

MARRIAGE RECONSTRUCTED (IDENTITY, 1 OF 5)

<https://fiercemarriage.com/marriage-reconstructed-identity-1-of-5>

[00:00:00]

Ryan: Few things are as confusing in our culture as the concept of identity. Everything seems to be wrapped up somehow in a person's identity. We've deconstructed, we've redefined, we've torn things down. We've done in such a way that people seem to think you can just build things up into whatever you want them to be. And we're here to say that there are absolutes in this world. And some of those absolutes have to do with marriage.

So in the next five weeks, we're going to be unpacking the idea of identity, particularly how it pertains to your marriage and our lives as Christian husbands and Christian wives. So we appreciate you joining us and we'll see you on the other side.

[00:00:36] <intro>

Selena: Welcome to the Fierce Marriage podcast where we believe that marriage takes a fierce tenacity that never gives up and refuses to give in.

Ryan: Here we'll share openly and honestly about all things marriage—

Selena: Sex—

Ryan: Communication—

Selena: Finances—

Ryan: Priorities—

Selena: Purpose—

Ryan: And everything in between.

Selena: Laugh, ponder, and join in our candid, gospel-centered conversations. This is Fierce Marriage.

[00:01:10] <Podcast begins>

Selena: We just ended our series on joy.

Ryan: Joy!

- Selena:** [inaudible] the notes. *[both chuckles]* We're excited. Joy.
- Ryan:** It was a good series.
- Selena:** It was a really good series.
- Ryan:** I don't mind saying so myself.
- Selena:** No, yeah.
- Ryan:** I like how it ended though. I felt like it ended on a really up note with us talking through and just kind of... we had more fun in that last episode.
- Selena:** We did. I think I would like to redo some of those things.
- Ryan:** How dare you?
- Selena:** I do think joy is different than happiness in a lot of ways. It's up for debate. Go back and listen to the series.
- Ryan:** You've been convinced by the podcast.
- Selena:** Well, nah.
- Ryan:** Okay. Okay.
- Selena:** So go back and listen to the series if you haven't. I think you guys will appreciate it, hopefully. It's been very, I think, enlightening for us to go through these different pieces of the Christian life and understand them deeper, and how they apply to our marriage.
- Ryan:** And this series is no exception.
- Selena:** Oh, gosh, this is-
- Ryan:** This is going to be intense.
- Selena:** Guys, our team helped get the series, these lists of series that we would do and-
- Ryan:** Just a one-word theme.

Selena: Yeah. But the fact that it's happening right now, it's God-ordained. I mean, God is working through Fierce Marriage and through this podcast, and I'm so excited to be able to kind of, I think, share on some of those hotter topics with us. We didn't really see that come in when we first outline this, but...

Ryan: Yeah, yeah. So as we dive into the series, here's the overview. All right, we got five Tuesdays, and we do our podcast releases on Tuesdays and so we're going to do a five-week series on the topic of identity, which is perfect because we need all five weeks. You might think, how are they going to talk about identity as it pertains to marriage? Well, here you go.

Selena: How are we only going to do it in five weeks?

Ryan: So week number one, that's this week here, we're going to talk through the identity of marriage itself. Marriage has been endowed with purpose and design and meaning. And it's not been something that we've done arbitrarily as a society, or as people, but God did it Himself. So we're going to talk through that, and hopefully new terms. So before you fast forward or go to the next episode, I think it'll be really helpful and illuminating to think about it new terms, especially around the idea of identifying marriage itself for what it actually is.

The second week is our shared or collective identity as a couple to becoming one. What does it actually look like? Are we completely absorbed... are we resorbed into each other? *[both laughs]* Or are we... you know, we still maintain our individuality in a sense? And is that healthy? And how do we go about finding that balance?

Selena: That comes with struggles for sure.

Ryan: And weeks three and four are going to be fire. Selena, what are those all about?

Selena: Week three we're talking about roles for those two weeks. So the roles of a husband will be week three, and the role of a wife is week four. Truth be told, we've done over 200 episodes now, and not once have we ever focused on roles, because we-

Ryan: Gender roles mainly. That's going to ruffle some feathers. I'll just make sure-

Selena: Actually, it's going to be great. God's word is sharp, and it is a double-edged sword. And we are excited to bring that as faithfully as possible and-

Ryan: Boldly.

