm not here to make light of how hard the situation is. But I'm here to say that abandoning that is a shallow version of justice. What Stephen is showing us is a deep, eternal wealth [00:35:00] of

justice. And he's saying, "Lord, do not hold this against them." In other words, he's saying, "Lord, still save them. If it's your will, bring them to you, that my death might bring life to these people who are stoning me because of this truth."

Selena: The weight of eternity.

Ryan: From Stephen's perspective, I mean, he's seeing Christ. He's seeing Christ at the right hand of the Father. He's saying, "Take me, Lord, I want to be with you. And they need to see you too because you are so wonderful." See how our shady visions of right and wrong and justice... Not right and wrong, but our shady visions of justice and mercy and joy, they all just kind of fall by the wayside when we see the true him.

Selena: Shady. Do you mean shallow?

Ryan: I mean, shadowy.

Selena: Okay.

Ryan: So like things that aren't true representations.

Selena: Got you.

Ryan: They're human kind of-

Selena: Yeah, yeah.

Ryan: It's just like we see through the mirror dimly or whatever

Selena: Yes. So good. So good.

Ryan: So it's just when we see and we behold Christ, we want nothing more than Him. That's it goes back to Matthew 5. We hunger and thirst for righteousness. But we have to behold Him. So our priorities are absolutely an overflow of our re-abiding and beholding Christ. Re-abiding and beholding Christ. Right. That's our-

Selena: I want to jump into Philippians 2 because it talks about Christ's humility. He is our model. Not only is He the fulfillment of the promise, but He is also our model. If you go to Philippians 2:3... now I'm in 1. I'm not where I need to be right now.

Ryan: You're going the wrong way, girl.

Selena: Philippians 2 is the Christ's example of humility. "So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests but also to the interests of others.

Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. That is verses one through 11 of Philippians 2.

Here we see the model of Christ, the humility of Christ, the king, and Lordship of Christ, eternity. He says, "He emptied Himself, taking on the form of a servant." Okay, how can our priorities, empty us of ourselves? How can they take on the form of a servant? How can they be born in the likeness of men? *[chuckles]* That's probably not the example that we're looking for.

So we are remade, like you were saying, into the image of Christ. We're being made. We're being sanctified. We don't hold that over people. We're not saying, "Oh, look at me, as a Christian, I'm just thriving over here and living the good life of obedience in my priorities." That's probably not what people say. *[both laughs]*

Ryan: That's what I say.

Selena: That's what I say. I just think humility is so underrated in the Christian life. And that is what we are called to. We are called to Christ, the one who could have ended all of the pain and suffering for Himself, who was so wrongly and deeply wrongly accused. He still sought eternity. He knew eternity. Yes, He was fully God, that plays a huge role in it, but His call to us too is to live in light of eternity, become humble, become obedient to the point of death. Be a servant-

Ryan: Oh, wow.

Selena: Empty yourself. How does that define our priorities? There's a lot of things there.

Ryan: I'm taken aback by this. Because if Christ had wanted, I mean, He could have called a legion of angels down to fight his battles. He could have done all that. He didn't. Is it just for God Himself to empty Himself in that way? Should he have done that? Well, in His view, yes. He did. He didn't have to. What I'm trying to say is that He walked.

Selena: You're saying a lot of theological things. *[laughs]* I'm a little like, "Did He have to?"

Ryan: He chose to. The point I'm trying to make is that we have to take on [00:40:00] Christ's view of eternity if we are to live like Christ. Because clearly He wasn't thinking here and now only. It was for the joy set before him. You read that already. What is the joy set before us? And that's why I want to maybe spend the remainder of our time. What is the actual joy set before us and what is the cultural maybe lie about the joy set before us?

Culturally speaking, aside from a Christian worldview, this life is paramount. It's all we have. So we live in a way that would maximize our life here now, will also maximizing some other promised land. Promised land being a retirement, being some standard of living, some maybe idealistic relationship or idealist. Maybe you just want your kids to grow up and be successful, then you'll feel like you've reached heaven. I gotta tell you that that's a sad view of heaven and it's a risky game. *[both chuckles]* It's all I'm saying.

