

THE ROOTS OF MARITAL JOY (JOY, 1 OF 4)

<https://fiercemarriage.com/the-roots-of-marital-joy-joy-1-of-4>

[00:00:00]

Ryan: I got the joy, joy, joy, joy, down in my heart. We couldn't figure out how to start the episode, so I started singing.

Selena: So you started singing. I was almost going to say something, and then you jumped in.

Ryan: Well, because I got the joy.

Selena: You got the joy.

Ryan: I got the joy, and also I have the sniffles.

Selena: You do have the sniffles. It's not the Rona, it's just the sniffles.

Ryan: I apologize in advance. I have tried to take enough decongestants. Is that the right word?

Selena: Decongestants.

Ryan: Decongestants... to make it bearable for you, our lovely listeners, but here we are. So I'll do my very best to speak clearly.

Selena: Not to sniffle and not to... I'm just kidding. [inaudible]

Ryan: Just ignore me this whole time. Just ignore what I have to say, anything I have to do or say.

Selena: No.

Ryan: So today we're talking about joy, right? So we're opening up a new theme, a new series for this month, and that's the theme of joy. And really joy in marriage, but I think in marriage that translates into a few things like delight and desire. Desire for one another, a desire for the things of God within your marriage.

A lot of couples that come to us, essentially, they're coming to us, whether it's through Facebook, or through Instagram messages, we get a lot of messages, they're coming to us because on some level there's a lack of joy in their marriage. And they're wanting to get back to the place where they can

experience the joy they once had. So today we're going to open up this can of worms. Over the next few weeks, we're going to be unpacking what's in there, especially, around marriage, obviously.

Selena: All the different worms of joy. *[both laughs]*

Ryan: Just the joyful worms. And so today, we're actually going to be looking at joy as a biblical theme and then applying that down into how that can and should look within marriage. And you know what I learned a ton, as Selena was schooling me, on what joy is and what it isn't. So I'm looking forward to her schooling you as well. We'll see you on the other side.

[00:01:51] <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.

[00:02:26] <Podcast begins>

Selena: I don't think I'm very good at schooling, but I learned a lot, and I want to share it with you.

Ryan: You are the master of the schooling.

Selena: So I guess maybe that is essentially what schooling is, right? Because the edumecation going for us.

- Ryan:** No, you did some interesting research, especially around the notion of happiness versus joy. And you know what, it's not what you think it is, it's not what I thought it was.
- Selena:** Because I was like, "Why do people want us to talk about joy?" Because we asked our listeners, and then we talked to our editing team, our editor, and people that are on our team and they gave us themes for the next couple of months, I guess.
- Ryan:** You guess. *[laughs]* I'm a part of this process as well.
- Selena:** You did this. I'm actually not a part of this at all. *[laughs]* So maybe this is more of my own narrative of joy seems obvious when it comes to marriage. Yes, I want a joyful marriage. Okay, what does that mean? Well, I want to be happy all the time. Well, what happens when you're not happy? Is joy gone? Is joy absent? Are you killing your joy? Are you being a killjoy?
- Ryan:** Which is interesting, because our other themes which have been communication, priorities... What else have we talked about in the past?
- Selena:** Boundaries.
- Ryan:** Boundaries. A lot of these have to do with developing skills and mindsets that are aligned with the biblical view.
- Selena:** Do with developing skills. I think it's just learning how to be humble.
- Ryan:** No, I think there's developing skills around boundaries.
- Selena:** Yes, yes.
- Ryan:** You have communication skills that you have to develop. Is there a skill aspect to be had in the joy conversation?
- Selena:** I think so.
- Ryan:** I think one thing that we've unearthed in our initial study, is that joy is not just about knowledge and knowing the right thing to do. There's a certain part of joy that will well up from within you.
- Selena:** It's an expression.
- Ryan:** But there is part of it that has to do with knowledge, and has to do with skill, and it has to do with discipline, right?

Selena: Sure.

Ryan: So that's what we're getting into today.

Selena: You could say that. One could say that, for sure.

Ryan: I'm really intrigued by this. And you know what, and very hopeful, because like I said in the intro, if you're listening to this and you've lacked joy in your marriage, in other words, you're not delighting in one another, you're lacking connection and the joy that comes from connection, you're feeling like there's just something off, we're here to give you some hope today, and perhaps help set your foot on the path toward health and growth in this area of your marriage. So thank you for joining us in advance.

I want to get into the episode, but I do want to do a little bit housekeeping. If you haven't yet, make sure you subscribe or follow the Fierce Marriage Podcast. That way you don't miss anything, especially for this series. I'm really excited where we're going to go, and I don't want you to miss it.

Next, if you want to leave a rating and a review, that helps us a ton. If this podcast has helped you just tell somebody. That's the most useful way, is you get on to iTunes or whatever your podcast app is, you can just hit the star thing, that's the rating thing. And then hit a review and spend 30 seconds writing review. It's really helpful. And I thank you in advance for that. Thank you to all you wonderful listeners who have taken the time to leave a thoughtful review, that's so helpful.

Next thing is Patreon, so this podcast, our family, the microphones, the editing, the transcriptions-

Selena: The team behind it all, planning it.

Ryan: The team behind this is funded exclusively, I'll say 99% exclusively through our lovely patrons. And the reason I love that model is because I feel like it's a biblical model. The people who are benefiting from this content are the ones supporting it. And the hope is that it helps enough people, and enough people feel led to support that it sustains the content of the ministry itself.

Selena: And we did a call with some of our patrons last week, and it was such a blessing to us.

Ryan: Amen, I just love them.

Selena: It's really great to meet people and to hear how God's working in their lives. They got to ask us questions. We kind of taught a little bit of, I shared, I guess, on the state of the union for fierce families and fierce marriage and all that. It was a very sweet time of fellowship. So you too can be a part of that. If you would like, and if God's leading you in that would be a better way to say that.