Selena: Yeah, and boldly without... yeah. We're not going to apologize because God's Word is true and we follow it and we're dedicated to it.

Ryan: We follow it blindly.

Selena: Sometimes.

Ryan: Not blindly but-

Selena: Faithfully. With faith. With faith.

Ryan: Faithfully is the word. So that's weeks three and four is we're going to define husband's and then wife's in week three and four. And then number five is our identity as a married couple who are also parents. So what does it mean to identify as parents and to put our mission to work in the field of parenting? You may not be parents yet, but trust me, you'll find it helpful.

Okay, so that's where we're headed. We won't spend as much time on that every week but we want to make sure that we're laying a very clear kind of trajectory so you know where we're headed, and you can anticipate and hopefully God will use that in your life.

Selena: So lay the land.

Ryan: Lay the land. There you go. [00:05:00] Before we do that, if you don't mind, it really helps us if you subscribe, follow, rate, and review the Fierce Marriage podcast on your favorite podcasting platform. It may seem like a small thing, but I'm here to tell you, it's about as big as it gets. In terms of the podcasting world, people listen to podcasts that have a reputation. And so that really helps us. Preferably a good rating and good review. But you know what? Be honest. We're going to do our best to bring the gospel consistently.

Next, if you want to go a little bit deeper and you want to be a part of the mission of what we're doing through Fierce Marriage and Fierce Parenting now, you can join on Patreon. Go to patreon.com/fiercemarriage. There are a bunch of tiers there, a lot of good options, there's free books, there's free rings. But the most important thing is that we want to be locking arms with our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ who care about the message of the gospel being proclaimed consistently, boldly, and clearly into the space of marriage and family and parenting in a culturally relevant way.

And so if you want to be on board with that, please pray about it, and then we ask that you just pull the trigger. There are a few steps to go ahead and join,

don't get bogged down, go the full distance. And we hope that it's going to be a blessing to you in return. [Patreon.com/fiercemarriage](https://patreon.com/fiercemarriage). I think that's good for now.

Selena: Okay.

Ryan: All right.

Selena: So we're going to jump into our discussion of identity of marriage. And I think we were-

Ryan: It's going to be marriage itself.

Selena: Itself yeah. Because I was starting the rundown and he's like, "That's not what I'm talking about." I was like, "Ahhhh, what do you mean by identity of marriage?" It was first identity in marriage.

Ryan: Yeah, that seems a little ambiguous.

Selena: It really threw me off. I was like, "I don't know what you're talking about. So maybe you can illuminate." But talking about identity of marriage itself and why does it matter that we define who we are, and what this covenant is. Why is that important now to know these things?

Ryan: Well, if we don't, I mean, clearly, we will-

Selena: We wouldn't come under its authority or live-

Ryan: You can kind of skate by if nothing's going bad. But as soon as something goes wrong, or you feel like the marriage is harder than it should be, if you don't have a strong-rooted description and definition of what marriage is, as God has identified it, then we might be prone to trusting our own wisdom over God's.

I mean, all of these types of principles it's not like... it's like you take your brake system for granted in your car until it's not there. You have to make sure that all that stuff works, and you're clearly putting all the pieces in the right places. So in every way, having a clear identity, having a clear definition of marriage from a biblical lens, it matters. Because it's going to govern how you deal with your finances, it's going to govern how you deal with your intimate challenges or successes, it's going to govern how you communicate, how you deal with conflict. But all comes down to this definition and identity of marriage itself.

Selena: Right. Right.

Ryan: So I think that the first question to ask is just simply this: where did marriage even come from? Now, a lot of this stuff is going to seem really basic and rudimentary. So just bear with us. These first episodes tend to be that way. We're laying the groundwork, so we're all working off this.

Selena: I don't think it's a bearing with us anymore, honestly. Because these are the things that are in question. These are the things that people are writing articles on the Atlantic about why marriage is not important anymore, or why society starting to think it's not a construct that we need to instill anymore. Which is a scary thing to think about, right?

Ryan: You're absolutely right. Where did marriage come from? That's a good question. You're absolutely right. Because these are what's in question. This is what's being fought for?

Selena: Or deconstruction.