So what is the joy set before us from a cultural perspective? And I want to talk about the mythical legacy a little bit. We didn't talk about that. So legacy is one of those things that is good. Legacy is good. It's not bad. But I think culturally speaking and in the Christian church, we have bought a lie. In other words, we've entertained a myth. We've created this idea of legacy, and that if I do X, Y, and Z things, then I will have this legacy that will live beyond me.

Selena: We didn't start Fierce Marriage to start a legacy. Let's just put it that way.

Ryan: No, life's far too urgent for that. *[laughs]*

Selena: Well, I'm just saying, though...

Ryan: Eternity is too urgent for legacy.

Selena: When that when we were starting Fierce Marriage, there's, I think, a lot of other startups ministries or ministries around this, but it was for a legacy purpose, which isn't bad. But sometimes you can elevate self more than God.

Ryan: We saw a need here now and we thought, "God help us and use us to meet this need here now." And I don't want to disparage the idea of legacy, because it is a good idea. But there's a myth around. And the myth is that somehow what we earn or what we create in this life will live past us. And I say that's true only in terms of the eternal impact that we have that is eternally minded.

So if we are discipling our kids in light of this, that's legacy to me. I received... I don't even know... I mean this, I'm not proud of this, but it's true. I don't know the names of my great-grandparents. I could look them up, I could find them, but they're not... It wasn't conversational in my life. I didn't have a relationship with them. And yet, the one thing I needed from them was my faith, and I got that from them. So I don't know their names. I didn't inherit anything from them in terms of land, in terms of money, in terms of even business or some sort of... You know what I mean?

Selena: Yeah.

Ryan: Blueblood sort of inherited thing. They were pioneers in the Pacific Northwest, they lived out here long before anything was here. Now everything's here, and they don't have... I wish they would have bought like 100 acres. It could be worth a ton of money right now. The point is, we didn't get any of that, but I got my faith. And that to me is a legacy. That's the one thing we need.

And we need to remember, we focus on that eternal perspective of legacy, I think that helps dispel this lie that if I can just amass a big enough pile of cash that my kids will be okay. Or if I could just get that house, pay off the mortgage, I'll be okay. If I just get my retirement account to X amount, I'll be okay. I'm here to say those things are fine, but they're not paramount. You need to think in terms of stewardship, think in terms of trusting Jesus more with that stuff.

Selena: Think in terms of Philippians 1:27-30, which calls us to live our life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Ryan: Yeah. We can't be too prescriptive around this idea of what you should amass in terms of your own whatever. There's a lot of Christian Liberty there. Just do it in light of what you said—in a manner worthy. In a manner worthy. And follow the Holy Spirit, obey, follow Jesus obey, repent, obey, believe, repent, obey. In cycles.

- Selena:** So good. It's so good. I don't know if I should touch on Philippians 1. I just think the struggle of Paul is so indicative of his priorities, obviously, in the life that he lived. It says that his struggle, verses 22-24, his struggle was whether staying in the body and or death, like dying and being with Christ. This is where they're talking about to live as Christ and to die is gain, and his struggle. If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me, yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. I'm hard-pressed between the two. My desire is to depart [00:45:00] and be with Christ, for that is far better. But to remain in the flesh is more necessary in your account.
- Ryan:** I mean, I can relate. *[both laughs]*
- Selena:** I know. Oh, I know. So his struggles to live here or be with Christ. To live here only to serve and to exhort and to teach on the gospel, to share the gospel, to spread the good news, to train disciples, to write these letters to the churches and to be the apostle that he was, that it's a struggle. To live here and serve and be imprisoned or to die and be with Christ, what a reflection of priorities and living a life worthy of the gospel. Go read Philippians. *[Ryan laughs]* It's just chockful.
- Ryan:** It's not a long book.
- Selena:** It's not. I mean, Philippians 2, like we said, it talks about living selflessly, the humility of Christ, living in a way that considers the needs of others, that He emptied Himself. There's so much about priorities without actually saying the word priority.
- Ryan:** Yeah. Yeah, absolutely. So... go ahead.
- Selena:** I was going to do the couple's conversation challenge.
- Ryan:** I was going to say that does segue quite nicely into what that conversation challenge would look like. Go ahead and you intro it, I'm going to look up something real quick.
- Selena:** Okay. Couple's conversation challenge. Think about your last days. We can't anticipate what those will look like. But if you imagined your last days, you're old and you're on your deathbed, essentially, what could those days look like? What do you hope and pray that your priorities will have been in the life that you're living today?
- Ryan:** That's really good. And as I was reading your notes on that, I thought, maybe I should just share. About a year ago, I added this piece to my kind of... I don't

