

WHO ARE WE AS “US”? (IDENTITY, 2 OF 5)

<https://fiercemarriage.com/who-are-we-as-us-identity-2-of-5>

[00:00:00]

Selena: So when we get married, a woman takes on the husband's last name. But do we lose our identity in that? Not just as a wife or a woman, but does the husband lose his identity? Do I lose my identity to some point? And what is that point?

Ryan: Do we lose our individualness, you mean, when we become a couple, a collective, that is, the Fredericks or whatever your last name is?

Selena: Yeah. And what are we giving up? Are we called to give that up? And what does that look like? And what are we to gain in that as believers? So we're going to explore that today. I'm really excited about that. I know Ryan is excited about that. So we will see you on the other side.

[00:00:40] <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.

[00:01:13] <podcast begins>

Ryan: As a matter of fact, I am excited about that. *[Selena chuckles]* Thank you very much, Selena.

Selena: We were just excited on the other side.

Ryan: As an individual, I'm excited about this conversation we're going to have about do we have a new identity as a couple? So this whole month, for the last episode and the next three episodes after this one, we're talking about the concept of identity in particular as it pertains to us as a married couple. In that what is my identity as a husband, father, as your partner? What is your identity as a wife, mother as my partner? And what is our identity as a couple?

Last week, we talked about-

Selena: The identity of marriage.

Ryan: The identity of marriage itself. And if you haven't heard that episode, do go back and listen to it. It is a foundational concept for the rest of our conversation here. And the basic premise is this is, that marriage is not something that we created or we conjured up as humanity or as people, but it is something that is birthed in the mind of God, something given to us for our flourishing and for His glory.

And until we resign ourselves to His design... hmm, here that? Resign ourselves to His design, then we will always kind of be at a loss when it comes to understanding the deep truths of marriage and how to live out even in the hard times, and how to get the most joy and purpose from marriage itself.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: Okay, so let's start there.

Selena: Before we go that way, we're going to ask you to subscribe and follow. If you have not already, subscribe or follow. I guess the new word is "follow" these days with the young folks.

Ryan: Yeah, make sure you do that so you don't miss an episode. This community is built on the loyalty of our listeners. And that means you got to stay tuned in. Our goal is to earn that, is to be here for you and offer consistently to you value when it comes to your marriage and living the Christian life as married couples. So please do subscribe, follow, like, follow, whatever it takes. *[both chuckles]* And what's next? I jumped in. I'm sorry.

Selena: No, you're fine. Rate and review. If you can leave that five-star rating or whatever.

- Ryan:** I love how you're just always unashamed to ask for five stars.
- Selena:** I'm just asking. I'm just saying.
- Ryan:** I'm going to let you do that from now on. Good job.
- Selena:** But I think my personal request would just be that you listen to a full episode and I just stop it where you get mad.
- Ryan:** We get a lot of people that say, "Ryan talks over Selena."
- Selena:** What?
- Ryan:** You, guys, you gotta leave room to grow. All right? *[Selena chuckles]* I feel like I've grown.
- Selena:** We're working on it. We're working on it.
- Ryan:** Not right now necessarily have I grown. *[Selena laughs]* I've talked over you. *[both laughing]*
- Selena:** Why don't you do the Patreon?
- Ryan:** Okay, okay. Point taken. All right, Patreon. I mentioned just a few seconds ago that this podcast is built on the loyalty of our listeners. So thank you so much to our patrons. We've had a number of patrons jump on in just the last few weeks. We can't tell you how encouraging that is. So if you want to partner with us, please do so go to patreon.com/fiercemarriage. There are options there and tiers. And thank you so much for people who have jumped onto one of those tiers and gotten the benefits but also have given us your complicity in this mission.
- Selena:** Whenever you say "teirs" I hear of tears like crying tears.
- Ryan:** There's so many tears to be had. *[both laughs]*
- Selena:** Not level of tiers to give.
- Ryan:** T-I-E-R. Yes.
- Selena:** Words matter. Spelling matters.
- Ryan:** Yes.

Selena: It all matters. So our discussion today like Ryan said was or is about us kind of a shared collective identity. So who are we as husband and wife? We will touch a bit on roles but roles is coming in the next few weeks. We're going to take time to talk about husband's role and a wife's role.