Ryan: Yes. And as a Christian married couple, we need constant refreshers because it's under constant barrage of attack. Right.

Selena: Amen.

Ryan: So that's what we're here to do is remind you, where did marriage come from, how do we define marriage itself, the identity of marriage itself. And the first question underneath that is, well, who created marriage?

Selena: Right.

Ryan: I mean, you have basically two options right now, either man created marriage or God created marriage. Those are our two options.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: And so some under the man created marriage side of things would say that marriage was just a popular & cultural convention. It just kind of evolved over time, it was necessary early on for tribes-

Selena: It's quite a leap I feel like.

Ryan: Why do you say that?

Selena: Because, I mean, when you look at history, and individuals, like you're talking about, like tribes in ancient times, even if they had... maybe this is a bad

example. But like you look at Pharaoh... so we're studying CC, we're going to be studying the ancient times. When we talked about Egypt, of course, but you look at Pharaoh and they have multiple wives and they had concubines. There's still some sort of like covenantal contractual aspect of that. He didn't just have like women. They didn't label them as just like women, right?

Ryan: Mmh, interesting. [00:10:00]

Selena: There was an identifying piece to that.

Ryan: There's a natural exclusivity to that type of relational dynamic.

Selena: Yes. I think that if you're arguing that it was just a cultural thing, it's like, well, when was it not? *[chuckles]*

Ryan: Well, especially we talk in terms of monogamy. You mentioned he had plenty of wives. Like the monogamous biblical view of marriage, biblical design for marriage, which is monogamous, I mean, from an evolutionary standpoint, it doesn't really follow. It seems like if you're just wanting to make as many children as possible the evolutionary way, the strongest male gets the most wives, gets the most children. Then why would I ever just say one's enough?

Selena: Right.

Ryan: So how does that ever naturally evolve in a culture that is not leaning towards another law that's-

Selena: Right. That's why I think it's more of...

Ryan: Faith?

Selena: I don't know.

Ryan: It's a leap you're saying.

Selena: It's a leap, yeah. But I get it. If we don't think about these questions, "where did marriage come from and who designed it?" then we're just going to gloss over it and say, "Well, it's just kind of always been there. And I don't know if it really... you know." I'm assuming that the Christian marriages that are listening are just that: Christian marriages. But maybe there are single people and there's people that are listening that are like, "I don't know if I really believe in marriage, because A, B and C, and it seems like you could just live with somebody and have the same effect." Right?

- Ryan:** We had somebody on the Fierce Parenting Instagram feed go on a bit of a tirade on how biblical marriage is not... I just said it's not monogamous is poly... polygamous. There it is.
- Selena:** There it is.
- Ryan:** He went on this whole research, did all these different texts and things, and I'm going back and forth with this guy like... yeah, you're basically...
- Selena:** Oh, no, you engaged.
- Ryan:** Oh, yeah, engaged. I don't always do that with these types of trolls.
- Selena:** It never ends well on the internet.
- Ryan:** But the thing is the amount of gymnastics you have to go to to make that case it's very unconvincing. And never has it gone well with even guys like Abraham, or Jacob, or these other men who had multiple wives. Solomon had all these concubines. In that respect, it never went well for them. So I think that's a bit of a sidebar.
- The point is we're talking about a monogamous view of marriage. And it's not just a cultural construct. It's not something that just evolved because it was safer to have a nuclear family, because you could somehow huddled together as a tribe thousands and thousands of years ago.
- Selena:** We're not just getting married for the tax purposes either. *[chuckles]*
- Ryan:** So I think our listeners will agree with that. But I do want to pick out that a little bit more and say, what are the implications if we buy that even on a surface level? If we start somehow thinking, "Yeah, I'm a Christian, but we believe on some level that marriage is somewhat of a toss-up. It's not as clear as you think it should be."
- Selena:** Sure. Maybe not a toss-up. But maybe it's less of what we thought. Like, "I thought I was going to be more happy, I thought I was going to enjoy this life more. And instead, it feels like I was bait and switched a little bit and I don't know what to do with that. I don't know what to do with the marriage is supposed to be great and happy and awesome but it's hard. Should I have done this?" You know, you've been kind of questioning those things and you start trying to unravel your covenant a little bit instead of saying, "Okay, God designed it this way. There's got to be a purpose, right? God always has a purpose."

