

**PRIORITIES, PRACTICALLY SPEAKING (PRIORITIES, 4 OF 4)**

<https://fiercemarriage.com/priorities-practically-speaking-priorities-4-of-4>

[00:00:00]

**Selena:** "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose." That is a quote by Jim Elliot, who was an American missionary, who died at a very young age, and he was killed by the people that he was trying to minister to.

**Ryan:** Wow.

**Selena:** But he wrote that quote, saying, basically, it is wise of us to give up that which we cannot keep, which is our lives, our mortal lives to gain which is eternity that which we cannot lose.

**Ryan:** And that's the whole calibrating statement and the reality of this series, is that there is an outside authority and outside... It's something so much bigger than just this life that we live in light of. And we don't just live for this life. We are not citizens of this world, we're citizens of the kingdom of heaven as Christians. But we do live our lives like that's the true reality? When Christ says, "Whoever wants to gain their life will lose it, whoever loses their life will gain it," do we take those words seriously? And is He's calling us to lose our lives in ways... in marriage, in our family life, in how we orient our priorities?

And that's the big question that we're hoping to answer. Which we have spent three episodes going over that. We've talked about First Things, Last Things, and we've talked about how to have unity as a couple. Today, the focus of this episode is actually putting what we've learned into practice. Through our habits, through our rhythms and namely, through our family vision and mission statement. So it's going to be a full episode, we'll see on the other side.

[00:01:36] <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.
- [00:02:09] <Podcast begins>**
- Selena:** So just to get this in real quick, this is our final episode talking about priorities except for our Q&A which is coming up either next week or... we usually release on Tuesdays. It might be a Thursday episode that we release this.
- Ryan:** We may do a bonus Priorities episode because there's five Tuesdays this month.
- Selena:** Tuesdays or Thursdays? Both? *[chuckles]*
- Ryan:** There's five Tuesdays. The Tuesday is actually in July.
- Selena:** Sorry.
- Ryan:** Thursday, I mean. So we might do another one. But regardless, there's a Q&A.
- Selena:** Yes, coming up. I want to say it up front so that people will text in their questions if they've had any while they've been listening to the series. 971-333-1120 is how you can get those questions in to us so we can start reviewing them and have answers ready.
- Ryan:** Please do get those in because those are very helpful.
- Selena:** They're helpful, yeah, to many people.
- Ryan:** In cases where you have a question that there's going to be another couple has the exact same question or something like it. So do be bold and text that in 971-333-1120. So let's do a quick recap. But first, if you haven't like, subscribe, follow, rate, review, please do that. That helps us a ton. We've asked you plenty of times, so I wanted to ask again. If you want to join us at [patreon.com/fiercemarriage](https://patreon.com/fiercemarriage), that's if you want to be complicit in the mission of what we're doing through this podcast, through the books we write, it's

how this podcast is made possible. So if this podcast has helped you, you can jump on board.

And also there's a community there, where we do Zoom call. We have a Zoom call scheduled, actually, we just did a Zoom call by the time this recording goes live. So we're hoping to build stronger relationships there. But hop on board, we hope to get to meet you through our Patreon community. Hopefully, virtually face-to-face. Is that a thing? Virtual face-to-face?

**Selena:** Virtual face-to-face.

**Ryan:** Nowadays, that's a thing.

**Selena:** It is.

**Ryan:** And then finally, we have a promotion going on with [gospelcentermarriage.com](http://gospelcentermarriage.com), that's our online learning platform. You can get 20% off any subscription there that you pick. Just go to [gospelcenteredmarriage.com](http://gospelcenteredmarriage.com), click any of the "Join Now" buttons, and use the code PRIORITIES at checkout to get 20% off. We hope that blesses you. We put a lot of hard work into that and we continue to add to it on a regular basis. Actually, by the time this episode goes live, we'll probably have eight or nine mini-courses, plus our core course.

**Selena:** Wow. It's plugging away, by the grace of God.

**Ryan:** It's growing. So if you haven't listened to episodes one through three of these series, go back and listen to those briefly. What we talked about is as Christians these are the big priorities that we're called to live out. And those priorities are this: to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, love Him, seek Him first. Then to love our neighbors as ourselves. One of the ways we love our neighbors most primarily is by responding to the great commission in Matthew 28, "Go, therefore, make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit."

In other words, tell people the good news of Christ, and then walk alongside them. Baptism is a sign of the covenant that bring them into the family of God, into the new covenant. And that's a beautiful thing, that should be a priority to us. It's not that you're actually doing the baptizing, but you can do the discipleship. There's no qualifier for people being disciples in the kingdom of God, and we'll talk through that today. But those are the first things.

Then we talked about last things, which is what do we have to look forward to, as Christians, as people who put our faith in Christ? What are the last things

of all eternity? Well, eternity doesn't have a last thing. By definition, eternity goes on forever. But this world will have an end. And what is the hope? We looked at the book of Revelation, and some of the hope to be had there by believers. Now, it's not a book of fear or of trepidation. When you're in Christ, it's not a book of those things. It's a book of hope. We talked through that.

**Selena:** And how do we live in light of those last things? How do our priorities begin to be ordered and purposed in light last things?