Ryan: Oh baby, it's going to be good.

Selena: I've actually done that. So I'm a little nervous but-

Ryan: Don't be nervous.

Selena: God is good.

Ryan: This is good.

Selena: It is. So, again, quick recap of last week's discussion, because it really does bleed into today really nicely. [00:05:00] We are stepping on this path of like we all agree with the belief and believe that God is the creator of marriage. He's given us purpose within the covenant. Marriage is one man and one woman-

Ryan: For life.

Selena: For life. As Christians, we believe the good evidence that God created marriage as a covenant between one man woman for life. And this changes everything. We talked about how culture or politics or society, in general, is trying to deconstruct it or argue that it isn't necessary for human flourishing, which is obviously lies, lies, and is very false.

Marriage covenant brings two people together and they become one flesh. So we see this as a mystery between like the church and his bride. So we're going to kind of talk about that today as well. So before we jump into the two becoming one, I want to share a longer quote by John Piper for Desiring God Podcast episode that he did on this.

He said, "Here in Ephesians 5:31 Paul is quoting Genesis 2:24, which Moses spoke — and Jesus said God spoke through Moses (Matthew 19:5) — 'A man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.' Paul says this word of God, spoken before the fall into sin, is a reference to Christ and the church and contains therefore a great mystery.

What this implies is that when God engaged to create man and woman and to ordain the union of marriage, He didn't roll the dice or draw straws or flip a coin as to how they might be related to each other. He patterned marriage

very purposefully after the relationship between His Son and the church, which He had planned from all eternity.

Therefore, marriage is a mystery — it contains and conceals a meaning far greater than what we see on the outside. God created man male and female and ordained marriage so that the eternal covenant relationship between Christ and His church would be imaged forth in the marriage union.

The inference Paul draws from this mystery is that the roles of husband and wife in marriage are not arbitrarily assigned, but are rooted in the distinctive roles of Christ and His church."

Ryan: Yeah, that's profound. And it does kind of point us to next week's conversation and the week following when we talk specifically around the roles of a husband and roles and a wife, mainly head and helper, and what those mean biblically. But today, we're focusing specifically on the union that is the result of this beautiful design. Am I right?

Selena: Yes. So when two become one, there is, I think, some part of us that is lost in order for the union to happen, right?

Ryan: Yeah.

Selena: The first part of this discussion is talking about do or should we even like lose a part of our identity when we get married? How much of ourselves do we give up? Do we give up something? I mean, it's a continuing struggle, I think, through marriage. But like in our discussion before, the things we give up earlier on in the years of our marriage are not the same as we do later on in our marriage. But the struggle is still there.

Ryan: Absolutely.

Selena: The fight for our own desires, our own identity.

Ryan: Something you said though, it stuck in my teeth- *[chuckles]*

Selena: Okay.

Ryan: It's this: something is lost when we step into this covenant. That's such a negative way to look at it. And I'm not saying that we don't look at it that way. But I am saying that we see this happen a lot of times with couples that get married maybe in later stages than we got married.

So when you and I got married, we were early 20s. We were 20 basically. 20 and 21. And we didn't really have much to lose. *[both chuckles]* I felt like a young man. We dated for four years. I knew you were the woman for me. I felt like I had everything to gain. And everything I lost, I wanted to lose.

I wanted to lose the temptation. I wanted to lose the lack of being married to you. I wanted to gain my wife. I wanted to lose my singleness, I wanted to gain my husbandness. But if you got married young later in life, or maybe even after a previous marriage or relationship, you have a lot of stuff that you're bringing to the table. And some of that is lost. And I think that's a very beautiful thing.

Our hope here is to embrace that reality. Not reject it or try to go around it, but instead to go through it and say, yes, some of my individuality is lost. Is some of my identity lost? Yes, yeah, some of its lost because you're no longer a single person, you're now a married person. You're no longer single man, you're now married man. You can't act as a single man. Same goes for wives.

Selena: And I think we can look at scripture and kind of parallel this idea of losing or gaining. 2 Corinthians 5:17, Paul says, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come."

