

PRIORITIES AND UNITY Q&A

<https://fiercemarriage.com/priorities-and-unity-qa>

[00:00:00]

Selena: All right, we're at the end of our series on priorities. We just finished that up. And we always do a Q&A at the end of each series. So we got some questions for everyone. And we are looking forward to answering those. Hopefully, they will be helpful. And we'll see you on the other side.

[00:00:14] <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.

[00:00:46] <Podcast begins>

Ryan: I get my hunch that most of these questions we're going to work through them and address them. But a lot of it's going to be review. When we put these questions out there, we got a few questions from our listeners. We get a lot of questions from folks on social media as well. And sometimes the folks on social media haven't listened and they don't have the full-

Selena: Are you reprimanding them? *[chuckles]*

Ryan: No. That's why it's going to be review.

Selena: We know if you haven't listened based on your question. *[both laughs]* I'm kidding.

Ryan: Well, yeah, somehow this was your test. Actually, you know what? It's encouraging the one from the podcast... not no one. But we had fewer questions from the podcast side, because they all listened to the content. Let's dive into these.

I do want to remind you folks that if you haven't yet, and if this series is blessed you, if our podcast has blessed you, take a moment, rate and review. That means a ton. If you want to support us and be on mission with us, lock arms with us, be a part of that 1% or less of our listeners that feel compelled to jump on board, you can do that. And the way we have set up for that is patreon.com/fiercemarriage.

There's all kinds of benefits for being a patron including we do a monthly kind of meet and greet sessions with our patrons over Zoom. *[inaudible]* more personal, which is really cool. We get to learn your names, we get to learn your story a little bit. And that's just exclusive to our patrons. So if you want to be part of that, go to patreon.com/fiercemarriage. We ask you pray about it. If the Lord leads you that you would take that leap of obedience and faith into that. If He leads you. Otherwise, we'll keep doing this either way. And that's it for today. I don't know, do you have a specific order?

Selena: No. *[laughs]*

Ryan: I know a lot of these questions are very thematic though.

Selena: There's no kind of rhyme or reason. And I think one of the big ones here that we'll start with is sex. It was a good question. It was like, how do you prioritize sex when you're not feeling it and you don't want it to feel like another kind of to do? Because the whole point of sex is for it to not to feel like a to do. I think that's the whole point.

Ryan: I'll just say what I always tell to Selena, is like, "Listen, I'll give you as much sex as you want. I just want you to snuggle me once in a while, talk to me. Give me as much as you want." *[both laughs]*

Selena: Oh, my goodness, he's just waiting to get snacked.

Ryan: It's so true. I'm going to get snacked with love. *[both chuckles]* Because it's so true.

- Selena:** No, I think the underlying question here is, how do we get into those regular rhythms that show it's a priority and a value to us without being like, okay, it's Tuesday night, we're supposed to do it." And that's definitely happened in our marriage. *[both laughs]*
- Ryan:** I've never heard you announced it like that, though. I feel like that needs to happen more often. Well, kids are starting to learn things, though.
- Selena:** But they don't know those things.
- Ryan:** They don't. I'm just wondering, like, they're going to ask and I don't want to explain it. Not on a Tuesday night when we're supposed to do it. *[both laughs]*
- Selena:** Oh, my gosh.
- Ryan:** Anyway, we're trying to have some fun along the way here. So you were saying Tuesday night we're supposed to do it. We've been there.
- Selena:** Yeah, when it feels like a to-do. I think just to be honest, I think that there are seasons where it feels more like a chore and maybe a joy or an exciting fun thing, how it should feel, however you want to label it.
- Ryan:** And what do you mean by seasons? Are we talking months, weeks, days, years? What is the healthy kind of...?
- Selena:** I don't think it should be very long. Personally, I think if you're feeling like this on a regular basis for years, then there's probably something wrong. If it's a couple of weeks or a few months maybe because, I don't know, one of you has a job that takes you away for a little while then...
- Ryan:** Or you're just going through a funk relationally.
- Selena:** Yeah, or you can just be going through a funk and praying through it.
- Ryan:** That's what the covenant is there for, right?
- Selena:** Right.
- Ryan:** I think our longest where we've had struggles has been probably a month plus, I would say. [00:05:00]
- Selena:** Yeah. And in there, I mean, we still-
- Ryan:** We still make it a priority. So it's not-

Selena: It feels more-

Ryan: It's a lot more effort.