- Ryan:** We'll get there.
- Selena:** Yes.
- Ryan:** We'll get there. Again, I want to pick out a little bit more of the implications of even just believing a whiff of that, that this is kind of something that just evolved or to cultural convention, or something-
- Selena:** Or it's an option.
- Ryan:** It's an option, yeah. Or something we just do because it's all we've ever known.
- Selena:** Right. That's I think what I'm trying to say is that-
- Ryan:** I hear all the time people are cohabitating and they're saying, "Well, we don't need to get married. We're pretty much married anyway." But no, you're not. You haven't made a covenant with her, you haven't made a covenant with God, you haven't stood before your loved ones.
- Selena:** Right. Because there's a whole list of implications that go with that. When you stand before God and man and you say, "I do," you are saying I'm in a marriage covenant, and Ryan is saying that he's going to be the provider for his family, that he's going to stand before God and answer to how he loved me. I'm going to stand before God saying how I loved Ryan, how I submitted to him, how I... you know, all of these things. You don't do that if you're just cohabitating. You might think you're doing those things, but you haven't. You have not stepped into that.
- Ryan:** Here's my response to those men and women who would say that "it's just a piece of paper." And I'd say, "Well, what's the big deal? Go get it then." It's just a piece of paper. Go get it. Go get the marriage certificate.
- Selena:** That philosophy obviously doesn't hold.
- Ryan:** Well, the point is covenants matter. Making a covenant matters. And there's something in our guts that we know that to make that type of commitment is something else.
- Selena:** Especially as a believer.
- Ryan:** Especially as a believer. Even as non-believers I think there's a sense-
- Selena:** I think so too yeah.

Ryan: Like you talk to any... not any couple because there are some weird couples out there. But you talk to most couples- *[Selena chuckles]*

Selena: You're not that, listener. You're not that.

Ryan: You talk to most couples and they'll say, "Hey, would you be okay if your husband cheats on you, even if you're not a Christian?" And they'd always say no, no. Like there's a sense that this is an exclusive commitment to [00:15:00] one another, that we're going to be faithful to one another. And that's not just a cultural thing.

So the results of this are that if we continue to deconstruct, I think we start to lose the value. I don't want to go through some of these articles. We have an article from Gallup-

Selena: I think if you just summarize real quickly just what they're saying. A lot of it is, is marriage obsolete? Should it even be a thing anymore? Even when you look, you know, why do we get married? Well, big part of that is having kids. So is it important for kids to have two parents like that are married? Is that important? These are the things that are in question.

The Atlantic has an article called The Case Against Marriage. I hate to highlight those things. But these are the things that are in our culture.

Ryan: These are the implications of taking it off the plane of something that God created. Like if we're saying it's not God-ordained, it's just a thing, now you start having other questions like, "Well, do we even need this?"

Selena: Right.

Ryan: And as Christians, we can ask these questions in a much more covert ways. And that's why we see divorce rates and things that should never be the case in the church. Which by the way, I don't think that 50/50 thing is true in the church. I think a lot fewer professing believing Christians get divorced than non-Christians. And there's lots of data for that. It's just been misconstrued. Shaunti Feldhahn has a lot to say about that. She filled my ear one day on that. It's really good.

So here's what I'm shocked with. Okay, I'm reading this article on Gallup. The title is: Is Married Becoming Irrelevant? Here's some of the highlights. 29% of people say it's very important for a couple to marry if they have a child. And that is down from 38% just eight years ago. So you've lost nine percentage points.

Selena: It's a lot.

Ryan: Nine percentage points in eight years. You think about all of human history, this isn't even a pixel on the screen of the timeline of human history. And here you've lost 9%, almost a 10th of people. As a percentage of people who say it's important, it's a third—a quarter those people. That's unbelievable to me.

Another statistic I found shocking is that fewer Americans today say it's very important for couples with children together to legally marry. Back in 2006, it was close to 50%. It's 49%. And in 2020, it was 29%...

Selena: Wow.

Ryan: ...would say it was very important. And then you also see it for people who thought that was somewhat important actually increased a little bit. And then percentage of not at all important, that increased more, from 23% to 40% who thought it wasn't important.

Selena: So this question of marriage being important, marriage being designed by God and purposed by God-

Ryan: And being something that's outside of us. That's not up for debate.