Ryan: You're doing pistol fingers right there, which is like, "You got to be part of that." So go to patreon.com/fiercemarriage, you'll see all the different options there, and like Selena said, you'll get access to the patron-only Zoom calls, which goes once a month. It's the first or second Thursday of every month, you'll know if you get in there.

And then also, you'll get some other free stuff. If you want to get books or if you want to get into a Gospel-Centered Marriage platform, that's all included for our patrons. Because I think that's the best way we can bless them back for being a part of it. So thank you. And all you current patrons, thank you. We couldn't do this without you.

And then finally, Gospel-Centered Marriage, you've got to pronounce that well. Go there, you can learn how to have a gospel-centered marriage, is a six-week marriage core. And then there's all kinds of enrichment modules you can go through. It's video teaching, and then some worksheets and connection time. Go there, check that out, find a plan that works for you. We hope it blesses you and helps you in your marriage, so that's the pitch part.

Selena: All right.

Ryan: What is this 50-thousand-foot view of joy? Let's take a step back. Obviously, we're marriage podcast. But we can't really understand joy in the context of marriage until we really understand joy in the context of a Christian life. And we can't understand the Christian life without looking at Scripture.

Selena: Very good.

Ryan: Is that accurate?

Selena: Very good.

Ryan: Okay. So where do we go?

Selena: We are going to define joy, going through a few Scriptures. And then we're going to land on John 15, and we'll take a fine tooth comb through that and what that means for us. Draw some of the themes out and then talk about the nature of joy and how we can abide in our marriage, and what joy in marriage

looks like in different scenarios, different examples of where you might find yourself in your marriage.

Ryan: I want to ask you a question first.

Selena: Okay.

Ryan: When you think of joy in marriage, what comes to mind first?

Selena: Well, from this study gladness, but I think I was thinking more of happiness. Contentment I think would be the next level down. Delight would be in between those, li I want to get accurate. But joy and happiness seem to be synonymous, which we should demystify this upfront.

Ryan: Okay. I think-

Selena: You were hoping I would say that?

Ryan: No. But it's a good time to go through it, I guess. Because that's what people were like, "Wait, what?" Because the recent teaching on this topic has been not that. Which that's where I would have gone if you would have said, "Ryan talk about joy," and I'll say it's not happiness. Happiness is different. We had a really good conversation around that and you have made a strong case for them being more similar.

Selena: I didn't just make a strong case but minds that are stronger than mine, or more bright, and more invested in the Bible-

Ryan: That's how typically how research works. But I would have thought when you said, "Ryan, what do you think of joy in marriage?" I'd have thought, well, we have fun together, we laugh. There's more smiling than not around the dinner table. We're sharing memories together. We're creating memories with our kids. There's generally an upbeatness about our lives and our marriage together. And there's a deep joy-

Selena: Right. And I think-

Ryan: Sorry, I want to finish this thought. And there's a deep joy that is rooted in security in knowing that you're not going anywhere, I'm not going anywhere. Knowing that yes, we probably will have trials and hard things we have to go through, but we're going to stick together.

Selena: Or even God says, "Count those as joy."

Ryan: Okay, that's true. But when I'm thinking about joy in terms of marriage, I'm thinking that there's this kind of steadfast security.

Selena: Sure.

Ryan: And from that place of security, it then wells up within me. This need and this desire to enjoy you, to enjoy our children, to enjoy life out of that place of security. Now, the question is that place of security, does that mean that you're always going to be stable in every way? Financially stable, or are you emotionally stable? Hopefully. Are you whatever this relationally stable, is that always a given? I don't know that you can say that it is. But that's what I think of when we talk about joy in the context of marriage.

Selena: Got you. Got you.

Ryan: But I do want to talk about that the idea that happiness and joy have been-

Selena: Just on their own.

Ryan: There's a needless differentiation that's been happening, and I would have said that.

Selena: Right, with believers specifically which is interesting. Because the teaching usually falls along these points of happiness is a feeling, but joy is not; happiness is fleeting, but Joy's everlasting; happiness depends on circumstances or other people, but joy is a gift from God; happiness is worldly, but joy is divine. But in Scripture, there's no major forcing to distinction between the two.

Ryan: So why are we making distinction?

Selena: To draw something out of it is arbitrary. It still rubs me the wrong way a little bit, and I don't know if I've just been so entrenched in happiness versus joy. But truly joy is an expression, it is a feeling, it is an imperative, even a command. It's used many different ways.

Ryan: And you said "rejoice" is a word that's used a lot. And that's the imperative side of like take joy, go run with this joy, and let the joy come out of you in a way.

Selena: "Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I say rejoice." And all the Psalms that are filled with that.

Ryan: **Ryan:** Here's why that struck me.

Selena: Shout for joy.

Ryan: And this is the plead that you're making in the space on research you've done is that we need to start making a distinction between Christian happiness and Christian joy.

Selena: Yes.

Ryan: There is a distinction between worldly happiness and Christian happiness. There's a distinction to be made between worldly joy and Christian joy. And here's where the tendency is, and I'm just going to articulate the position, so hopefully, we can come at it more effectively. But in the past, I mean, in the recent past, as in probably less than two hours ago, you would have asked me this. And this is why I'm so easy to let go that, because I feel the case for the other thing is so much stronger.

So if you'd said, "Hey, what seems to be happiness and joy?" I would have said exactly what you just described. And that happiness kind of depends on your circumstance, and joy is deep-seated and unchanging. And I do think that there is an aspect of it, but you made the case that joy is an outward expression. It's a very direct feeling, an experience that is the result of these deep truths.

And so the analogy that I made, when you and I were talking, is that if you go outside and you see a duck, you say, "That's a duck." And then you walk a little bit further and you see a squirrel, you say, "Oh, that's not a squirrel, that's just a duck that looks like a squirrel." You'd be like, "You're an idiot. That's not a duck that looks like a squirrel. That's a squirrel." I think we do the same thing with these ideas in our minds.

Selena: We can, yeah.