Selena: I think it-

Ryan: Because you're not snuggling me.

Selena: I think, again, looking at your schedules, looking at your capacity, I mean, we talk about first things in our priority section. What are our first things? We know that we're saved by grace, our identity in God is not compromised, whether we have sex with our spouse or not. If we're having a hard time, that doesn't necessarily mean we're falling out of salvation. But there could be indicators of sin that is there, there could be unconfessed sin or sin that is unconfessed and you're working through, like we said.

But when you look at the first things, and we're putting God's truth at our forefront, this is the authority. He is the authority. We know that He values intimacy in the marriage bed. He values us being intimate. And so sometimes the feelings aren't always there. It's not always going to feel like it's not a chore. Sometimes it feels like that. And I think it's okay. But when it's for long periods of time, then there probably needs to have some conversations about why you're coming to that point.

Ryan: So that's one side of this question is how do you prioritize without it feeling like another to-do? And you're saying, that's kind of okay if it feels like a to-do. But I do want to answer the how do we do it without it feeling like another to do. For that question, it goes back to what Selena was saying. Remembering first things. How does God value sex? Why did He create it the way He did? We talked about that in our-

Selena: The purposes of it.

Ryan: The purposes of sex. But I would also say it goes back to desire. So if you don't want to feel like it's a to do, then you want to give yourself margin to kind of work up the desire for it. Because if you're always trying to make it happen, and you're always at the end of your day, or at the end of your rope energy wise or patient walk, emotionally-

Selena: You're just empty.

Ryan: ...you're just empty at the end of every day, then it's going to be really hard to not feel like it's a to do. So I would say, give yourself room to act on the desire.

Because you're asking the question, clearly want it to feel like it's a desire and not just an obligation. So sometimes you can set yourself up for a better outcome or failure.

Selena: Right. Prioritizing margin versus prioritizing I think-

Ryan: Wake up early, maybe set your alarm. And this is really bizarre. And I don't know I can even do this. But I'm saying if that's the case, then maybe set your alarms so you have to be up at six, maybe set your alarm for five. And that's early. Go to bed a little bit earlier and see how that works. I don't know.

Selena: Are you saying have sex in the morning?

Ryan: Yeah.

Selena: Okay.

Ryan: First thing in the morning like going to the gym. *[both laughs]* Jazzercise.

Selena: Okay.

Ryan: Sexercise. That has to be a thing.

Selena: Sexercise.

Ryan: That's just a random idea. But you get the point. And that could happen with your weekly rhythms as well, where maybe you're trying to always make it happen on Friday night, and you're realizing that that's not going to work. So you try and set on a Monday.

Selena: And the thing was priorities again is having first things that are first things already decided. These are non-negotiables, this is part of our covenant, this is something that we have agreed to, this is what God has said is healthy, and these are purposed for our good for His glory. And if it's starting to feel like a struggle, we need to take a step back and not just look at it, like you're saying, but look at what is around it, what is the pressure that's starting to enclose and make it more challenging? And ask the Lord to give us wisdom and clarity on how to proceed so we can honor him in that way and in that part of our marriage.

Ryan: That's really good. Next one, self-care, quote-unquote, for both parties as a priority, i.e. is alone time to prioritize, and should I feel guilty?