**Ryan:** And then last week, we talked through gaining unity as a couple. And the benefits of finding and working toward unity and how to find unity. And so this episode is dedicated to giving you those tangible tools. We all want tangible tools. To be honest, I think, we can probably spend a little less time here today, because I want your time, listener, to be spent doing the connecting with your spouse, getting on the same page, getting about the work of actually unifying and re-orienting your priorities based on, primarily, what God's word says and how the Holy Spirit convicts you. So that's what we're spending our time on today.

**Selena:** And talking about unity last week really just kind of segued us into practicing these godly priorities. Because we ended with talking about negotiables versus non-negotiables. And not just figuring out ways to give in to each other, but ask the Lord. Take time to seek God, be in His Word, be in prayer. What is God doing here? What is the bigger question? How can we steward it well? And how can we move together in unity towards God? Not just together, as in together and being unified, but unified in the things of God. Because Jesus is the way, the truth, and life. So how can we live our lives that reflect and emulate the good news of the gospel, in our priorities, more specifically?

So practicing these godly priorities in our marriage. If you're familiar with the Fierce Marriage space, we talked about concentric circles last week a little bit. But we're talking about them in a different formation, I would say.

**Ryan:** We are going to go a little bit deeper, give you some more texture to that idea. So as we were brainstorming, "How can you really be helpful to our listeners?" And I came up with two ways, and there's more than two probably. One, we can give you a new way to think about a similar situation, similar problems. So in this case, we're going to hopefully give you a new way to think about our priorities.

The other way we can help you, we hope, is to give you a new way to walk that out. So to think it out, and then to walk it out. New way, something to help you process through it. So that's new way to think about it, this was new for us. It's probably not new to you if you've listened to us for a while, as

Selena said. But this comes from our book "Fierce Marriage" which we wrote a few years ago. It's kind of our marriage Manifesto. If we were to have a sit-down and have a conversation with a young couple before they got married, this would be kind of the manual that we would probably use in terms of how we would think through and talk through the various issues. In this book, we talked through priorities and time.

As we found, my dad who's a psychologist of many years, he's confirmed this. But he said that the biggest issue that couples face, that's oftentimes unaddressed, is the issue of time and priority. Just their calendar, just coordinating the busyness of life and orienting it around things they actually care about, sort of things that are just urgent. And so in talking through that issue of priority and time, we came up with this model. And it came from Selena. You were having a bone to pick with the traditional to-do list?

**Selena:** Yeah, because I think our life can basically be a to-do list. And God I believe has called us to so much more than just doing but actually being. And so the concentric circles definitely provide a visual for that being. So if you think of the circle...

**Ryan:** Because of the to-do lists, I want to contrast little more.

**Selena:** Sorry. To-do list of like if you think, "What are my priorities? Let's list them out. Love God, one. Love my spouse, two. Three, love my kids. Four, love my neighbors, do what I should do. Five, go to church. *[laughs]*

**Ryan:** Or whatever it is.

**Selena:** Whatever that list is. The problem, I think, with the list is that it becomes too divi... I hate to say it.

**Ryan:** Divided. There it is.

**Selena:** There is. Nailing the words today. Divided. Because we go to number one, check, read my Bible, did my journaling, boom, done, shove that to the side. Number two, check, boom. It's very self-serving. We all want to just check stuff off, feel satisfied. But we're not actually living into the purposes of God. It's not actually integrating the things we prioritize and should be prioritizing as Christians.

**Ryan:** And that's not to say you can't use a one, two, three, four to-do-lists to help orient your day or make-

**Selena:** It's a to-do list, not a how-to-live-your-life list. Maybe that make sense.

**Ryan:** So we've found it more helpful to look at it as concentric circle model, where at the very center you have the most primary thing, the very first thing. And that, biblically speaking, is to love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. That's Deuteronomy 6:5. That is at the center. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and soul, mind, and strength.

From there, it radiates outward. And so the next circle is then the loving your neighbors and making disciples. That's the Great Commission, that's the New Testament expression of how to relate to one another. Because loving well, it's not just New Testament, but loving one another well. So you don't just do that in itself. I'm just not going to take dinner over to our neighbors who are sick, because I just want to be good, I can do that. But the reason I do that is because that is how I'm loving the Lord my God with my heart, soul, and strength.

**Selena:** What's a marriage example of that?

**Ryan:** Well, I mean, I don't just love my wife, because I want-

**Selena:** How you say, "I love you."

**Ryan:** You are [inaudible] in yourself in a sense, right? I love you because of you. But the deeper reason for loving you is because you are made in God's image, and I want to honor Him and love Him in how I love you. So it's not just, "Okay, my wife loves flowers, I'm going to buy her flowers." No, I'm going to buy my wife flowers because she's a treasure to me, because God has given her to me.

**Selena:** Well, and as a wife, I want to respect you. I may not always feel that respect or want to respond in respect. But if the Lord has called me to respect my husband and to let him lead, I need to be obedient and trust in that obedience that this is God's design. And I'm going to live out His design on purpose and in full obedience. By the power of the Holy Spirit. *[chuckles]*

**Ryan:** Right. We won't go too far into the kids thing, but our kids are our first disciples. So we train them up in the ways of God, not just so that we can say we trained our kids well, but because that is how we love God. See how the very center of it is loving? So it's not a list anymore. Think of it as a target. So the center of the target is loving the Lord your God. As the rings move outward, discipling others, loving others as we would want ourselves to be loved.