Selena: Yes.

Ryan: It's not up for deconstruction.

Selena: It's important for us to grab ahold or live under the authority that it is, that we have committed and made a covenant with each other, and we are committed to each other, and this is what it means. Defining what marriage is between one man and one woman for life.

Ryan: And guys, we're going to get into what we believe it is very clearly, like Selena said, but I just want to highlight this because we have to know the context and what the water was coming in. I'm no anthropologist. I don't know all of the sociological history of this. But I do know this. The enlightenment gave birth to rationalism, gave birth to deconstructionism, postmodernism.

It's only been in recent history that people are questioning these things in this way. And it says something about how the affluents of a society, the wealth of a society, and the wealth of a people can lead to these types of sins. A sin. Calling something that God said is x, it's a sin to call that thing Y. That is wrong. God has said something, His decree is true, we'd better get on board with it if we want to flourish.

And we wonder why society goes this way or that. It's because for a long time we've been veering off the path of God... And I'm not just talking about Western popular Christendom. I'm not talking about that. I'm talking about Orthodox Christianity that goes all the way back to the ancient fathers, to the fathers of the Church, Justin Martyr and that whole generation, just after x. Anyway, the whole point is this is all so recent.

So what happens is you have married couples with their boots on the ground, they're doing the work, and they are failing in their marriage is because they bought this subtle lie, that it may be just a little bit debatable, that marriage doesn't have to be what God says it is. Marriage can be what I say it is. Do you see how that's problematic? And so this is very important that we get the identity of marriage itself absolutely, correct. Not just for us, but for our society, for future generations, for our churches, for our industry in a lot of ways.

Selena: And I think that's part of our discussion too is just getting [00:20:00] the clarity around why it's important. I think even as believers, we can say that yes... we can believe lies are things that we think God has said about marriage and in fact He has not. Was it Gary Thomas that said, What if marriage was for your holiness and not your happiness? For how long? And how many divorces happen because of this idea that we thought marriage was just for our happiness?. Well, when we weren't happy anymore, then what do we do? It's such a bigger question. It's about our holiness, it is about our sanctification.

And without being able to answer those questions and to have clarity around the truths that scripture gives us about marriage, we can't live out in this identity of what marriage is and why it was designed this way, and the purpose of it and the strength of it, and the mission of it as well.

Ryan: Let's just be really clear here. Again, we're here to draw really, really clear lines around what marriage is. So here it is very clearly. The identity of marriage itself is this. As Christians, we believe God's word is inerrant, we believe it's authoritative, we believe they're the words of God Himself and the canon as we know it.

So as Christians, we believe with good evidence that God created marriage as a covenant between one man and one woman for life. A covenant between one man one woman for life. That's a very orthodox basic definitions. Let's parse through that a little bit. As we've mentioned, this identity will govern all that we do and how we live and live out and view our covenant in all manner of season of marriage. So it is a covenant. That's the first one. Covenant. What is covenant? I want to ask you. Shoot from the hip.

Selena: It's not conditional. It's a promise basically between two people that I'm going to fulfill this, you're going to fulfill this and we're going to be together. It's not contractual or conditional. I think it has aspects of contractualness. There are some I think conditions that we agree to, right, the exclusivity of it, but it's eternal. Well, eternal of this life.

Ryan: It's for life. God's covenants in many ways are eternal, most of them, some of them. And there are conditional and unconditional covenants. Marriage happens to be an unconditional covenant. We'd see examples of that in the Scripture. So, yeah, you nailed it.

Selena: Yees.

Ryan: It's not conditional, it's not contractual, and it's this agreement between two parties that says, "We're going to adhere to the terms of this agreement, and I'm going to adhere to it regardless of what you do, and you're going to adhere to it regardless of what I do." Now, in Scripture, there are concessions given for divorce-

Selena: But those things didn't come until after sin. Sorry.

Ryan: They didn't come till after sin. True. Covenant existed in the garden. That's really important to know, thank you. But the concessions for divorce were given as a result of the hardness of the hearts of the people of God. And they were never the ideal, and they're never going to be God's desire for your marriage.

With that said, because He's loving, because He's understanding and because of our hardness of hearts, he's given us some divorce routes. We're not here to focus on that. Okay? Those aren't what we're majoring on right now. There's only one or two possibilities there.