- Selena:** So this was kind of a theme. I was seeing sort of two branches of this question of, do we make self-care a priority for both of us? Do you, Ryan, have self-care? Do I, Selena, have self-care? Should we prioritize that? This came from wives or moms, I guess. Is it okay to have alone time and prioritize that in the name of self-care, and should I feel guilty about that? I think a lot of women struggle with feeling guilty for wanting alone time or having alone time.
- Ryan:** Sure.
- Selena:** You know that we shy away from these words of self-care because they just have too much worldly connotation to them. [00:10:00] As Christians, we are called to die to ourselves, to our fleshly desires. Does that mean we're just running on fumes all the time and just being doormats? No. That means that when God is asking something, and we desire to not do that thing, we give in to God's desire and His commands. And what that might look like is prioritizing our time.
- I think if you make it a weekly rhythm and you know yourself, and you know your spouse, and you know what rhythms are healthy for you, your marriage, and your family, and in the name of better stewardship, not just in the name of I want to go on a spa trip with girls for 36 hours-
- Ryan:** Well, that's not bad. It's an attitude behind that that is wrong.
- Selena:** Yes. It's the I think the deserving, the entitlement, the "I need self-care, blah, blah." I think taking care of ourselves is very important to be able to do the work that God has placed in our hands of being wives and mothers, and whatever role you find yourself in.
- Ryan:** That's really good.
- Selena:** I think you have to, again, assess what works for you. But if you're spending more time on self-care than you are in your actual life, then I'd start to question some of that, if that makes sense.
- Ryan:** I mean, that some bold words, you said. I'm not going to augment any of that. You're saying it from the context of a mutually generous marriage.
- Selena:** Right, sure.
- Ryan:** So, in a marriage that's ideal, you're not having to fight for your own time, because you're both looking out for one another. That's the big kicker here. Because the world's view of it is you have yours, I have mine. I'm in this relationship because it benefits me. And that is true about biblical marriage. It

does benefit you. But that is not primary. The primary motive in biblical marriage is biblical love and a biblical expression of covenant and obedience to God in a marriage that you have committed yourselves to before Him and before your families and your friends.

So if there's a mutually generous marriage, I'm not going to just be waiting for Selena to ask desperately to get away. I'm going to say you need to have quality time with women that are going to build you up, you need to do things that are going to build you up. Just the last two weekends, you were gone because-

Selena: Yeah, two Saturdays, which is not normal for me. All-day Saturdays.

Ryan: Like 12 hour day.

Selena: Yeah

Ryan: And I was with all three of our daughters. It was wonderful and a little chaotic and tiring. But Selena came home and I was glad that she came home and she had a good time.

Selena: I had a good time, yeah.

Ryan: She wasn't like, "I deserve this, you better let me go or I'm going to basically be a huge jerk to you for the next near future." I'm just going to use this example then we can move on. But last night I got this cold thing. You might hear my voice a little bit. And two of our three girls also have it and Selena's has a women's Bible study on Wednesday nights. Today's Thursday. I didn't think you're going to go, and you're like, "Are you good for tonight?" And I was just like so deflated because I was like, "The majority of your household is sick right now and you're leaving." And I was like, "But I want you to go because I don't want to... You can. It's fine. We'll manage."

Selena: And I was very much ready to send the text.

Ryan: You were.

Selena: I was like, "It's fine. I'll just go next week."

Ryan: So you needed to go. In other instances, you haven't gone in that case. But in this case, you did and we were fine. And so it's a spirit of mutual generosity not mutual I got to get my own.

Selena: Nothing mutual about that really. *[chuckles]*

Ryan: Right. It's like, "You had a guy's night. So now I get a girls night." And it's like you're keeping this balance, this T account of who owes what to who. And that is exhausting. It's not the spirit of covenant to love. It's something else.

Selena: If you look at Christ, He never did that. And if He did, we would all lose all the five billion of persons.

Ryan: That's the mic drop right there.

Selena: There it is. Well, we did talk about the model of Christ and humility I think back in week two when we're talking about beginning with the end in mind, and who is our model for how we determine priorities and Jesus. How did He live? Humility, right? We see themes like humility, selflessness. He even had margin. He needed to go away into the garden and have time alone to pray.

Next question I think might be beneficial for anybody in ministry. It seems pretty straightforward. "My husband is a pastor. Any tips for balancing needs of the congregation and needs of wife and family?" This is a very [00:15:00] common, common question. I think we struggle with it. Even as church members or just a congregation yourself, like, how much do you give to those in need around you? And at what point do you stop giving? And why?

Ryan: I'm trying to think through this thoughtfully. Because I don't want to just kind of repeat the rote answer, which is your wife and kids should come first. Well, I do believe that. I'm trying to think, you know, what is the biblical model for this? Do we have one? Forgive me, I'm not totally sure. I think we have evidence for Peter having been married. I don't want to say that with full certainty. Paul wasn't married, Jesus wasn't married. I know there were marriages within the 12, within the apostles, and things like that.