- Selena:** You used this example of it being like when you throw a stone in the water, and it ripples out and radiates out the effect of that. It is just integrating. It's an integration of purpose, it's an integration of identity.
- Ryan:** Every ring is the result of the central-
- Selena:** Absolutely.
- Ryan:** ...rock being thrown in the water. Every ring is the result of that. And as it radiates outward, the third circle is to enjoy God's grace, extend His glory. And that's common grace. If you enjoy doing something, do that thing because you love the Lord. Selena, you love riding horses. When ride horses, yes, you're enjoying the company of the horse, the experience of the horse, but you're doing it to the glory of God. Because you recognize that a horse is an amazing animal created by God and that the air that you breathe is a gift of God. There's so much to-
- Selena:** I think when it comes to a priority, though, that thing definitely fell to the wayside when I became a parent. There's other roles that God calls us into, and things maybe fall down the ladder. But that's okay because my love is in order of what it should be: of God, my spouse, and my family. Those are the things that I need to serve and be submitted to, and not just my desires to ride a horse. *[laughs]* Insert whatever you have as a hobby or something that you enjoy. Not saying that it is bad. But if it is affecting the way you are loving your husband, or your children, or the way that you are being obedient to the Lord, then it needs to be questioned.
- Ryan:** Interesting. Because if you put something else in the center of the circle, now everything else is radiating out from that thing.
- Selena:** It's so obvious too.
- Ryan:** If you live for horses or whatever the hobby is, now how you love others is going to be determined by that central affection. "I don't have time for them, because I need to go do this other central affection." Or "I'm impatient with my spouse because they are getting in the way of the central affection, as opposed to just lay it out.
- Selena:** Absolutely.
- Ryan:** So to me it's an elucidating way to look at. It helps me think more circumspectly, and more holistically, and honestly, it makes the joy so much greater. When I know that I'm not just enjoying a good meal with my family, I'm doing it to the glory of God because of His grace, oh men, now it just got a

hundred times better because it's not just about the steak, it's about the giver of the gift.

**Selena:** Right. Right.

**Ryan:** So you do you want to walk through some tangible ways?

**Selena:** Yes.

**Ryan:** So what we're going to do today is we're going to show you some ways to love and honor God, and how we love and prioritize each other in marriage. We're going to explain that a little bit. But then mostly, we want to walk through the Frederick Family. Because we were talking beforehand, and I'm like, "Selena, there are things that are primary for Christian married people." Things that we can come on here and say, "You should do X, Y, and Z."

**Selena:** As a married Christian couple, yeah.

**Ryan:** Those two, married and Christian, they-

**Selena:** They embody.

**Ryan:** Yeah, they make all sorts of claims on our lives, if you are a married person and you're a Christian person. And so we can get on here, and I think Biblically and rightfully exhort you and admonish you to live in those ways. So instead of doing that, we're going to hopefully show our current model. We're not perfect in it, but we'll explain the Frederick Family order of business, order of priorities. And how we're striving to live our lives to the glory of God by His grace. And hopefully, what that will do is maybe demystify it a little bit.

And then we're going to give you a link to download an e-book that we wrote. It's like 50-pages, long, 60-pages, or something like that. And it's called, "How to Craft Your Own Family Vision Statement." So we're going to talk through our family vision statement, and hopefully, it'll be helpful as an example. Is that something?

**Selena:** Yeah.

**Ryan:** Okay. So what's this one here?

**Selena:** You already talked about it. I've just illustrated more of what those circles look like tangibly. Loving our neighbors and making disciples. So, you are my first neighbor, so how am I loving God with all my heart, soul, and strength, that first central circle, in how I love you? Do I know God's Word enough to let it



instruct me in how I respond, how I communicate, how I love, how I'm patient with you, or how I'm respectful of you, and why? Is the Bible informing my decisions of how I love you, and how I respect you, and how I'm bringing Glory to God in that?

Is the Bible instructing me in how to love our children and to disciple them? Or am I just doing it by looking at a parenting website and saying, "Okay, this is how you discipline, this is how you do these things." You can't look at the how unless you know the why, right? We have to know the why. Otherwise, it's just another to-do-list, rather than a priority.

**Ryan:** And indeed, well, the first two episodes of these series were all about that why. And that's exactly why we spent so much time there, so that now you get to this place and you're not just-

**Selena:** You're not making arbitrary priorities. That's the whole goal of your own priorities.

**Ryan:** You have a goal in mind. You're not on a trailhead with a blindfold on, hoping that you can grope your way through the woods and... *[Selena laughs]* That's a word.

**Selena:** I know. It's a funny word.

**Ryan:** Stumbling in all the perils that are because of that, and you said, you have your eyes wide open, you know where you're headed.

**Selena:** One of the biggest, I think, enemies to our priorities, which you mentioned in our conversation before we started recording, was distraction.

**Ryan:** Absolutely.

**Selena:** And I think we just need to pick that apart for a moment. In order to, again, emphasize God's glory in this area of our life. Dying to ourselves, dying to this idea that we need entertainment, that we need, I don't know, screens or we need whatever. It's created this false need, I will say.

**Ryan:** It's nothing new. That's the thing.

**Selena:** No. Distraction.

**Ryan:** I'm not saying that you're saying it's new. But the point is the mode and the mediums have changed, but the underlying problem has been there since the fall of man. So I'm thinking of Esau and Jacob. Esau, he sold his birthright for a

bowl of soup, and his appetites were primary to the point where he had forgotten.