know, it's like a personal sort of I asked myself questions. I have versus that kind of....

Selena: Resolutions and things.

Ryan: Resolutions and my personal purpose, mission. It's personal to me, but Selena is very obviously intertwined with every aspect of this.

Selena: Yaaay!

Ryan: One flesh, right? Anyway, I just want to read a portion of this, and I haven't... I'll just read it. As I read this, fierce wife, fierce husband, think about these things for yourself. I'm not saying mine is perfect. It'll get you thinking and then it'll help you reorder your priorities.

So in light of this, think about your work, think about your family, think about your income, think about whatever your life is in light of this. And our hope and prayer is that all of this conversation and then wisdom would inform maybe some conviction and that the Lord would convict you in ways... just like He's convicting and has convicted us in these ways so that we can live more, I don't know, on mission and with more joy for this hope set before.

So here it is, my vision. "So I envision a day when I look back at my life, having run my race with one foot on the threshold into eternity. I see a bedside surrounded by loved ones, my wife first having been loved and nurtured into a faithful vine..."

Selena: Well, said. Go to God first.

Ryan: Nope, I will burn you to the ground. So my wife first.

Selena: Sorry.

Ryan: You derailed it. "I see a bedside surrounded by loved ones, my wife first having been loved and nurtured into a fruitful vine and a woman of God. I see my children and my children's children having been tended to be shown, instructed in the way of God. And I see friends having been witnesses to God's continued grace in my life and their own.

On that day, I will not look forward to anything other than seeing my King face to face. I will not look back on anything other than the relationships I've nurtured or neglected. May I recall with clarity, peace, and satisfaction that I have nurtured, not neglected my relationship with my King, and that of those he's sovereignly entrusted into my care. All at once, I will know, as every man

has known before me, that my time on this earth is done, then may I sigh a sigh of final relief, knowing full well the fact that I fall into the waiting glory and loving hands of my beloved Savior, friend, and King."

Try to envision that moment, that deathbed moment. When you're laying there and the people are surrounding you on that bed, what is going to be going through your mind? What's going to be occupying your heart? Take it seriously. And then how does that compel you then to live today?

So with that said, Selena, why don't you pray us out, and then we're going to go. Our kids just got home and we filled up the pool so they're excited.

Selena: Lord, God, thank you for sending your son. Jesus, thank you for coming and saving our dark Souls. Thank you for Your eternal perspective, Your perspective that is outside of time [00:50:00] and space but it's full of love and purpose for us. May we live in light of the gospel. May we choose our priorities in a way that reflect and honor you. Give us wisdom, Holy Spirit, give us discernment. Lead us in a way that will brightly shine you to those around us. We love you, God.

Thank you for this podcast and for the marriages that are listening. May you continue to shine light and be their center as they learn to write out their priorities, to live out their priorities, and figure out what those are for Your glory. In Your name. Amen.

Ryan: Amen. As a reminder, you can save 20% for this month at gospelcenteredmarriage.com. That's our whole suite of online learning resources. Go to gospelcenteredmarriage.com, pick a plan there and then just use the coupon code "priorities." That we give you 20% off. With that said this episode of Fierce Marriage Podcast is—

Selena: In the can.

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

Selena: Stay tuned.

[00:51:08] <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

- **[00:05:36]**
 - Scripture references:
 - Philippians 3:20
 - Philippians 3:17
 - Hebrews 12:1

- **[00:16:50]**
 - Scripture references:
 - 1 Corinthians 9
 - John 12:25
 - Acts 7:54
 - Philippians 2:1-11
 - Philippians 1:27-30

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