And how did they manage ministry and family? We don't see a lot of that. We do see the fact that for elders, in 1 Timothy, the qualifications have to do with how well you manage your household. And that's the precursor to serving in the local church. An elder is synonymous with the biblical term for "pastor." Being a pastor, you might be a lead... basically, a pastor nowadays is what the Bible would call a lead elder, or the Bible would even call a lead elder. You'd be an elder who happens to be in charge of more things than the other elders. Nowadays, we have vocational ministers, and we have lay ministers, lay elders.

So I'm thinking through this, and seeing how family health and family governance, family management, and being the head of your home is a precursor to being any sort of under shepherd within Christ's Church, I think it

would say that this has to be priority. If that being the case, balance in needs of your congregations and the needs of your family is always going to come into the place of discernment.

You don't want to love your congregation so well that your wife is starving for love at home. That's a huge problem. To me, that would disqualify you from leadership. And the same with if your children are acting out, because they're never seeing you. Because all you want to spend time with so and so's family because they were going through it, which is very pastoral. But how does Christ view a pastor neglecting his home?

Selena: And there's always I think that inner voice in some of us, at least to me, where I want to help. I'm not saying this for everybody. But sometimes there's the savior complex of like, "I could go help them and save them from this" or "if I just tell them this or show them this or whatever..."

Instead of possibly in that moment, if my family is going to be suffering, and they are not sending me out, and we're not on the same page, and there's a whole lot of dissension and frustration, and there's a lack of peace, then I think that that's an indicator to me that I need to relinquish that responsibility, call someone else in and submit to the Lord on that and give it over to Him. Because I think anything good can suck you into thinking that you're the one that will have to... if you don't do this, no one can. That's the lie. And God is just like, "I'm sovereign. Yes, you're in their life but I can use other people." I don't know, I don't want to speak for God in that way. I just-

Ryan: All that being said, I'm convinced that being a pastor is the hardest thing that God can call you into doing.

Selena: The hardest. The hardest.

Ryan: And so there's a reason why pastors need to be surrounded by... we're big fans. And I think the biblical model for church is a plurality of eldership. Ideally, that plurality would be a majority of lay elders. So you have people that are objective to help you and to call you want things and to have you stepped down if you need to.

Selena: And can fill in. All of those things. So again, balancing needs of a congregation and the needs of your family.

Ryan: I mean, that's a huge thing is you're not the Savior, Christ is. That's tough to do when you're staring somebody in the eyes or they're calling you and you know what's happening. So there does need to be agreement there for the health of the family.

Selena: And tangibly I think that just kind of looks like, okay, on these days, this is dedicated to the needs of the congregation. And if there's an emergency or anomaly, let's deal with it. But for the most part, we know that this time is set aside for these needs, this time is set aside for these. And those decisions have already been made. We're not negotiating them at the front end.

Ryan: And your church should support you in that-

Selena: Absolutely.

Ryan: ...if you vocalize it and come to them. It's not you and them. You are the church. It's one. That's in Ephesians—we are one body of believers. Now act like it type of thing.

Selena: I wanted to go down here. I think this was another big [00:20:00] theme that I saw was how do I keep from feeling bitter or frustrated when my husband's priorities are basically hobbies? So hunting and fishing over the family—spouse, and kids. How do we keep from feeling bitter when we feel like the priorities are not in order?

Ryan: So there's two things at play here. There's the wrong priorities. Because it's wrong for a husband to put hunting and fishing or any hobby over their family. The way that looks is your family needs you and you're not there. You're there for the deer, and the elk and the fish, you're there for your buddies, but you're not there for your wife and your children. That's disordered love. That's a wrong thing. That's imbalance. There needs to be repentance and change because it's a form of idolatry. So there's that side to it.

The second piece is her bitterness, is her hardness of heart toward him. Sin has a way of ruining relationships. And so your bitterness, in some sense is understandable. And that's really difficult when you're trying to get through to somebody and they just for whatever reason, won't engage in the conversation, they won't recognize, they'll - what's the word? They'll gaslight, they'll make you feel like it's your problem, it's your fault, or that you're the one that's crazy. That's a form of manipulation. "How dare you not want this? Don't you want? I'm going to feed our family or whatever." That's another form of manipulation. It's like, no, she does want your family to starve. She doesn't want you to get your food from hunting half the time that you're off.