If you recall when you read into the story, he shows up, Jacob had been preparing his food. Esau comes in and says, "Give me some of your soup, I'm starving." Jacob says, "Give me your birthright and I'll give you some." And Esau says "No way." And he's like, "Fine, you're not having soup." "Fine. What good is it having a birthright if I'm dead anyway? Give me the soup, and I'll give you the birthright."

So, what does that say? God is sovereign and all that, but the point is, Esau, he had forgotten the promise of God. That God had made a promise to Abraham, which was handed down through Isaac. And now he's going to come down into one of Isaac's offspring, primarily his firstborn, which would have been Esau. The promise was, "I will establish you into a great nation." God would not let Esau die. The promise was that he would live to see that fulfilled through the line of Abraham, Isaac, and then we know Jacob, because Esau gave it up.

Now there was something else that happened later on, where Jacob was a very tricky son, tricked Isaac. The point is that that distraction that, "I have to have it here now, I'm going to give up on the promises of God-

**Selena:** Nearsightedness.

**Ryan:** Nearsightedness. Thank you. I'm trying to teach our daughters this: we can be so fixated on here and now, my carnal needs, my carnal desires, my appetites, I want a desire, I'm addicted to whatever the thing is, social media, entertainment, alcohol-

**Selena:** It causes us to negotiate those non-negotiables.

**Ryan:** And we give up something so much greater for something so fleeting. And go back to that Jim Elliot, a quote, I don't know what he said exactly. But you can read the exact quote because I don't want to mess it up.

**Selena:** "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which you cannot lose."

**Ryan:** So it's easier said than done, right?

**Selena:** Right. For sure.

**Ryan:** That's why the "Why" is so important. Because if we can, at least for me, I feel like if we can get down to the nitty-gritty of the "why" of life, then I can start to live in light of that. Now the goal is just to keep my heart fixed on it.

**Selena:** Right. And the tangibles, honestly, become fun to me because they're the things that we get to implement into our marriage, okay, this is why we're doing these things. We aren't just going on a date, to just say we had a date night. It's so much deeper than that. There's so much more purpose behind it.

Or we're not just going through a book together, but we are sharing ideas, we are trying to figure, out on a soul level, some of the frustrations of our marriage, so that we can have margin and the ability to love our neighbors. Not just for ourselves, but, again, by the power of the Holy Spirit, and us being sanctified, being able to, again, love our neighbors make disciples. It's very hard to do if we're constantly in just chaos, and we can't seem to connect. And we're just doing things arbitrarily because we should.

**Ryan:** Distraction, it is the enemy. And if we can stay focused... I mean, why does the Bible constantly tell us to set our hearts on things above, not things that are below? That's a conscious thing. So you had said something and I want to hear you unpack it a little bit. It's is not just going on a date; it's so much more than that. I think that resonate with me. It might resonate with some of our lovely listeners. What do you mean by a date is not just a date?

**Selena:** Well, you and I, I mean, we talked about it quite a bit, it's sharing in your friendship and building that friendship. I feel like it's a partaking of soul time with your spouse. So our life is pretty loud and chaotic with two young kids. And so going on a date is kind of shutting those things off for a temporary time and focusing on you and me, and the things of God, and our priorities. Sometimes that taking in having a conversation about the rhythms of our lives. Sometimes it's just eating together, slowly, laughing together.

**Ryan:** Tease that out a little bit more. So if we don't have time for a date, and you know it's not going to come unless you make it happen, you're not going to have time for it, what reasons do you give yourself to say, "We have to make this happen sooner than later?"

**Selena:** I think it's obvious to most of us, at least to you and I, when we have not had time together, we continually are breaking down on every front: intimacy, communication, priorities. Everything is in a breakdown. So not only do I want us to be restored, and to be in unity, and to be able to live out these concentric circles, but I want to love God fully in how we do that.

**Ryan:** There it is. And that's what I was hoping to get to, because I was like, "Okay, so to what end?" As a unified couple, we can now live on mission, and we can be far more effective. We can help each other the way couples were designed to help, and interrelate, and help others as a result.

So we're a stronger couple when we're more connected. We're more connected when we make time. And the way we make time is through dates. And us being a stronger couple allows us now to disciple our children from a place of strength, to disciple others from a place of strength, to fulfill the mission that God has given us from a place of strength.

**Selena:** In unity. I would argue unity is that strength factor.

**Ryan:** Yeah. So the big "whys," the big important things have to be in place. Otherwise, 10 steps down the line won't make as much sense. I think we made that case up to until now. So this is the Frederick Family kind of order of priorities.

**Selena:** How we do what we do.

**Ryan:** Yeah. Actually, I was going to pull up the Frederick Family Vision Statements, because that needs to be updated anyway. *[both chuckles]*

**Selena:** Note to our listeners, these are things that are revised depending on the season of life that you're in sometimes. But I feel the revisions are the tangible pieces, the big stones are in place, which will come. Can I start talking about it?

**Ryan:** Yeah, go ahead.

**Selena:** The Bible is very important to our family. We read it every day to our kids and with each other. Ryan and I are doing a reading plan together. We're reading about four chapters a day. I would argue that as a couple, you should be doing that. So I'm just going to put that there, four chapters a day.

We're doing the Same Page Summer Reading plan. It's on the Bible app, all of that. There's lots of reading plans you can do. I found it very elucidating. I love having something to read, to check off. And now Ryan, I can begin discussing those same things together. Teaching our kids gospel fluency, biblical literacy. Is that right?