Ryan: And so what I mean by that is, I'll say like "I have deep joy and I feel it, and I want to rejoice, I want to sing. I'm just feeling I'm happy." We see that in Scripture. When David starts dancing, and when Mary's rejoicing, and when Adam is rejoicing over the arrival of Eve, there's this very outward expression of joy, and I'd say, "Yeah that's joy." But this is what I would say and would have said, "Joy is still there even when I'm feeling depressed, feeling down, feeling anxious, feeling uneasy."

Selena: Right.

Ryan: And what I've come to realize is that that is like calling a squirrel a duck, because it's not joy. But what I can have in those moments, in that steadfastness, that unchangingness, I'm clinging then to a different fruit of the Spirit, I'm clinging them to peace, I'm clinging, then to hope. I still have the unchanging fruit that's there. It's not the same type of fruit, though. And that's the argument that, I think, we're making. So I would have called something that's not joy, joy. In those instances, I feel a sense of security, but it's not joy-filled security, it's peace or hope-filled security.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: Does that make sense?

Selena: Yeah.

Ryan: I'm looking at the faithfulness of God in my tough circumstance. And then Paul comes in and says, "Count it all joy." And so it's almost like you can say, "Okay, I don't feel joy, but I'm going to count this a joy to feel hope and peace in this instance." So that's where the joy comes from, is I can still feel hope when I feel no joy. Now, therefore, I can now feel a sense of joy, because I still have hope even though the emotions that usually well up in an outward way, aren't necessarily right there.

Selena: Sure.

Ryan: I hope I articulated that well.

Selena: I think so. For me, well, when we're talking about... we kind of jumped around here, so I am going to back up. We will talk about James 1:2, "Count trials as joy." Because as you were talking, I was just thinking about how Scripture says to count them as joy. And the way that it said, if you look at the grammar of it, and I haven't dissected this sentence, it feels like an imperative. You count trials as all joy, why? Because when we're in the trials we can make ourselves align these and say, "I'm supposed to count these as joy, because God has not left me, God has a plan and purpose in this God is going to be glorified through this." So these trials are a way of glorifying the Lord. Therefore, I can count them as joy.

Anyways, we can look at that in just a minute. But I want to back up just a little bit, because you said, you were just talking about joy and happiness. They are essentially one and the same when you're talking about them in the Bible, those ideas. It's still there's a tinge in me that's like, "Dang, I don't think so." But I'm going to trust in this process, and maybe unpack that a little bit more with some research on my own.

- Ryan:** Can I add one caveat?
- Selena:** Yeah.
- Ryan:** Because I would say that you can, as a believer, have a supernatural sense of joy in those down moments.
- Selena:** Yes.
- Ryan:** But I want to be very careful not to call something that is not joy, joy. Because we have different fruits of the Spirit. We have joy as a fruit of the Spirit. But if we call something else that's not joy, joy, then I think we miss out when we can really rejoice in something, and experience the fullness of what joy is because we've always called joy, anything, and everything joy.
- Selena:** It's really defining them and sticking to that definition in order to have that full experience as well. So looking at what joy is, if you google it, it is a feeling, an expression. In Scripture we see joy and gladness are closely intertwined. There's always joy because of gladness, or gratefulness, or some sort of something joy is a result of that.
- You hear "the joy of the Lord is our strength." That is actually in Nehemiah 8:10. Which is so weird to me when I was looking it up. I was like, "No, surely this is the wrong reference. Surely it's in the New Testament, or Proverbs, or Psalms." It feels more poetic, right? "The joy of the Lord is our strength." And it's actually Nehemiah telling the people... yeah, you're looking it up?
- Ryan:** Yeah, yeah. Can I read the whole verse?
- Selena:** Sure.
- Ryan:** "Then he said to them..." On this, remember he was rebuilding the wall. That was the context here.
- Selena:** Yeah. And the people asked him to bring out the book of Moses, and to read it. And so they were all listening attentively to him reading it.
- Ryan:** Then he said to them, "Go your own way, eat the fat and drink sweet-berry wine, and send portions to anyone who has nothing ready for this day is holy to our Lord. And do not be grieved for the joy of the Lord is your strength. So the Levites calmed all the people saying, 'Be quiet, for this day is holy, do not be grieved.' And all the people went their way to eat and drink, and to send

portions, and to make great rejoicing, because they had understood the words that were declared to them."

So it's interesting because it's a call out of the grief, out of the grieving into the joy of the Lord. This is why I want to make that really clear distinction, is there's grief, and there's joy, and there's a contrast. So when we're in a space of grief, I don't feel joy in that moment. But I can feel peace, and I can feel hope, and I can remember that "The joy of the Lord is my strength."

The Bible doesn't say that... I don't know anywhere where it says, "The peace of the Lord is your strength." And maybe there's a reason for that. I'm speculating. I haven't studied this, but I'm just on the fly speculating here a little bit. Because it's out of the stoutness of heart, and the sturdiness of that joy where then now I'm motivated now to move forward from a place of strength into whatever God is calling us to put our hands to.

I know it's really easy to do work when I'm in a great mood. It's a lot harder to do work and to be productive when I'm not in a great mood, and not feeling that joy. So maybe that's what "the joy of the Lord is your strength" means. I don't know if you have something else.

Selena: I did research that. There's a whole article on God Questions. You know how we like our website, about the difference of joy and happiness. But He did talk about what is the joy of the Lord. And just a quick quote I think summed it up, "The joy of the Lord is the gladness of heart that comes from knowing God, abiding in Christ, and being filled with the Holy Spirit."

Ryan: Wow.

Selena: I felt like that was all-inclusive.

Ryan: So what were those three things?

Selena: "The joy of the Lord is the gladness of heart-

Ryan: That comes from?

Selena: That comes from knowing God, abiding in Christ, and being filled with the Holy Spirit."

Ryan: In our discussion, you brought this up, and I asked you this question: is it possible for a depressed person to feel joy? Because it's possible, certainly, for a depressed person to do those three things: to abide in Christ... to what? Just help me.

Selena: Know God.

Ryan: To know God. And to?

Selena: Be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Ryan: And to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Selena: Yes.