So the whole bitterness thing is, okay, there's some sense that your bitterness is justified. Now, you have to be careful where your heart goes in that. Love hopes all things. Now, love doesn't just ignore when they're being sinned against, but love would confront lovingly. So then the question becomes one

of how do I confront lovingly? Well, you go to him as tactfully as you can, with much love as you can muster, which as much patience as you can muster at a time when you'll have margin to discuss it and you bring up these issues, and say, "Your family needs you. Here are the areas in which we need you and you are not here. How can we begin having you here more?"

If he is not responsive to that, then it's time to bring someone in to talk with you and him together. A counselor, pastor, a trusted friend, somebody who can kind of stand alongside you in the rebuke. The rebuke is what brings us to a place of repentance. Now, it's his job to repent, and the Holy Spirit's in charge of softening his heart. And then the repentance is the trigger now for reconciliation. You can actually see the wholeness in that area. So hopefully, that was helpful.

Selena: No, I agree. It's so hard to keep priorities clear. We talked about priorities not being a list, but kind of those-

Ryan: Concentric circle.

Selena: Concentric circles. And so everything is radiating out of the gospel of being in the middle. So if you imagine throwing a stone in the water and those rings that go around a stone, and they just kind of radiate out, that is how we view priorities from a-

Ryan: Well done. Well said.

Selena: ...biblical and Christian perspective.

Ryan: Were you being tied into a hunting thing?

Selena: Yeah. Because I don't think they're bad things. I just think if they're-

Ryan: No, we hunt and we fish unto the glory of Christ.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: And this is no longer glorifying to God. That's where it should break down. And hopefully, he would see that. If he values the things that God values, he would see, "I'm not honoring Christ in this." Hear me now, husbands wives, even if she's wrong in this, even if he is only hunting once every three months for two or three days, that doesn't feel like a lot, maybe that's a lot, I don't know, even if it's imbalanced, and she feels like it's out of balance, then that's his opportunity not to die to self, and to be generous to his wife, and to love her through it, and to put some of these things on the altar. And hopefully, he

wouldn't grow bitter than that. But the point is, is there's the sense that we would always hold the trump card, and now it's our jobs as spouses to hold it lovingly and not be manipulative with it.

Selena: Right. Because again, thinking of those with the end in mind, it's not just about whose priority is the best or who should have their priorities be met first. It's about a heavenly perspective. And it's about living a God-honoring life and running the race in such a way that when we stand before God that He is going to say, "Well done, good and faithful servant. [00:25:00] You talked to your husband and you prayed for his heart before you talk to him and you were scared and nervous, and you weren't sure how it was going to go, but you did it anyways in a loving and gracious way. You bit your tongue when you know you should have, and that was good." You know what I mean?

So it's not just like heaven is out there and we're just here kind of making our way through here. God is with us. The Holy Spirit is with us. And we need to remember that we are not doing this on our own and we can find the fullness of everything that we need in Him. But we are still here and now. And so that means battling, knowing that we are not alone and that He is with us.

Ryan: Cool.

Selena: Somebody just wrote in financial priorities. It wasn't very clear. I mean, it wasn't specific. But I can imagine where the question came from on so many levels.

Ryan: At the root level, how do we spend our money based on godly priorities?

Selena: It's a good question.

Ryan: It comes down to these first and last things. The first things are, what are the big calls that God has placed on our lives? What are the big non-negotiables? And the last things are, what is the perspective and the context within which we live this life here now? And so if we have that perspective, then we know that God is our provider, we are not. It is all His. That's the first thing—it's stewardship.

This is not my bank account. It's not my paycheck. It's God's, and He is providing it for me through the work of my hands. Which by the way, He gave you the ability to work, He allowed your body to metabolize the food so you have energy to work. And by God's grace, you have the mind to be able to work. So that money is His. And that's the first thing.