**Ryan:** Yeah.

**Selena:** ...and the theology, all of that has to come from, and worship from the Bible.

- Ryan:** So we just started with the Bible hot out the gates. Selena said four chapters a day. But the reason we say that is because of the first two episodes in these series. We're beholding the personal work of Christ on the cross, and the goodness that it is, and the commands that result from reading God's word saying, "If this is true, which it is, now, the Bible is first."
- Selena:** And I will show you how it prioritizes your life. For me at least, I have a very hard time getting on social media or watching anything like a show until I've read my Bible. Talk about a quick... what are my priorities? "Have I even been in my Bible today? Nope." Okay, "Well, why am I scrolling through my Instagram for 20 minutes? I could have read two chapters, at least by then." You know what I mean?
- Ryan:** Yeah.
- Selena:** Just the opportunity cost there.
- Ryan:** Well, and the reading plan is the mechanism to put that check in your heart, in your head that says, "I have this thing that I'm accountable to."
- Selena:** It's not being legalistic either. It's just... I don't know how to say it anymore. Unless you're in reading a group of Scripture, guys, it's revolutionary, it's transformative.
- Ryan:** Group prescription.
- Selena:** I can't say it enough, I mean, maybe that's my own fault because I would read one chapter maybe or a few verses, or a Psalm a day. I'm saying get in and dive in and go for it. Make it a priority.
- Ryan:** It's insane to me, sorry, it's on that note. I can't think of any other scenario in life where you would say, "I want to do the thing, but I don't want to do the thing that leads to the doing the actual thing. So, for instance, if you say, "I want to be a bodybuilder," well, bodybuilders go to the gym every day, maybe multiple times a day. Or you say, "I want to follow God," following God means?
- Selena:** Dying to yourself.
- Ryan:** It means knowing Him. And we know Him through His Word.
- Selena:** Sorry, [inaudible] dye to yourself. I'm so selfish all the time, so that's why it comes to mind.

- Ryan:** So anyway, it's like, where else in the world can you claim to be something without doing anything that has to do with that thing? If you're a doctor, and you are like, "Yeah, I just never went to med school, but I'm a doctor."
- Selena:** No, it's not going to work.
- Ryan:** You don't have to be a doctor of Christianity to be a Christian, but the point is, there is a cost to discipleship.
- Selena:** Yes, and we talked about that.
- Ryan:** And that's a good thing. And we don't take that on begrudgingly, we take it on because of the goodness we've experienced in Christ. We've come and we've seen. Well, the woman at the well—we're reading in John, like you said—she went off after her interaction with Jesus, and she said, "Everyone come and see, I met somebody who told me everything I've ever done. He's the Christ."
- And when we have that face-to-face experience with Christ, the only logical result is to run and tell others, and to want to know Him more. So, we're walking through the Frederick order of priorities. So the Bible is very important to our family, and discipleship.
- Selena:** Well, and tangibly what that looks like for Bible reading. Do you want to say what that...?
- Ryan:** It comes out in discipleship, and prayer, and in worship.
- Selena:** It does.
- Ryan:** So family worship is how that looks most. There's three spheres of worship, as the Puritans would say. There's secret worship, which is between just me and God. No one else knows. Just between me and God. It's not hidden but it's secret, between me and Him. Selena will never know what my relationship with God is really like, exactly. I can tell her, but she'll never know exactly what that's like. That's just between me and God, isn't that cool?
- Selena:** Man, I don't like feeling left out, but I get it. I'm kidding.
- Ryan:** Well, I'm left out from yours, your relationship with God. *[both laugh]* There's secret worship, then there's hidden worship or private worship, excuse me, private worship. Sorry, I got... Private worship is family worship. That's what happens in our house. It's private in the sense that we're only-
- Selena:** Just our family.

- Ryan:** ...privy to it. And then there's public worship, which is worship that happens with the body of believers in our church. And so in those spheres, we prioritize, Selena, you said Bible reading. That's the secret worship piece. And that would include reading your Bible, but also prayer, also, adoration and worship, and your own worship life. When you're going about your day, "God, thank you so much, you're so good, the sunlight is on my face. And it's there because you made it."
- Selena:** My children are finally obedient and perfect. Oh, wait, that's my prayer.
- Ryan:** That's worship.
- Selena:** Thank you, God, for this mess in these blessings because if there was no mess there'd be no blessing.
- Ryan:** Right. And that's the secret piece. The private worship piece is we do family worship around the meal table. It's either breakfast or dinner, sometimes twice a day. Sometimes you miss a day. But the way that looks ideally is we'll read some Scripture. I'll ask the girls some questions. Now, our girls... you have to calibrate this for your family. But our daughters are seven, almost five, and almost two. And so there's not a lot of attention span in there. So we have to be really patient, I have to really be patient. Selena does the refereeing when I'm trying to ask them questions and pull answers out of them. And then we'll usually do some sort of singing. And the singing is a short song.
- Selena:** Could be a hymn, could be "Jesus Loves Me."
- Ryan:** Or as of late, something from the Sacred Heart, which is really cool. It's a hymnal but on steroids,. It's awesome.
- Selena:** Getty Family Worship, I think it's on Spotify. And they have the doxology, they have a lot of cool songs that we're learning as a family. I wanted to say something to-
- Ryan:** Hold on.
- Selena:** Okay.
- Ryan:** Already I'm sensing, and I don't mean to say that I'm weird way, but already I can sense how this is grating on some folks because they're like, "We don't have time around the breakfast table?" And here's where I just want to remind you, this is an ordering of priorities. So if it's not important, then you don't have time for it, yes.