Ryan: And that's not Scripture, of course. That's a-

Selena: A quote.

Ryan: A commentary on it. That's again going back to these distinctions. Like if you can feel depressed and still cling to and abide in Christ, with the hope that your joy will be complete in that moment, and that you will then be girded up with the joy of the Lord to then become strong once again, all the while feeling weak. And so you're hoping in Christ. And this got us talking about the seasonal nature of fruit, like fruit-bearing. Why is it called the fruit of the Spirit?

Selena: Not the vegetable of the Spirit. It could be. It very could be.

Ryan: And not the bark of the Spirit, but some other thing that doesn't come and go.

Selena: Right, it's not seasonal. Which leads us nicely into talking about joy again. So again, joy, first, is this expression. It is the joy of our Lord, of knowing Him, abiding in Him, of being filled with Him that is our strength. That is where that He is our source of joy and strength.

But then, of course, the Bible goes on to talk about—well, Paul does—the joy as a fruit of the Holy Spirit. In Galatians 5, we see keeping in step with the Spirit is the whole theme of this lower part of the passage. And he writes... I'm just trying to figure out where to start. Because it's just like, "But I say walk by the Spirit, you will not gratify the desires of the flesh." And he goes into what those desires are.

So the works of the flesh are: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, anger, fits of rage or fits of anger, jealousy, strife, dissension, division, sensuality... I think that covers all of it. Enmity, drunkenness, orgies, things like these. The spirit-

Ryan: *[chuckles]* You glossed over all these massive things.

Selena: Sorry, I know. I guess I should've just read the verse. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control, against such things there's no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires." So as a fruit of the Spirit, so as a product, as produce, as something that is being produced in us by the work of the Holy Spirit.

Again, we see that reinforcement of when we are filled with the Holy Spirit, when we are abiding with God, we are going to know Him. And I think not just by knowing Him, but abiding with Him. You and I were talking about this word "abiding," which we'll jump into in a little bit. There's the whole relationship aspect. Like the Pharisees knew of God, right?

Ryan: Yeah.

Selena: But clearly, they didn't have a relationship. And I guess there's a lot more argument that can happen around that. *[chuckles]*

Ryan: Well, but that's where the walking in step with the spirit...

Selena: The spirit, right.

Ryan: And Jesus explicitly came and He gave the counselor, the helper. He sent the Holy Spirit to come be our counselor. I'm sorry, but that Galatians 5 passage, to me, it's so helpful in this case. Because if you're sitting here, or you're in your car, you're doing chores, or you're going for a jog, whatever you're doing listening this podcast and you're thinking to yourself, "Man, I just wish I had more joy in my marriage. Whatever Ryan and Selina are describing, I want more of that laughter, that contentment, that deep gladness-

Selena: Connectedness in relationship.

Ryan: Yeah, that rejoicing, that connectedness, I want that." Now we glossed over this, okay? And Selena did it too, and this is not to call you out, but we gloss over the works of the flesh as instructive. We get right down into the fruits of the Spirit and say, "Now I need to have love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness... okay, focus on these things, that's good." And that's all good and fine.

Now remember, this wells up from within. It wells up from something deeper that's happening by the power of the Holy Spirit. It's fruit, it's not the root. It's

not stapled on there, but it grows from the inside out. Now, the works of the flesh are fruits of the flesh.

And so if we are walking in things that are not joy-filled, and not peace-filled, not hope-filled, not patient, kind, or good, or faithful, or gentle, or self-controlled, there's a good chance you're walking in something that is flesh infused, that is the fruit of the flesh. So let's look at these with sobriety here.

Now the works of the flesh are evident. He's saying they're self-evident, here they are: sexual immorality. Sexual immorality, I mean, you could spend a whole episode on that.

Selena: A whole series on that for marriage.

Ryan: In your marriage, is sexual immorality a part of your marriage? Now, what does that look like in a faithful marriage? It's kind of an oxymoron to say there's sexual immorality in a faithful marriage. But I'm saying that you can have a monogamous marriage and you're still sexually immoral. In that you're not sleeping with other people, but you are lusting. Or you are allowing sexually immoral things into your home. Whether that's actions that are sexually immoral, whether that's viewing things, or talking about things, or joking about things that are sexually immoral.

That goes into the next one, which is impurity, sensuality... and sensuality is seeking the desires of the flesh above all else. And it's almost like this wantonness. I think, it's one of the ways they would interpret that word, as a wantonness, a desire for things that are... how do I describe it, things that are-

Selena: Carnal?

Ryan: Yes, thank you, very carnal, idolatry.

Selena: That's just all of sin, it feels like. I know it's not.

Ryan: Well, Paul in another place compared covetousness to idolatry. That was earlier on in Galatians, I believe. So are we walking in these different aspects of the flesh and we're wondering when we have no joy? And so I'm looking over our neighbor's house and it's so much nicer, their car is so much nicer. I'm looking on Instagram, and their life is so much more together, and I'm coveting. Sorcery, when you think about sorcery like, that's not a thing. I don't go to the witch doctors-

Selena: Stones and gems, my friends! The gems and all the telling of the stars and all that. Can I just stop you for one second?