Now, the question out of that first thing is, how do I live in light of eternity and this Father who has treasures in heaven stored up for me? It is an inevitable end that God will reign into eternity. And all of human history will be brought to this culmination in Christ's Second return. In light of that hopeful eternity, how can I forego things here and now based on the priorities of God?

That's kind of where I would stop the conversation. And now it's up to you now to live it out. Now, even the Old Testament mandate tithing of 10%. That's not imposed on us as a new covenant people. That's not it. But Jesus said more. He said, "Give gladly and give sacrificially." And He also said, by the way, "Give it all." Now what I mean by that is He wants nothing less than everything we have to give.

Think rich young ruler who turned away because he couldn't fathom giving up his wealth to follow Christ. Jesus didn't want his wealth, Jesus wanted his heart. And so if our heart happens to be attached to all of our wealth, then yeah, Christ wants all our wealth. If our heart kind of has a hook into some of our wealth, then he wants as much as it's going to take for you to give sacrificially and gladly because it means you're trusting Him.

And then from there, it's all about stewardship. How do you steward well? By the way, stewardship to me is full spectrum. It's not just how do you steward well, so you can have a return on your money. But how can you steward well so that your kingdom influence is not negatively impacted by some of the decisions you've made? I mean, like the car you drive, it's not just about can you afford it? But is it a positive witness to the kingdom ethic as this world sees it? And will it help bring people who see you, people who know you closer into a relationship with Christ, or will it repel them? And that's a tough question to answer. It's one that only you can answer with the help of the Holy Spirit in your context.

Selena: So next question. How do we get on the same page about what is a priority? He has his version, I have mine, how do we work this out and make sure we're on the same page as to what is a priority, what is not? And what does that look like, basically?

We actually did... I think that was week three or something that we did that on why we should be in agreement around our priorities.

Ryan: Unity, yeah.

Selena: When we are in agreement, there's definitely freedom and joy and contentment and life to kind of be had within our marriage. But unity often requires a lot of us. And we did talk about that. It requires us-

Ryan: How do they work it out?

Selena: Sorry, that's what I was-

Ryan: That was the final episode, right? I mean, that was the one on family vision.

Selena: I think so. Yes, fighting for unity.

Ryan: We have a longer answer [00:30:00] on that podcast, go check out the episode just before this one is the Priorities 4 out of 4. In there, we mentioned a resource that is free to you. It's an eBook. It's how to craft a family vision statement. And that's exactly what this is designed to do. Because Selena and I were dealing with the same struggle, where we actually were in agreement, we just didn't have any idea what to agree on. But this would work for you as well go to fiercemarriage.com/vision. That'll redirect you to where the family vision download is and this little guide on how to fill it out.

It takes a little bit of effort, a little of time. But if you're really struggling with this, and you really want unity, I'm here to tell you, it's so worth it. You'll get direction, you'll get unity, and you'll get vision for whatever God is putting on your heart to do in the name of the Great Commission.

Selena: Right. Right.

Ryan: Very cool. Here's one that I think is really tactical. How do we limit phone usage and really connect with each other?

Selena: Huh, these pun. It's very punny.

Ryan: I didn't even catch it. Get off your phones. *[laughs]* Phones are addictive. That's the hard thing.

Selena: That's their design.

Ryan: The hardware is designed to be, the screens are designed to be addictive. The apps are designed to be addictive because we live in an attention economy where your time, your attention, as far as corporations are concerned, are more valuable than your money in most cases. That's why a lot of the really nice apps like Google... like Google's not free, folks. You're selling your data. Because they're selling your data to people who want to sell you goods. And it ends up being worth more to them to sell your attention than it does to actually sell you stuff. So know what you're up against is the first thing. Kind of know the water you're swimming in.

Now that you're aware of that, I think creating really clear boundaries around it. You can only create boundaries if you know what they are. You have to define the boundaries, you have to then discuss the boundaries, get an agreement on them, and then defend those boundaries.

Selena: That was the series before this.

Ryan: Was that?

Selena: It's all about boundaries. Yeah.

Ryan: Was it?

Selena: We were talking about priorities.

Ryan: I thought it might have been unity before this.

Selena: No, the whole series before. We did talk about unity.

Ryan: Oh.

Selena: I think it was boundaries, then priorities. But yeah, the three D's of boundaries. Here we go.