So it's a covenant between one man, one woman for life. The second piece, between one man and one woman. We're going to be really bold here, but there's no other format under the sun that will honor and respect the biblical model or fit the biblical model for marriage.

Selena: I just want to let that sink in.

Ryan: Okay.

Selena: I think sometimes it's not just the words that we say, but the pauses that are allowing to happen.

Ryan: And I just want to go on even further. It's not two men and a covenant for life. It's not that. Even if they're loving, it's not biblical marriage. It's not two women. It's not two women one man. It's not two men, one woman. It's not any number of variations. It's one man, one woman for life. That's God's definition that we see in Scripture.

So what's the for-life piece? Well, once you enter marriage, the covenant is for the rest of your life. And here's the kicker. This is a really sensitive topic. A lot of people, a lot of really smart theologians still fight on this. But what's the nature of a covenant does it dissolve even though you get a divorce. And a lot of people would argue it doesn't. I would tend to argue that it doesn't. If both spouses are still alive, and you haven't fallen into one of the escape clauses that we see Moses giving the people or Jesus illustrating in the New Testament, then there's nothing that can dissolve that covenant between a couple. [00:25:00] That's a hard pill to swallow, especially in terms of remarriage and things like that. We're not here to get into the nitty-gritty of that but-

Selena: It's kind of presenting those truths.

Ryan: We're presenting that truth, that we need to view it with this, this level of sobriety. Young married couple, young engaged couple, young person who is dating or hoping to be married someday, it is a covenant for life. So don't enter it lightly. Also, don't worry so much that you never enter, you end up cohabiting and you end up sinning in that way. But it's for life. And that's a very serious thing.

Here's the deal, you guys, God is not just being a miser about this. He's doing this because it's for our good. And we're going to get into that next. Before we jump into that I want to jump into... excuse me, I want to look at Genesis 2:24. And this is kind of the quintessential verse. It's before the fall. It says, "Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed." So you had something you wanted to read about oneness?

Selena: Yeah. I mean, if you think about identity, right in this verse, "Therefore, a man..." So "a" being the - what? I can't even think of the words right now. I'm like, "Noun." "A", that means "one." Man shall leave his mother and hold fast to his wife, which is singular. So you have one man, one woman, and the two become one flesh.

Ryan: Wow.

Selena: So when we look at the meaning of "one flesh," in the Hebrew terms, the original Hebrew word refers to more than just a person's physical or sexual composition. This is a quote from Got Questions. They said, "It relates to the whole human existence. The biblical view of "one flesh" communicates a unity that covers every facet of a couple's joint lives as husband and wife. In marriage, two whole lives unite together as one emotionally, intellectually, financially, spiritually, and in every other way. The "two shall become one" in purpose. They are so close that they function like one person, balancing each other's strengths and weaknesses so that together they can fulfill their God-given calling."

Ryan: Oh, man. We spent a lot of time defining it clearly. I don't want to lose this in the middle of that that it's not just about the hard and fast definition. It is in a lot of ways, but God gave us this structure for our flourishing and for His glory. It's not something that He just said, "How can I make relationships as unfun and lifeless as possible?" No. God said, "How can I maximize their joy in this and how can I give them life and let them flourish in life through this particular institution that He's designing?"

And so here's what I want to argue and I don't think I'd argue that hard. *[Selena chuckles]* And we're asking the question, what is the purpose of the marital covenant? And I'm here to say, its form determines its function. So its form determines its function. In other words, the design of the marriage determines what it was made for. You just read that beautiful passage from Got Questions and we read Genesis 2:24, that two shall become one flesh, one man, one woman becoming one flesh together for these purposes.

I've outlined six purposes. There's probably more but these will get us thinking. So emotional. So have unity, there's love expressed between spouse. Song of Solomon is all about the rapturous love between a husband and his wife. And what a beautiful display that God have to give us. It could have been just animals, like procreating and done. Not pleasurable, there's no emotion, just you're compatible, let's get it done, now we have kids, we can live on for another generation, right? Or our DNA will live on rather. God didn't do that. He gave us emotional unity and the ability to express love.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: The second one is spiritual. So you have emotional, spiritual purposes of marriage. Now there's sanctification.