**Selena:** And what was our quote that we started with?

**Ryan:** And if that's hurtful, I'm sorry. But it's also as calibrating for me, because when we don't do this, I don't think it's important. So the more important it becomes, the more urgent it becomes, the more re-ordered your life becomes. I'm not saying that you have to do it at the exact same time that the Fredericks do it. No. But I am saying that if it's important, it becomes a priority.

And so if you don't understand the importance of family worship... I'm actually writing a whole book on this right now. And I hope to convince you of that and then give you tangible ways forward. But suffice it to say that it's very important. And then there's public worship, and that is the communion with the saints, and being with a body of believers. And making that a priority, setting aside the time, reorienting our lives around that gathering.

**Selena:** I wanted to say something about the Bible reading and the family worship. So we did start out reading the children's storybook Bible. But we found even with the young ones, that it has been better and more rich for them to hear just the Bible.

We use some of those children's Bibles to help them be familiar with the stories, the characters so that they can narrate back to us, who's in the story, what's happening, what is God doing. We're building those things, the biblical literacy, and seeing Christ in all of this and what all that looks like. So I just want to demystify like our kids don't sit still quietly for 20 minutes, and we read the Bible, and they have all these answers.

We have to work on our question-asking. They are working on listening and narrating is the term that they use a lot, but saying back, expressing what happened in the story. And then their own testimony of not how does this apply to them but how do they kind of-

**Ryan:** What is the implication of the text on your life?

**Selena:** Yes.

**Ryan:** In other words, how are you changed as a result of reading this.

**Selena:** And again, these are big questions for little hearts and minds, but they're not... they're actually not. The kids always blow me away with their answers.

**Ryan:** Sometimes I'm underwhelmed, other times I'm overwhelmed. *[both laugh]* There's a lot of underwhelming too because they're kids, but it's okay.



**Selena:** But this is a practiced priority of training up our children in the ways of the Lord. That is the purpose, that is the priority is training up our children in the ways of the Lord. How to love Him, how to honor Him.

**Ryan:** And that's the biblical literacy, gospel fluency piece, right? They will have these inventoried pieces in their hearts and minds because of the priority. So again, how does that look? I don't know if this is too far into it. You read the Scripture, that bear text, which by the way, going through Genesis 19, that was a roller coaster. I don't recommend it for young kids. We didn't get into the nitty-gritty. I actually stopped reading at that point, and I was like, "I can't explain this to you right now."

**Selena:** There's a few things that are-

**Ryan:** Genesis 19 is really dicey. There's homosexuality, there's rape, there's incest, all in one chapter.

**Selena:** It was Sodom. We're reading the "Pilgrims Progress" a kid one, and it talks about Lot's wife turning into a pillar of salt. And the girls were like, "Can we read that now?" They didn't understand, and they wanted to understand, which is so great. But I was, like "We'll read it tomorrow with Daddy." We read it, and then we had to stop because there's a lot of things. You don't have to explain everything is what I'm saying. Explain it in a way that they were hurt, but you don't have to be graphic in your explanations at certain points.

**Ryan:** And with that weird caveat, I do think the kids can sit under the full counsel of God's Word without needing to have it filtered. With that said, I would be very careful how I explained it to them, like you just said. And then sometimes we'll do... Man, Catherine Vos, her book is "Child's Bible Story Book" is what it is. Unbelievable, excellent book, I love it. It's the summaries of the stories and narratives in the Bible. And that'll be the evening reading. So when they're in bed, and then I'm trying to get them to go to sleep, I'll read the story. Usually recapping-

**Selena:** "Trying to get them to bed, I read them the Bible." *[laughs]*

**Ryan:** No, I mean, they love it.

**Selena:** They do, yeah. They ask for it.

**Ryan:** And what's really cool... I'm probably spending too much time on this, but they will read the full text in the morning on ideal day and then in the evening, I'll

read the summary story version of it. And then they'll ask me to then explain it to them. So they're getting three layers of it.

**Selena:** Which is what they need. As for priorities and Bible reading for a husband and wife, I mean, we have good friends that they wake up, because their kids are a little older, they wake up... kids are not allowed out of bed until seven. So they wake up a little bit earlier, they sit and read the Bible out loud together. Or they sit and read together and then they talk about it for about an hour or so every day.

**Ryan:** I love them. They're awesome.

**Selena:** And so I love that there's this sharpening of faith happening. So get in the Bible, talk about it, don't be afraid of it, you can do it.

**Ryan:** And then honestly, in terms of Frederick priorities, it's pretty loosey-goosey after that. *[both laugh]*

**Selena:** Well, because discipleship is happening, prayer is happening, worship is happening. We're doing those exact same things on Sunday at church in a greater scale, essentially. But there's more teaching, obviously, and less interaction, question-asking, and whatnot.

**Ryan:** And then mission. So now, what has God called us to put our hands to do, the work that He specifically called the Frederick Family to be about the business of doing. And for us, that's fierce families, that's fierce marriage, fierce parenting, and that's basically creating discipleship opportunities in the home between spouses. That's why you're listening to this. We're working on more resources for parents and their kids. And that's the work that we're busy with. And I love it.