So he's talking [00:10:00] about the ministry of reconciliation. All of this is from God who through Christ reconciled us to Himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation. I think there's a parallel to be drawn in 2 Corinthians 5:17 when Paul writes, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come."

So just a basic comparison of former things and new things; former things and current things. So-

Ryan: Right. Well, Paul's talking about the ministry of reconciliation between the church and Christ. You're drawing a parallel, and I think it's appropriate. It's biblical.

Selena: To an extent.

Ryan: To an extent. That there is a sense in which just as we were in old, we were dead in our sin and now we're alive in Christ. Because of the ministry of reconciliation, of Christ on the cross, resurrected, bringing believers to life, the old has passed away, the new has come. In a similar way, husband and wife in marriage, they are reconciled together... not that they were estranged, but they are being brought together and a brand new thing is happening. A death of sorts is happening in that the death to your old self is happening.

- Selena:** Which is the cause-
- Ryan:** And now you're being alive.
- Selena:** ...for a new creation.
- Ryan:** A new creation. You're being made alive in a new way to one another, right? That's what you're saying.
- Selena:** Right. Yeah.
- Ryan:** Okay. So, Paul's not talking about marriage in 2 Corinthians 5:17.
- Selena:** No.
- Ryan:** But when we talk about the mystery that is between Christ and His Church, we can make those comparisons I think appropriately without overreaching between a husband and a wife.
- Selena:** And this idea of, you know, when we get married, we are taking on a new identity in that we are not our own anymore. In 1 Corinthians 7:4, Paul is talking... he's talking about the principles of marriage in that chapter.
- Verse 3, "The husband should fulfil his marital duty give to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband. The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband. Likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife..."
- So we can draw this conclusion that we are now a new creation, a new identity as to as two is one, and that identity takes on the idea that I am not my own anymore.
- Ryan:** That's it. That's it right there. People will read this, and depending on what angle you're coming out, or what you had for breakfast that morning, will read this and say, "What do you mean I don't have authority over my own body?" That is such a hot topic in our culture. It's not about losing authority. It's not about losing authority, it's about the fact that is no longer yours to be had. Does that make sense?
- Selena:** Yeah.
- Ryan:** So you have given yourself to one another. This covenant of marriage in a lot of ways it's unconditional giving of one another. He's talking about-

Selena: Both are reflection of Christ in the church. Right?

Ryan: True. And Paul makes that parallel very clearly in Ephesians 5, which we will talk about at length next week and the week following, also later on in this episode.

Selena: So I think it's safe to say that there are things that we lose, right? When we get married, there's things that we keep in gain. So I have not lost my identity in Christ when we get married. These are obvious things. I'm still a Christian. I'm one soul accountable to God, for the way that I live based on the gospel, what I believe and the decisions I make. So I am still accountable for my soul.

However, I am no longer single Selena or [inaudible] or just Selena. I am now Selena Frederick. That is a collective term now. I am a child of God first and foremost. That identity doesn't change. But instead of being Selena, daughter to [inaudible] Judy, I am now wife to Ryan. So we see these primary roles are being shifted, I am no longer daughter, or sister, as I am more so wife and mother.

Ryan: That's well said. I would say there's some cultural nuance to be had in here-

Selena: For sure.

Ryan: ...because the nuclear home is a very beautiful thing, right? A husband and wife, children, you know, the independence and the autonomy there. That's great. However, I think culturally we've lost much of the biblical sense of family and that the multi-generational piece still needs to be a big part of your family.

Now, in-law boundaries are real. I get all that. But we have this sense that, listen, they're out, we're in. And that is true in a sense. That's why the nuance is so important. But you are no longer primarily [inaudible] and Judy's daughter, you are now primarily Ryan's wife. Does that make sense?

Selena: Yeah.

Ryan: But you're still a daughter. And that's important. That's an important aspect of your identity. But it's just not as primary. You said that. I wanted to tease that out a little bit. We are for multi-generation families. [00:15:00]

Selena: I think that's important.

Ryan: We are honoring grandparents in this equation.