- Ryan:** Okay.
- Selena:** Because I just think just because we want the fruit of the Spirit, this is what you're saying, it doesn't mean we immediately have it?
- Ryan:** Well, the whole point of this aspect of Galatians is saying, "Don't walk according to the flesh." You've been crucified with Christ, and it's no longer you who live, but Christ lives in you by faith. The whole point of that is saying, "You can now recognize this is the flesh, this is the Spirit. I'm crucified in the flesh, therefore, that is no longer part of my nature. And there's a sense in which I have to turn away from that actively. There's also a sense in which my desires are being changed internally."
- Selena:** Absolutely. Absolutely.
- Ryan:** And those two things happen when we're in concert with one another-
- Selena:** When you're abiding.
- Ryan:** It doesn't say "and binding." *[Selena laughs]*
- Selena:** No.
- Ryan:** When you're abiding. I don't know this word sorcery, I'm stuck on it right now and I can't remember what the Greek root for that was. It's like potion making. Potion making.
- Selena:** That's exactly where I'd go. *[both laughing]*
- Ryan:** It's where you get the word pharmakeia, pharmacy, pharmaceutical, potion making. I just think I can't help. And just bear with me, but all these remedies for the ills of life.
- Selena:** Don't even say it. *[laughing]*
- Ryan:** Essential oils. There, I said it. *[both laughing]* You're alchemist. Are you referring to alchemy? *[both laughing]* We're joking about essential oils, but it's consumerism. Again, Paul's not talking about consumerism, he's talking about potion making. And it's a different view, but I'm saying let's extrapolate maybe something out of this. There's this idea that I will be saved, or I will find satisfaction, or I will find the deep meanings of life if I'm able just to get the thing that I want through acquiring something.

- Selena:** Sorcery.
- Ryan:** That's a sorcery. So anyway, it's interesting. We can probably stop there, but I'm just saying, maybe we're putting too much weight in these things in our lives. And it's walking in step with the fresh and not with the Spirit.
- Selena:** Maybe we are not seeing exactly what they are, we're not defining them and we're not-
- Ryan:** And here's how that could clearly play out is instead of going to my community to pray for me, I'm now google-searching this different essential oils that helped me with anxiety. Instead of going to my spouse and saying, "I need you to pray with me because I need God to intervene in my life." Instead of doing that I'm now going to Instagram and looking up whatever the latest remedy is for that thing.
- Selena:** Sure.
- Ryan:** Again, I don't want to read that into the text, I'm saying that's what that pushed me to think. So that was a lot of Ryan's commentary there. But enmity-
- Selena:** Enmity.
- Ryan:** You are looking at that up.
- Selena:** Yeah. It's the state or feeling of being actively opposed or hostile to someone or something.
- Ryan:** Oh-oh.
- Selena:** That rings true. Oh-oh. This is not the Scripture I wanted to be set on, Ryan. *[both laughing]* This is the text. This is the text.
- Ryan:** So if you're feeling that way towards your husband or your wife, and you're wondering why you have no joy, I mean, let's be honest with ourselves.
- Selena:** Or it doesn't have to be towards your husband or wife. I mean, if you have it towards anything outside. I mean, think politics, think anything in the world,
- Ryan:** Whoever is on the other side of your political-
- Selena:** Yes, on the other side of anything that you like. Let's just put it that way. And there is grounds for enmity there, right?

Ryan: Mm. "Strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these."

Selena: Why do you laugh?

Ryan: What is he thinking of.

Selena: I know. *[chuckles]*

Ryan: What is he thinking of when he says things like these?

Selena: Well, because it was probably more prompt? I don't know.

Ryan: I mean, orgies.

Selena: You don't need to stay here that long. I'm just saying it's interesting that that word is used here.

Ryan: There must have been a problem. The point is, is there's kind of this sexual wantonness that was probably endemic to the time and to the place, and to the culture.

Selena: Well, there's probably less policing. There's less law. It was a lot of lawlessness, I think, and it was just dealt with a heavy hand. Whereas nowadays there's levels of how you deal with different offenses.

Ryan: Can I keep harping on this for just a minute?

Selena: Okay.

Ryan: And then he goes on to say, "...and things like these. I warn you, as I did before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God." So typically, when we read that, we'll think they don't get to heaven. But remember Christ came and He brought the kingdom to earth. He left the Holy Spirit now to realize the kingdom in our hearts and in our lives.

His kingdom came, He will return again, and it will be fully realized.

Selena: The kingdom come on earth.

Ryan: But it's happening. It's already but not yet. Again, I don't want to read into that, but maybe what Paul is saying is that, "You're not inheriting the kingdom, yes, maybe in the internal sense, but maybe you're also not inheriting it here and now through the fruit of the Spirit."

The kingdom has come and Christ has come. He has established His kingship on the throne. He's reigning in heaven. He will soon reign here on Earth as well. But for here and now, the kingdom is, it looks like the Spirit reigning in the human heart, in the Christian heart.

Selena: That's a lot of things.

Ryan: And so when we live in these certain ways, we shouldn't be surprised when joy is hard to come by, when hope is hard to come by, when peace is lacking. When we don't have the fruits that we so desperately want is all I'm trying to say. *[Selena laughs]*

Selena: "That's all I'm trying to say. 20 minutes later.

Ryan: I know.

Selena: No, it's good. It's good. As you were saying those things not inherit the kingdom of God, for sure that means today, and possibly in the future. I'm not the one to determine that. But if you are not walking, he's saying, he opens this whole section of "I say, walk by the Spirit and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh." The desires of the flesh are against the desires of the Spirit. And so they're opposed to one another.

I don't necessarily think those things are going to produce fruit. I know we said like, "Well, you're going to have the fruit of the world basically." I think those produce deaths, and the fruit of the Spirit produces life, love, joy, peace.

Ryan: So those all things would fall under the category of life. And the other fruits of the flesh would be under the category of death.

Selena: Right. It's not going to reproduce; it's just going to take you down towards death. There's not going to be fruitfulness, there will be end and death of the things that God has determined for us to be fruitful in. So I think that it's important that we see joy as a fruit of the Spirit, as something being produced, as something that leads to more fruitfulness.

But we can only be fruitful as it is produced in us, and as we are abiding in Christ, and as He is our joy, knowledge of Him, knowing Him, being in a relationship with Him, being filled with God, the Holy Spirit. So again, we see joy is very intertwined with gladness. It is the joy of knowing our God is our strength. Joy is a fruit of the Holy Spirit, it's something that produced in us. It is also an expression or an imperative of gladness. We talk about rejoicing. Do you want to say something?

Ryan: Well, I know we're going to move on to the next point. But I can't help but think that joy is the gateway fruit into the rest of these. Because here's the order. And again, I don't want to speculate here, but the fruit of the Spirit is first it's love, then joy, then peace, then patience, then kindness. So if we struggle with love, which we've talked about love ad nauseam because it's a marriage podcast and the true nature of love, and how Christ is the fuel and the foundation of our love.