But also, priority, providing for my family. And so I spend a lot of my day on that piece, because I'm the one that is at the helm of providing. Selina is providing in a different way for our kids, providing and educating them. Well, obviously, there's a lot of in and out between us sharing those roles, but in general, that's how they're divided.

And then after that, it's just quality time, just enjoying each other's company. One of the ways we do that is, we like to go to parks, and sometimes we'll just do a random adventure. Yesterday, we just said, we're going to go with my parents, who were out at the coast. So we met them out there just for the day, and came back, drove out drove back in the same day. It turned out to be an awesome blessing.

- Selena:** Yeah, it was beautiful.
- Ryan:** But then it comes down to this decision, so say, we need to make a decision, we still have to run it through. Does this decision fall in line with these priorities?
- Selena:** And how does it affect the relationships? I think that's been the biggest filter for me, is how do my decisions about our calendar affect our family life, affect my relationships? Am I honoring God with these decisions? So it may sound, I don't know, prudish or something, but I don't usually put things on the calendar that are going to include or require Ryan's time unless I've talked to him beforehand.
- Ryan's time and like "Hey, you're going to have the kids all day. I have a school thing this Saturday and then I have another thing the next Saturday." I am very aware of the weight of those decisions. And so again, they're decisions that we've agreed that are loving God, that they are loving our neighbors, they're making disciples. We're enjoying God's grace so that it checks the boxes without checking the boxes, if that makes sense.
- Ryan:** To use the school example too is that takes an entire Saturday. And that's a practicum thing, is that what you're doing?
- Selena:** Yeah, for school.
- Ryan:** And that's where you're learning how to be-
- Selena:** Well, it's just keeping those big pictures in mind and the habits and why we are in the classical mode for classical conversations and it's practicum.
- Ryan:** We're saying you take an entire Saturday, and that's important to you, because it's important towards the education of our children. Which is important to us, because of the discipleship quality. And so I'm here saying, as your husband, I am on mission with you in that. I will gladly take the kids, we'll do something fun, it'll be great, I'll take care of them, you go. And we're sending mom now, we're not just saying, "We're just going to endure while she's away." But instead, we're saying, "Go, be, do that, because we're sending you as a family, because we're all together in that ideally.
- Selena:** Which allows me to then enjoy that even more knowing that I'm not just like, "Oh, man, I got to go, because my kids are probably falling apart, and Ryan's getting frustrated. And I've already said that I got something next Saturday." It's like, "No, I get to actually fully, 100%, show up and be there.

**Ryan:** And now think about that, in terms of a dad going off a business trip. We're sending dad because he is providing for our family. Think of the kids. You're sending your kids to school because they are going to be a light in that community if that's what God has shown you. How do you want to educate your kids? I guess, just we talked about this last episode, there's so much joy, and just so much depth in living on missions because of the priorities that we've gone to the hard work of creating.

**Selena:** There's so much freedom to be had. We're not sitting here with decision fatigue about what we should do, and then we don't do anything, right?

**Ryan:** Ideally, although that happens a good bit. Which is why we have the family vision statement. *[laughs]*

**Selena:** Coming back to that, finally.

**Ryan:** Well, we have to. And so we're going give you this e-book that we wrote, it's called "How to Craft Your Own Family Vision Statement." And I'll tell you the URL for that, but first, I want to explain it real fast. Basically, the family vision statement has three components. And this is something that was hard-won with lots of sweat, and trial and error, over a number of years in the Frederick household. We wrote this thing, and this is hopefully make it a lot easier for you. That's the goal.

So the three components are this. You have a mission statement. So, again, this is all kind of sitting on the firm foundation of the Christian worldview. So your mission statement is not going to be the same as Fredericks' mission statement. You're going to have your own mission that God is asking you to do faithfully unto Him, for His glory, and for your good, for the good of your community.

In general, our mission statement is pretty vague; "It's to know God and to make Him known." That's vague. But we do that in some very specific ways. And that gets into the core values. And the core values are what we've discussed here. But we're taking a lot of the baseline stuff for granted, like Bible, all that stuff is for granted, baked into it. But for us, our core values are... I don't have it in front of me. Shoot! I'll get to that later.

So mission statement, core values, and then the envision statements. And the envision statements, to me, are where you actually put skin on the bones of it. And you say, "This is the outcome. This is what I'm envisioning the reality to be if we live these mission statement and these core values practically." If we put our money where our mouth is, so to speak. And that is a challenge, so I totally get it.

Where is that document? I had it right here. Here it is. So our core values as an example. I won't explain these, but like stewardship. We own nothing, we're stewards of all that God entrusts into our care. That includes everything in our lives, financially speaking, asset wise, but also the relationships, children. And that, to me, is the biggest piece, but that's the least intuitive at least when it comes to that.

**Selena:** Or at each other, right?

**Ryan:** Yeah. Community is number two. We're designed for community... this cuts off a lot of kind of distractions, to be honest. Because when you work on the internet like this, you can live anywhere, and we've realized we can't do that because we need community. And we don't have community anywhere. We've community here, and so we live here, and God called us here. And that's a good thing. And that is a joy-filled thing, and it's given us a lot of contentment in here.

**Selena:** And a lot of freedom. *[chuckles]*

**Ryan:** Faith. That one sounds a bit cliché, but here's what it means. We follow God obediently even when He asks us to do difficult things. In other words, we're acting, we are people of faith doing hard things because we have a faithful God.