Selena: Well, and I think there's also spiritual growth. I don't know how to say it. We can grow together, right? We can walk together, praying for others together,

praying for ourselves, praying for each other. There's this unity aspect. Yes, their sanctification. I think no one will deny that piece for sure. Right?

Ryan: Yeah.

Selena: We are constantly being sanctified by someone who is with us all the time and that knows us better I think than sometimes we know ourselves. And they hold the keys I feel like in a lot of ways to the deepest parts of us. And yet, we can still look to them and they can look to us to have grace and to point each other to Jesus when we're weak and to hold them and cry with them and uplift them and faithfully [00:30:00] bring Scripture to them and speak that. So, I don't know, I'm just trying to present this image of pursuing God together spiritually. There's the sanctification piece and then there's this pursuit piece.

Ryan: So two becoming one flesh. This form is determining its function. And the functions of marriage are emotional unity, spiritual, sanctification, growth. The third one is multi-generational. And you've got procreation happening. That's where kids are made. The birds and the bees. That's where children are made.

The fourth one is missional. Fruitfulness is a language that we see throughout Scripture, particularly around the family. Fruitfulness we come to realize it's something different. In the New Testament, it symbolizes something else, having the fruits of the Spirit. The outcomes of our faith, loving others, and so on and so forth.

So discipleship in one another. That's a spiritual piece. Parenting, that's discipleship. We talk about that a lot over Fierce Parenting. And then our industry. This is something we overlook a lot. But the fact that our home is a mini economy, where we rely on one another in really unique and special and amazing ways. It's not just about baking cakes, and ironing the clothes, and getting the kids out the door to school. It's about building a life together. The industry of building a life together. That's missional. That's not an arbitrary, it's missional because you're building a life that is headed where it's headed toward deeper, reverence relationship, awe, and wonder of God. You're building that as missional work. That's the fourth one.

These last two, I'm sorry, I'm using terms that are...

Selena: You can use the terms if you can define them. That's the rule. *[laughs]*

Ryan: Okay. These are seminary terms. So missional is the fourth one. The fifth one is soteriological. What that means it's basically the study of salvation. Like the savingness of the gospel. What saves us? Soteriology is a study of what saves

us. So here's how marriage serves a soteriological function in our lives is that it's a shadow of the gospel.

When we're naked and unashamed with each other, namely, in bed, when we're making... obviously, making love, that sounds so weird, but it is what it is. It's amazing. It's a shadow of the gospel that I'm being loved, you are being loved in your vulnerability, in your nakedness. In all your imperfections, you were still fully known and fully loved. That's a shadow. That's a picture of the gospel. And that's what it's like to be loved by God in Christ. What an amazing thing to behold. And marriage serves that function in some ways.

The final one is eschatological, or eschatological depending on how you want to pronounce that. But eschatology has to do with the end times. Paul talks about this in Ephesians 5:31. He says, "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." He's quoting Genesis 2 there. And he says this, "This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband."

So it's a shadow of the things to come. Marriage is a shadow, it's a mystery. It's profound. And it shows us a shadow of what it's going to be like to be united with Christ as His bride, as the church being His bride.

Selena: So good.

Ryan: So it serves all these purposes. And its form has to do with those functions.

Selena: So good.

Ryan: So as we wrap our minds around and submit our hearts to God's view of marriage, it frees us up to live out these functions in a way that is more profound. And instead of abandoning it when it doesn't align with us, we can now cling to it, knowing that it's for our flourishing and for God's glory.

Selena: So good. So good. I guess we just want to leave you guys with some questions, maybe some challenges about this idea and this identity piece of oneness in marriage, unity, being exclusive, one man, one woman. Do we take this seriously in our marriage? Or do we get overly concerned with kind of our own individual identities and things that we want and we begin kind of slowly operating singularly versus collectively? What might that look like?

I think the quickest one that I would think of is just hobbies, things we do outside of work and family. Do we do those things? Are those becoming a

priority? Are those things that are kind of trying to squeeze their way into things that we've decided that during this stage in the season of our life as a family they're just not a priority? Are there things that we're fighting for and are they worth fighting for? Or are they just our individual oneness? Is that just coming out instead of we're not fighting for our unity in our marriage, we're actually fighting for the only thing that we want? [00:35:00]

Ryan: Are you prefacing? Because we're going to talk about that at length next week?