Ryan: Define, discuss, defend. One of the clearest, I'll just give you really tactical thing is, no phones after a certain time. Because it's clear that if you're not at work and you're at home together, and you're not sleeping, then you're going to use that time somehow. So just say, "That time's got to be for us. And so to make sure it's for us, phones go off and in the drawer, or phones go just in the drawer on silent." Because what if someone else...

Selena: Always in the drawer.

Ryan: But they need to be out of sight. And there's studies that show that your focus goes up by like a factor of three or four just by having the phone out of the room when it comes to your work, your productivity, things like that. I mean, phone usage is one of these things. There's a lot of science around this.

Our friends, Nathan and Anna, they have a podcast called Gospel Tech. Check that out. He talks a lot about gospel tech in terms of parenting, games, social media, that kind of stuff. But he also does talk about it in terms of just tech usage. The tagline is "love God use tech." Tech is meant to be a tool, not something that steals our lives away from us. So check that out. It's Gospel

Tech. It's got a picture of my friend Nathan right there on the podcast and it's got a gray background. Hopefully, that'll be worth your time. He's a good friend, loves the Lord, and gives you solid advice.

Selena: You guys did naughty things as little teenage boys.

Ryan: This is a sidebar. So we used to hate each other whenever anything good happened to anyone. And Nathan made it to state as, I don't know, a junior wrestler at the high school. And so to celebrate Nathan's making it to state, we kidnapped him. Someone pulls up in their car, we just grab him out of nowhere. He was really strong. So it took like five guys. And we put him-

Selena: Nathan doesn't usually like these things either.

Ryan: We tied him to the bed of a truck and went through carwash in December. He lived, he's fine. He was laughing the whole way. His laughter sounded a lot like tears, but it was laughter.

Selena: I'm like, "Should we release this to the interwebs?"

Ryan: He's a good friend. I sit on the board for his nonprofit so he wouldn't dare.

Selena: He wouldn't dare. He sign his checks. Oh, I'm just kidding.

Ryan: I literally sign his checks. I'm not kidding.

Selena: I think we should ask this one question too, because I think that they're just where we find ourselves through this pandemic and jobs and careers. Like things have changed drastically. [00:35:00] People have lost jobs, people have had to stick with jobs longer I think than they've wanted to for a number of reasons. So we got somebody writing in saying, "How do you prioritize your marriage when your work schedules are opposite?" One works 11 hour days, on a second shift, not by choice right now as is time. And then she was let go because of COVID.

So they're lacking on time together. They also feel like they're going to be lacking on finances as well. And they clearly have children, because she says he doesn't have a lot of time during the school year either. So these are some big, big questions and things of priorities and what people are trying to deal with.

My tendency is to be like, well, let's maybe try a different job. And maybe that is a big thing to consider. These I do think they are seasons where we go through, our priorities kind of have to be shifted or kind of shaken around and

maybe even reassessed. But I think the big the bigger questions here are, you know, is this job the only job that we can survive on? Why is this the thing that we have to sacrifice for? I'm not asking in a malicious way. I'm saying, okay-

Ryan: It sounds like she's saying it's not by choice at this time.

Selena: I think the timing of the shift is what she's talking about.

Ryan: And some of that feels like it's out of your control, which it very well could be.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: We live in a really unique time in that there is a weird, especially now, but there is a weird amount of worker mobility and there's a lot of jobs and not a lot of people to work jobs. So I think your encouragement is just maybe explore some of those options. I love what you said, and I want to maybe blow that out a little bit is this idea of that you can do it for a season. I think some of those conversations are really hard to have if you don't have an end in mind, or you don't have like, "This is only going to be for the next couple of months. We can get through it together as long as we know there's an end in sight."

So if there's not an end in sight, then I would encourage you to put one in sight. And that's where you could define the boundary, and say, "Listen, this is sustainable for X number of weeks." It could be four weeks, it could be four months, whatever you discern is best for your family. Now you draw that boundary and say, "Okay, at the end of this time, if the situation is still happening, we will reassess at a minimum, and we will probably change it."