- Selena:** And having them a part. Going through the effort of having people a part of things. That's huge.
- Ryan:** One of the things that we... I don't know if it's time to talk about this, but an analogy of this is like when you have a Facebook profile and we have a lot of folks that that follow us and it'll be like, Tom and-
- Selena:** Jan.
- Ryan:** Tom and Jan Smith liked fierce marriage, you know, the page or whatever. It's a couple, they have a shared profile. And there's a lot of things... I think they get a hard time about having a shared profile. I personally don't have any problem with it. I think you do you, like social media as well.
- Selena:** I saw it as more of a deterrent for other people. Like, hey, they're married, like, if you're thinking anything, don't think those things go away.
- Ryan:** I never thought that way. That's funny.
- Selena:** That's why I have a picture of you and I. It's never just a picture of me.
- Ryan:** I see it as a most likely a wife who's on social media and her husband's not, and she is out there representing their families.
- Selena:** I see that too for sure.
- Ryan:** And she's a representative for the family and she happens to be the one that's responding to messages and liking posts, interacting, and the husband is just along for the ride, and he probably doesn't care. He's in the garage fixing the lawnmower or whatever. *[both chuckles]*
- Selena:** That is a lot. Okay.
- Ryan:** I'm broad-stroking in but-
- Selena:** Genesis 2:24, I think just encapsulates this idea that we were just talking about briefly of how the roles kind of change and how our primary roles when we get married take on this new identity. It says, "Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh."

So once again, the Bible says it perfectly. So if we are subscribing to that idea, we are in agreement with that, we are saying yes and amen, okay, but what

does this mean for I know that I'm going to have to give up stuff? Like when we first got married, I think the things that we gave up were a lot more blatantly selfish. Right?

Ryan: Yeah.

Selena: Like I'm giving up my pride to be able to communicate better with you. That's still a hard thing I think for us. Or I'm giving up - what? My own bathroom to share a bathroom with you.

Ryan: Time with friends.

Selena: Time with friends.

Ryan: We're giving up kind of our financial autonomy, and that I can just do what I want with whatever disposable income that we have.

Selena: Yeah, there's no like bigger plan for two of us. It's just kind of me and I make the plans for myself, hopefully, as a believer and Christian after God, you know.

Ryan: I'll jump in. Because as a husband, now the consideration is not just do I provide for myself, but now I have to provide... I'm on the hook now to provide for another human being in a way that you're not on the hook.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: And that's where we get into headship a little bit next week. But I now have to think about the decisions I make, not just for what I want to do, or how I want to live my life. But now how can I allow my wife to flourish as a fruitful vine—that's Psalm 128—so that she can be radiant, and I can wash her with the word? And that's, again, we're getting ahead of ourselves.

The point is, I give up that autonomy. And Paul talks about this. He says, if you can, stay single so that you can go and be a more effective minister of the gospel. But if you're called to marriage, that is still a good thing, do that thing now.

Selena: Right?

Ryan: But know that you're not a single man. You can't do what single men do. And that's we're talking about giving things up.

Selena: And it's interesting. So we look at Ephesians 5, the whole marriage passage. I mean, he begins with walk in love. I just love that. He's talking about what it means to love and be an imitator and child of God and how Christ loved us, gave Himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. That's verse 2 talks about sexual immorality.

But then we get into wives and husbands verse 22, "Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands."

Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish."

I don't know how far we want to go into this. But the whole idea here about husbands loving their wives... the idea of giving oneself up. I'm sorry, I got a little lost. Husbands are to give themselves up, wives are called to submit. So what's the different call there? Why didn't God say, give yourself up, wife?

I think because, for two reasons, submission [00:20:00] isn't giving up of self. But the idea to submit is a callback to Genesis 3 where God says, "The desire to you Eve will be for your husband, but he will rule over you." So when sin broke everything, there's this course kind of sin broken desire that is saying, "I could do it better than you. Let me just do it. I'm already on it. Can I just..."

Ryan: That's good. There's two-

Selena: That's the subtle version I think.

Ryan: There's kind of two lines of reasoning here, and there's the roles. Okay, what are you called to do within the family construct, within the family institution, husband and wife? We see some of that in the garden pre-fall. We see how the fall distorted those roles. We'll talk about that at length next.