Selena: Yeah, yeah.

Ryan: And that's going to be incredible because we're looking at the actual what's the identity of us? Right?

Selena: Right, right.

Ryan: Not just two individuals, but we are a couple now, and we represent one another in a way. And so how can we think through those various things that you just mentioned in a way that's not just pragmatic, but it's principled and built on the Bible and not just what works?

Selena: Right. Right. And how can we do these things? How can we love and serve each other if one of us is going through a really difficult time? Can we even ask for like me-time? Where does that come from? Is that important? Or how do we have those kinds of conversations if we are now two as one? What does that look like? So those are things that-

Ryan: It's not codependency.

Selena: Right. Are there still areas in our life that we're divided, that we're not one flesh? I think that's just kind of to leave you with some questions, to leave you thinking for next week, we'll kind of be talking about these things. But the couple's conversation challenge, why don't you...?

Ryan: Yeah, I think it's just this. And you have to be really honest. This stuff won't work terribly well, this question won't work terribly well unless you're just honest with kind of some of the presuppositions some of the underlying assumed things about your marriage and about your life and about your own personal thinking. You have to be honest about that stuff.

And as you are, ask these questions, do I believe or do we believe that God designed marriage? Do we believe that His design is trustworthy? And do we trust His design rather than ourselves when we are in a struggle where we

can't find clarity? When our emotions don't point us where to go, do we believe that God's design is there for our good? Talk about that. And what are the implications of that? And talk about maybe your last fight. And maybe draw lines between your last fight. And maybe this underlying belief. And why are you fighting the way you're fighting? How you fight, how is that determined by what you believe in terms of God's on marriage?

Selena: So good.

Ryan: All right. Well, we're trying to get done a little earlier. So I think we're there.

Selena: We're really trying to kind of cut down the time on the episodes because I think we can do better. *[laughs]*

Ryan: Yeah. We just want to get more succinct and we want to help people more, and maybe that'll do it.

Selena: Do you want to pray?

Ryan: I'd like for you to pray if you'd be willing.

Selena: Of course. Holy Father, thank you for this time. Thank you that you give Ryan and I, the five loaves and two fish and you multiply it. Lord, we trust you in this and we trust you and your words, we trust your design for marriage. God, when we fail, when we fear or we don't trust, God, I pray that your Holy Spirit would continue to lead us on, that we would learn to trust, that your word would prove faithful as it does once again, to be true, to be powerful.

I thank you for your creation of marriage, for the purposes within it, for what it is, who it is supposed to be between. God, we witnessed firsthand in our own lives the flourishing and thriving that happens when we are obedient and we are under your authority. We are joyfully submitting to your purpose, your design, your creation. We love you, God. And thank you for this time. Thank you, for every listener. God, I pray that this identity series would be impacting and would cause questions and conversations to happen and that your truth would prevail. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Ryan: Amen. Amen. I feel like it's an apt time to just remind you, fair listener, that if you're wondering, how do we get on the same page on these big deep truths of marriage and of Scripture even and what the gospel is, and what love even is, and how do I even understand what covenant is, I'm happy to say and we do have a tool for you.

It's our online marriage course. There's a six-week core curriculum. You go through that in six weeks. There's enrichment materials there. Anyway, all that is available to you at gospelcenteredmarriage.com. We try to make it accessible for you so that anyone can go through it. It's not free, but it's also not insurmountably expensive. We want to make it accessible to you. But the thing is, is we can't make you want to invest in your marriage, but we hopefully can serve up a platter of useful good tools and courses for you. And that's what we're hoping to do. Go to gospelcenteredmarriage.com to find more. We want you to be on the same page. That's kind of our way of helping you get there.

All right, with that said, this episode of fierce marriage podcast is—

Selena: In the can.

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

Selena: Stay fierce.

[00:40:07] <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](https://www.facebook.com/Fiercemarriage) on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Thank you so much for listening. We hope this has blessed you. Take care.

PODCAST NOTES

- **[00:25:26]**
 - Scripture references:
 - Genesis 2:24
 - Ephesians 5:31-33

- **[00:39:10]**
 - Recommended resource:
 - [Gospel Centered Marriage](#)

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