What if the next thing after that? The natural thing is joy. Think of when we fell in love. I know that we don't use that term often. *[Selena chuckles]* But when I was just like, "Who is this girl? And I want to spend my life with her," yes, the very next emotion was joy. It was joy. And not to say that I was walking in step with the Spirit at that moment.

Selena: You were.

Ryan: Actually I probably was, by His grace, I didn't know it. But the point is that maybe there's this progression to human emotional attachment. There's kind of dominoes being pushed over?

Selena: Well, I was just looking at the different translations of that order, and they seem to stay in the same order, no matter the translation.

Ryan: Oh, my question is, did Paul intend the order to be significant in a way? Or he was just listing things off? Is it a bulleted list or a numbered list? That's what I want to know. *[both chuckles]*

Selena: I don't know, I think there could be a case for that for sure. Case made for that.

Ryan: And so in that way, it's a gateway. Like joy becomes this gateway into peace, and patience, and kindness toward each other, in general. If I'm feeling joyful, I'm going to have more peace with you, more kindness towards you, more patience towards you. Anyway, we can go on to the next piece. I really want to talk about the abide side of this.

Selena: We'll get there.

Ryan: Welcome to the abide side.

Selena: We're almost there. Philippians 4:4-5 says, "Rejoice in the Lord always, again I say rejoice." So he actually opens it up, so again, we see this shout for joy. The whole section is "Rejoice in the Lord." Maybe I'm in the wrong... it keeps giving me the BSB version.

But encouragement, exhortation, prayer. "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

Again, you see, joy and then peace in that order, in the section. But again joy as an expression. We see "shout for joy" in the Old Testament a lot, like Isaiah 4:9-13, Psalms 9:8-14, these are imperatives commands. You shout for joy. It's the implied "You." So what am I supposed to be doing? How am I supposed to be approaching the throne with shouts of joy or rejoicing?

We see the rejoicing with, like you said, Mary and the birth of Jesus in Luke 2:10, of them saying, "But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid I'm bringing good news, news that will be cause for great joy or cause you to rejoice for all the people, Savior is Christ the Lord.'" So we see joy used, again, as announcements, expressions. It's you're looking at the different angles, I think, is what we're trying to do to define joy of what it is.

In James 1:2, this is the last one before we jump into John 15, which is where we'll stay for the rest of the episode here, it's talking about "Consider it pure joy, my brothers, when you encounter trials of many kinds," in your marriage, that's my version, "because the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Allow perseverance to finish its work so that you may be mature and complete not lacking in anything."

So we see that we are able to count trials as joy, as pure joy, not just joy. I don't even know what that [inaudible] happiness mean.

Ryan: So here's where I want to begin tease it out a little bit more, because if we say "Consider the trials joy..." It says it "Count it as joy, because you know that trials will produce perseverance, and testing of your faith produces perseverance." I forget the exact wording. But the point I want to make is, he's not saying, "Don't fake it till you make it." He's not saying "Just consider it joy." It's joy. You're saying, "No, it's terrible, I'm in a trial right now."

Selena: Let's look at this with sober judgement.

Ryan: He's not saying that. He's saying, "Okay, you're in a trial and that's horrible, here's a joyful thing about it, though, is that through that trial, you'll have perseverance." It's the same reason anyone goes to the gym and wants get stronger, or do the exercises-

Selena: Do the exercises.

Ryan: ...or who runs sprints or whatever, because they want to get faster. It's hard at the moment, but you're doing it because there's a greater joy set before you. That's the name of the Christian faith, it's for the joy set before us.

And so we don't feel the fullness of eternal joy right now. But it's for that joy that we continue in these trials, knowing that that will produce the perseverance that we need to continue onward in this path. And in marriage, I feel that's especially prevalent because marriage is for life. It's meant to be for life.

And so, when you're in a trial, you can look at it and say, with your Holy Spirit glasses on, with your Holy Spirit perspective, that's the most corny way of saying it, you can say, "I know that this trial will produce perseverance which will, by God's grace, I'm hoping that it will produce a more joy-filled marriage, a more steadfast marriage, and all the fruits that I so desperately want."

You're talking about the nature of joy, and I know you're going to go to the John 15 piece, but I wanted to do a quick little sidebar on Psalm 42. And the reason is I'm very intrigued by the idea and the correlation between desires and joy and how God will transform the desires of our hearts to allow us to find greater joy in the things that He finds joy in.

We had prayed around I think either the breakfast table or dinner table in the last day, Lord help us... maybe was before the podcast, help us hate sin as much as you hate sin. Help us take joy in righteousness. You take pleasure and joy in your own righteousness in your own character.

And so I'm reading in Psalm 42, it's the "As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God? My tears have been my food day and night, while they say to me all the day long, 'Where is your God?' These things I remember, as I pour out my soul: how I would go with the throng and lead them in procession to the house of God with glad shouts and songs of praise, a multitude keeping festival. Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation and my God. My soul is cast down within me; therefore I remember you..."

So you see this desire and the language "As the deer pants for flowing streams, my soul pants for you, O, God." That desire is so palpable that it's as if I am just parched and thirsty. And then he's saying, "In this moment of thirst, why

are you cast down? Hope again in your God. Hope in God, for I shall again praise Him." And so I don't know, that correlation between desire and hope fulfilled, and therefore joy. So if our desires-

Selena: So desire plus hope fulfilled equals joy, is that what we're saying?

Ryan: Well, again, going back to the flesh versus the spirit, if I'm walking in step with the spirit, I'm saying, "God, align my desires with yours." The Bible says, "Delight yourself in the Lord, He will give you the desires of your heart." And the way to read that, is not He'll give you what you want, but instead, He'll transform your desires, He'll grant to you the desires that He wants you to have, and He'll implant them in you. When you delight yourself in the Lord, your desires are changed. And now I am hoping in Him for the things that He... My will is still aligned with Him.