Freedom. Now, this one might get tossed, because I feel it's a little bit tertiary. But we aim to remain agile, mobile, ready to respond however God calls. In other words, you don't want to be beholden to unnecessary constraints without being flighty or avoiding commitment.

**Selena:** Steadfast. We want to be steadfast. But we want to live in a way that we are able to respond quickly, I think, to whatever to God calls.

**Ryan:** That one might get tossed in this next iteration. Family... I don't know why I'm reading all this.

**Selena:** Sure. We make each other priority by giving our very best time, energy, and resources to one another. This has a multiplying effect on our family's health and our ability to give time, energy, and resources to others. So, margin, I think would be one of the big words under that. Having that whitespace and it's okay, it's okay, it's good, and it is good to not have things scheduled every day on the calendar.

**Ryan:** Every no has a yes. And that's saying no to things is creating a whitespace, so you can say yes to other things. Whitespace being the margin. The final one is fruitfulness. And this used to be called saltiness. *[both chuckling]*

**Selena:** Really?

**Ryan:** That's Selena's core value. *[Selena laughing]* Saltiness. Just one. Salty. *[both laughing]* Oh, no. Fruitfulness is-

**Selena:** Thanks for changing.

**Ryan:** It's still on yours.

**Selena:** I get what you're saying.

**Ryan:** Selena's mission statement, just one that's more salty. Saltiness.

**Selena:** Be the salt of the earth.

**Ryan:** Life is short. We want to tell as many people as we can about Jesus. That's what fruitfulness is. And so gospel, everything that we do is with that in mind. Can we create discipleship opportunities for you to do the same thing in your home? I won't get into the envision statements, but I will say this, it's not easy to walk through this process.

So we have a free eBook for you. You can have it just go to [fiercemarriage.com/vision](http://fiercemarriage.com/vision). That's [fiercemarriage.com/vision](http://fiercemarriage.com/vision). There'll be a little form there to fill out to get the download emailed to you. And like I said, I think it's like 60 pages long. But it's not a long read, you can probably read it in, I'm guessing, 15 minutes.

Actually, there's a worksheet you can go through to create your own vision statement with your families, and we give you some coaching in how to display it, and make it a priority. I firmly believe that if we can get couples and families to live on mission for Christ, and have clear priorities that they live out with conviction, this world will be vastly different.

**Selena:** Right, that's the revolution. That's the revolution.

**Ryan:** The revolution happens in the home.

**Selena:** It does.

- Ryan:** And it starts with couples like you listening to this, and trusting your whole lives, your whole hearts, whole marriage into the loving hands of our capable Savior and a loving Father. And He will use you in ways that you've never imagined. And He will fill you with greater joy and peace than you could have ever imagined, as you live on mission for Him. So, hopefully, that's helpful. Go find that resource That'll be your challenge. Create a vision statement.
- Selena:** Yes, get those concentric circles started. Love the Lord your God. Even if it's just looking at the first circle on the inner target, love the Lord your God. The second love neighbors and make disciples. Third, enjoy God's grace. Put that in front of you, pray about it. Talk to your spouse, you, guys, both be in prayer about that, and begin walking through that family vision statement.
- Ryan:** One quick caveat on that is it's not something you're going to necessarily nail in 30 minutes. Sit down, get your bearings, and then get ready to invest some time over months on it, not every day all day. But it's something that you come back to, and you reiterate, and you sleep on it, and you pray about it, and you sleep on it.
- Selena:** And you start recognizing some of your strengths as a family or things that you enjoy and you envision. How can we do this for the Lord? Or how can this be a testimony to His goodness in our lives? Those are questions you can ask.
- Ryan:** All right, that wraps it for priorities, at least maybe. *[chuckles]* We'll see if we have an extra week, maybe we'll do something bonus-wise.
- Selena:** We'll see.
- Ryan:** We'll see. Lord, I thank you for this time. I thank you for just how clear you are in your words. Just how clearly you've revealed yourself to us, and you've made yourself available to us. Holy Spirit, thank you for being with us and in us. Thank you for convicting us. Thank you for working on us and through us.
- Father, I pray for the couples that are feeling aimless, they're feeling their priorities need to be re-adjusted, but they don't know where to start, or they're just afraid of where to start, or feel like maybe their spouse won't respond to the way they hope they would. I pray that they would run to you, and they would find you to be a solid foundation, a strong tower into which they can retreat and trust that you are at work, you're at work in their hearts, at work in their spouse's heart, and you're at work in their marriage. Lord, we love you, we need you, and we worship you. In Jesus' name, Amen.
- Selena:** Amen.

**Ryan:** All right, last reminder, go to [gospelcenteredmarriage.com](http://gospelcenteredmarriage.com) and use the code PRIORITIES to save 20% off. Again, we have all kinds of stuff there for you and it's there for your benefit, to edify your marriage for you and God's glory. We hope you take us up on that. That discount will be available at least for the next week or two, so don't hesitate. Other than that this episode of Fierce Marriage podcast is—

**Selena:** In the can.

**Ryan:** And we'll see you again in seven days, until then

**Selena:** Stay fierce.

**[00:50:58]** <Outro>

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

- **[00:04:58]**
  - Scripture references:
    - Matthew 28, ESV
  
- **[00:36:34]**
  - Book Reference:
    - Child's Bible Story Book
  
- **[00:40:28]**
  - eBook Recommendation:
    - [How to Craft Your Own Family Vision Statement](#)

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