That gives you a very clear finish line. And the goal between now and then is to make it work in a very organic way, so you're not having to quit a job and go without the income that you're used to. Because there's wisdom in that. But really clearly defining, discussing that boundary.

And then when it comes time to make that decision, I would just encourage both of you, husband, wife, to follow through with it, to defend it. Because you didn't create that boundary arbitrarily. There's a reason it's there. It's to protect your family over the long haul. Again, with the first things and the last things in mind. It's not just about maximizing your income here and now. It's not even about having the lifestyle that you want, or even having everything that the world tells you you need. It's about something else.

Selena: So good.

Ryan: But all that said, it's not an easy situation to be in. You're not alone in that. I would also encourage you to press into the community of the body of Christ, because you'll be shocked at how people can help you. I mean, just-

Selena: Whether it's encouragement or meals or have other jobs.

Ryan: God uses church to supply for His sheep.

Selena: Yes, yes, yes.

Ryan: Let's do one more.

Selena: Okay.

Ryan: We'll finish with a fairly generic one. And it's just this is, how do we prioritize each other? This was a huge theme among all the questions that we got is we want to have a closer relationship, we want to feel more connected, how do we do it? And Selena, I love you, because this is the salty and sweet part. You're like, you kind of just have to make it happen. There's not a silver bullet for this other than recognizing how important it is.

Selena: Well, there's going to be sacrifice. There's going to be things on the chopping block. There's things you're going to have to walk through our conversations or say goodbye to or-

Ryan: I think the questions oftentimes are phrased around the idea of how do I have the courage to make the decision I know is right? And here we are to say that where we get the courage, we get the courage from having the perspective of our context of being already but not yet. And then we have eternity to look forward to, we have Christ here and now, we the Holy Spirit here and now, we have the hope that we have in Christ. How does that compel us to live?

That can either give us courage or can make us cower. Because if we don't really trust [00:40:00] that Christ is Lord, that He's King, then we're afraid. If we trust that He's King, then we can have courage to make hard decisions in the name of biblical priorities. So how do you prioritize each other, I would say trust Christ at the center of it, and then walk that out. Because that's what trust is. It's not trust us to pay Him lip service on a Sunday, and then do nothing different in your life based on his lordship.

Trust would say that "God, you will provide for us, even if we rearrange our lives to live more in line with your priorities and less with the world's." God will provide in that. I dare you to trust Him in that. I dare you to walk in that and trust in that. Whatever issue that you that you're facing, it's usually going

to be a result of some sort of misordered priority in your life. And so this is just generic. This is a general encouragement. Walk in courage, knowing that the conclusion is foregone, that the Lord will be king and you can trust Him in that. And if you truly do trust Him, He is trustworthy. So hopefully this was helpful.

Again, if we missed any questions that you had, and you haven't listened to the four episodes all about priorities, I encourage you to go back started episode one of four. Listen to all four of those. I'm sure that you'll find something that you can apply to your specific situation.

And with that, let me pray us out and then we'll call it... okay? Lord, thank you for this time that we get to spend talking together and talking to couples through this podcast. Thank you for the gift of technology, where we can communicate to people across the world, across the country. I pray that you would be at work even though we're communicating from thousands of miles away. You are at work right there with them in their immediate lives. Lord, may they be encouraged by that may they be emboldened to live out your priorities for Your glory and for their good. In Jesus' name? Amen. All right, this episode of the Fierce Marriage Podcast-

Selena: Is in the can. *[both laughs]*

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

Selena: Stay fierce.

[00:42:01] <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

- **[00:19:26]**
 - Recommended Resources:
 - eBook: [How to Craft Your Own Family Vision Statement](#)
 - Podcast: [Gospel Tech](#)

FIERCE MARRIAGE RESOURCES

Main Site: <https://fiercemarriage.com/>

Shop: <https://shop.fiercemarriage.com/>

Patreon: <https://www.patreon.com/fiercemarriage>

Podcast: <https://fiercemarriage.com/podcast>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/fiercemarriage>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/fiercemarriage>

Instagram: <https://instagram.com/fiercemarriage>

Facebook: <https://facebook.com/fiercemarriage>

Pinterest: <https://pinterest.com/fiercemarriage>

Ask Us Anything: <https://fiercemarriage.com/ask>