Selena: I want what He wants.

Ryan: I want what He wants, thank you. And then the hope-fulfilled is God's sovereign will fulfilled, His providential will, His decree fulfilled, righteousness in the life of a sinner, the dead are made alive. And now from there, this hope fulfilled wells forth the spring of joy. A hope fulfilled is a wellspring of joy.

And so I don't know, I just think that correlation between desire. So a lot of times when we approach this joy conversation in marriage, people say, "Help me just have a happier marriage." And the quick answer is, "hey, go on a date, have some fun together, be friends."

Selena: Rekindle your friendship.

Ryan: That's part of it. That's part of it. But what I'm here to say is that maybe there's a desire that needs to be just even deeper than we realize. To want what God wants for our marriage, not just what we want for our marriage. But to say, "God help my marriage be the marriage you want it to be, because my hope is in you. And then when that hope is fulfilled, by God's grace, then that joy wells up from a much deeper place as opposed to just maybe the more surfacey happiness and joy that we would hope to experience. A little bit of sidebar, but I just think that desire is so important.

So if you're sitting here and saying, "I don't know how to want that more," that's the beginning is you just ask God, "God make me want what you want. Make me hunger and thirst for your righteousness. Transform my desires to be in line with your will. I only want what you want, Lord Jesus. Help me in that." That's the beginning of that. And then I'm just saying buckle up, because

God has a way of bringing His desires into your heart when you invite Him into that place.

Selena: So good. So John 15, we just got a little bit more time here I think. We are going to read verses 1 through 11. We don't have that much time. And talking about joy... I'll just read it and then we'll talk about it, because the last verse is kind of the hook here. Verse 1, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit.

Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full."

Ryan: Wow.

Selena: So we were talking about this before.

Ryan: You got to go to two more verses. "This is my commandment that you love one another-

Selena: Okay, I was going to.

Ryan: Oh, really?

Selena: I was, but then I was like, [inaudible].

Ryan: "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you." It goes on. The point is, all that talk to about abiding, abiding, abiding, joy being fulfilled in that. And then the commandment is "Love one another as I have loved you." Which to me is profound, especially in marriage.

Selena: Yes, absolutely. No, absolutely. And so, if we pick apart this whole passage, the last part was where I wanted to start because it was so big of "the things that I've spoken to you that my joy may be in you." These are red letters, so these are Jesus talking, that Jesus' joy may be in us and that our joy will be full.

I was just so taken back by that passage because I don't tend to think of myself as being someone that God takes joy in, I think just because I see all the flaws. And again, I'm being sanctified on my own path. And so there's room for joy to be known and discovered in this, I guess, is what I'm trying to dig out and hopefully encourage you as listeners is that when we are abiding in Christ, when you... What did you say? You said, like abiding in Him or a joy fulfilled desire. Desire and a joy fulfilled, or a hope fulfilled equals joy. When we abide in Him, our desires become of Him and they're His desires.

Ryan: And that's the piece I wanted to pause, because you said, you didn't know how you could bring joy to God in that way, that He would take joy in you. And that's where I would say, yeah, because if you're glorifying Him, He's the only one that rightfully wants His own glory because He's God. Anything else would be idolatrous. He only wants His own glory.

And so He's not loving you to glorify you, He's loving you, because you're glorifying Him. And there's a delight there, and there's a joy that's being fulfilled in you glorifying Him.

Selena: Well, and then our joy is full.

Ryan: Because He is the giver of all joy and He's the vine. We're not the vine. We're just a branch.

Selena: We are just a branch. I love that He says it's so many times, He's identifying it. Because oftentimes, we want to be the vine, we want to be the vinedresser. We want to be the one who cuts off, we want to be the one who's right, who decides where the growth is going to happen. And Jesus saying, "You can do nothing apart from me. So understand you are not the vine, I am the vine, you are the branches. This is how you glorify me. This is how you live. It's abiding in my love, abiding in who I am. Joy comes from this, joy comes from me." Joy comes from the fullness of who God is, knowing experiencing, and living into that.

Ryan: Abide is 10 times in 10 verses. So it's a pretty important thing.

Selena: Pretty important thing.

Ryan: I challenge you to find another place in Scripture where there's the same thing said 10 times over 10 verses.

Selena: So the nature of joy, like how do we abide in our marriage? How do we abide and find joy?

Ryan: You mean how do we abide in Christ within our marriage?

Selena: Right, sorry.

Ryan: So that's going to be maybe the couple's conversation challenge. Selena, I asked you what... because I got a little irritated, because I've heard this before, and I'm like, "What does it mean to abide in Christ? Because we say, "Abide in Christ and you'll have joy." I feel like we need a little bit more of "how do I abide in Him?" How?

Selena: How do I abide?

Ryan: Tell me how. Just tell me the way to go?

Selena: I can't tell you how things grow. *[both chuckles]* I'm just saying that there's fruit that comes from abiding, and that fruit is the proof that you are abiding in Christ. And so, "abiding" to me would mean you are obedient to His commands, to the Word, you're in the Word. So you know the Word, so you're able to be obedient to the Word following Jesus' example. You're living free from habitual sin. Again, knowing the Word, not living in sin seems pretty on par with where you should be.

And I would include... I just think of like worship community and Bible reading and prayer. So those are kind of like the things that to me show me that, I guess at higher levels or... I see fruit in your life and I see fruit on all of these levels. I know that you're praying because I can tell when you are engaging with me in a conversation it is just dripping with Scripture, and goodness, and pure and true. Those things that we're called to think on in Philippians.

So when you were in the Word, when you are praying, when we are in community, with the body of Christ, and we are worshipping Him. Those to me are indicators, like, active, in all of those areas you will see fruit.

Ryan: They're indicators. That's what I want to hover around because those aren't necessarily how to abide-

Selena: No.

Ryan: ...because that becomes legalism.

Selena: Absolutely.

Ryan: Although all those things are in line with a life that is abiding in Christ. The abiding has to do with trust, and belief, and saying, "God, you're God, I am not." Proverbs 10:12, I think, it says, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Fear of the Lord is not, "I'm afraid of you, God." That's part of it, but it's God, "You're God and I'm not." You've heard us say this a lot.

Selena: You are the vine, I am not.

Ryan: And so what is that posture there? That's a humble posture. "God, I am not God. You are God, I am not. I need you. I trust you. Help me. Help me live, and help me trust in you and help me to abide in..." See how the posture changes?

Selena: Mm-hmm.

Ryan: And what happens when you trust God so deeply and so intensely, that you want Him so badly? What do you do? You start going to hear His voice, you start praying, you start going to the Word to hear what He has to say. You start saying, "God, your word, says this hard thing. I'm not going to sit over in authority to your word. I want to let your authority sit over me. You tell me what to do."

Selena: I'm going to learn to come under it.

Ryan: "And I'm not going to filter what you say or cherry-pick what you say so that I can just make myself feel better. But instead, I am going to put myself under your authority." That to me is the very beginning of abiding. And that's the very beginning of a life that has all the things that you've said. And you said that at the outset, these are indicators. And so as a result, you'll end up getting in Scripture. You'll end up being true Christian community, because you're realizing this is the body of Christ, and she's beautiful, and she's multifaceted. And there's people that I need to help me in the body.

And you pray because you need God. You worship Him as a family because you want to glorify Him. So that's the big question. I think the couple's conversation challenge is, go to your spouse and ask this question: "Are we a family that abides in Christ? Do we want nothing more than to be glorifiers of God in heaven?" And ask yourself these honest questions: Do we spend time? These are evidence of our abiding.

Selena: Is there fruit?

Ryan: Is there fruit?

Selena: Do we see joy?

Ryan: Not "are you fruity?" *[laughs]* But "is there fruit?"

Selena: Oh, my goodness. Ryan is real preachy and sassy today? Yes.

Ryan: Is it sassy to be preachy?

Selena: Well, you can have a little sassy tone I think, or a little soapbox tone sometimes.

Ryan: Well, you're hypersensitive today.

Selena: I am, probably. So just to shed some light on where we're going to go, in the next few weeks, we are going to talk more every week about what does joy look like in marriage? Kind of even diving into things like the sources of joy, the source of our joy. Are we expecting biblical joy in the world's sources of joy, right?

Sometimes I think we want that deep, eternal joy, or we're looking for some sort of fulfillment in something that was never designed... Or even our spouse was not designed to fulfill us in that way. Even talking about joy in trials, and what is the lack of joy. If you look at the Old Testament, the lack of joy was often an indicator of disobedience.

Ryan: Wow. Wow.

Selena: And then how can we be producers of joy? What does that mean? What does that look like? These are not in stone of where we are going but this is kind of the...

Ryan: I would imagine that we would look, especially in terms of delight and desire around joy in the various aspects and areas of marriage. So, like intimacy, I don't know where we're going to go exactly with this. But how do you delight in one another and take joy in your intimate life.

So I don't know. It'll be interesting to see how this theme unfolds in the coming weeks. So make sure you subscribe and follow us so you don't miss any of that. But again, couple's conversation challenge, ask yourself, "Are we abiding in Christ in our marriage? Is there evidence of our abiding?" And what does that evidence look or not look like in your marriage?

And just have an honest conversation. And wherever you end in that, just pray. Pray, "God help us to want what you want. Help us to reject what you reject and to hate what you hate, namely, the sin in our own lives, so that we can live lives that are more glorifying to you."

Well, I'll pray for us and we'll call it... okay? All right. I got the head nod. Lord, I thank you for your word, that you didn't have to give us a Scripture but you did. You revealed yourself, you showed us how to please you, you showed us your law, which was a grace in itself. But then you realized that we were too sinful and inadequate to fulfill the law, so you fulfilled the law yourself. And you gave us yourself as a reward for fulfilling the law.

So Lord I thank you for your unmatched and unmerited grace in our lives to even be having this conversation. I pray for the couples listening to this, that they would behold you in all your glory. And that they would, from beholding you, have this rich, deep welling up within them desire to please you, to follow you, to walk in step with you, Holy Spirit, to walk in unity with one another, for their good for Your glory.

God, I pray that you would strengthen the couples listening to this, the husbands the wives listening to this. Bolster them, Lord, and uphold them with your spirit, with your hope, and with your peace. Lord, without you we are hopeless, without you we are helpless. So we look to you Holy Spirit for only what you can do and is to rescue us, and continue guiding us and leading us, and guiding these couples. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Selena: Amen.

Ryan: All right, as a reminder, go ahead, if you haven't yet, check out gospelcenteredmarriage.com. We mentioned at the outset that is our online learning platform for couples. It helps couples get on the same page finally, and once and for all, in terms who are we in Christ and how are we to live as a married couple?

And then we give you a monthly, I guess, the enrichment courses that are meant to be done in one or two sittings. Anyway, go to gospelcenteredmarriage.com and check out the different plans there. Our hope is that it's something that can become part of the culture of your marriage. So that you can continually grow in the things of God, and not current stagnant as a married couple, and deepening your joy as a result. So with that said, I hope you take us up on that. And this episode of the Fierce Marriage Podcast is—

Selena: In the can.

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

Selena: Stay fierce.

[00:57:20] <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

- **[00:17:21]**
 - Scripture references:
 - Nehemiah 8:10, ESV

- **[00:21:41]**
 - Scripture references:
 - Galatians 5, ESV

- **[00:36:02]**
 - Scripture references:
 - Philippians 4:4-5, ESV
 - Isaiah 4:9-13, ESV
 - Psalm 9:8-14, ESV

- **[00:37:14]**
 - Scripture references:
 - Luke 2:10, ESV

- **[00:40:39]**
 - Scripture references:
 - Psalm 42, ESV

- **[00:44:03]**
 - Scripture references:
 - John 15:1-11, ESV

- **[00:50:55]**
 - Scripture references:
 - Proverbs 10:12 ESV

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