But we also see now how we relate to one another. I want to make sure that you catch this. Roles have to do with the things we're doing, how we relate to one another has to do with the people we're becoming within the marriage covenant

So that's what Paul's talking about here. He's talking about husbands love your wives. Why is he saying husbands love and wives respect? The whole dichotomy love and respect. I think it's because husbands are naturally good at respecting, wives are naturally good at loving. But husband have to work at loving because we don't naturally just come alongside other men.

Like when other men are trying to commiserate and they're going through problems, it's almost like we just want to say, "Hey, do this man and you're fixed. Quit being an idiot, do the thing and fix the thing." That's not empathetic love. That's-

Selena: Wives don't usually respond well to that. *[laughs]*

Ryan: And women when they get together, they're very good at comforting one another and going through hard things together, and just, "You know, it's going to be okay." So they're naturally good at that. They're not as good at respect naturally. I'm thinking broadly.

Selena: Yeah. I think there's an innate rub those terms.

Ryan: That has to do with how we interact with one another. So our identities now have to take into account the other.

Selena: I think that's why God called us to this.

Ryan: That's what I'm saying. The husband now love. You have to be the embodiment of love. He's comparing it to Christ is the embodiment of love. Husband, you be that for your wife. Die to yourself. Give yourself up for her. Go down so the woman goes free.

Selena: The men goes down.

Ryan: The men goes down so the woman goes free. In other words, you have to give yourself up. Wives die to yourself in this way, respect your husband.

Selena: Submit to them.

Ryan: Or submit to them. And depending on our heart bend, that is nails on a chalkboard or a symphony of music. It just depends on where we're at, and how we're submitting ourselves, man or woman, to the authority of Scripture and God's word. And that's challenging. And that's a challenging thing nowadays. And we're here to be on that battlefield.

Selena: Right. And we will talk more about this next week. And we'll talk about how it is more complimentary for us to lean into and be obedient to God's Word in these instances of loving and submitting. And of course, there are caveats. I mean, if you're being abused and somebody is using... your husband is using the word submission, that's not what that by the Bible means with that. That's a whole caveat: get out of this [inaudible] and get safe. That's not what we're talking about.

Ryan: Yeah. I think we've covered that. There's a sense that we're giving something up that's worth giving up. It's worthwhile, but it's worth giving up in the marriage space. Now, who are we? We're Ryan and Selena Frederick. We are a family. We are the Frederick.

When I go out into the community, when talking to friends, in many ways I'm representing you. Same goes for you. When you're on the community, you're representing me, you're representing us, you're representing our household. So the question I want to ask now is, yes, we represent one another but you know, all of our individuality is laid to waste.

Selena: Right? Because obviously the Lord brought us together, right? And there's this idea of being complementary to each other. So when you and I got married, you know, our family of origin played I think bigger roles and kind of the hills we were willing to die on, the battles we were willing to engage in. Because we come from two different backgrounds. We have two different influences. Even our ethnicities, there's something to consider.

Ryan: Yeah. Selena, you came from a Hawaiian... half your family is Hawaiian.

Selena: Half Hawaiian. My dad is full Hawaiian. Yes.

Ryan: And I came to love that side of your family. Like we've been to Hawaii with our daughters, and it's amazing to see the culture. Your grandparents were born there and then they migrated... What's the word?

Selena: Yeah. Their grandparents came-

Ryan: Moved.

Selena: Yeah.

Ryan: But that's part of you. Now, for years, we never even acknowledged that out overtly, even though we always lived in it. But it was coming to embrace that as well.

- Selena:** It was just a part of our lives rather than like, "Oh, you know what, this is an important..." It's like when you have kids [00:25:00] you become more aware of the things you should probably teach them and show them and consider. And it's not that we ignored it. It wasn't that like I lost my Hawaiianess. But Ryan actually gained Hawaiian family, right? It's not something that I lose. It's not more of something that identifies me more than me being a wife, I guess.
- Ryan:** Yeah, yeah, absolutely. And it's a beautiful thing how then that part of your identity now becomes part of our identity.
- Selena:** Right.
- Ryan:** Like if you come over for dinner, and we'd love to have you over, listeners, for dinner, that's so fun, but there's a good chance that we might have something that you wouldn't have.
- Selena:** To eat
- Ryan:** To eat, yeah.
- Selena:** I was like, "What do you mean?" *[laughs]*
- Ryan:** What I mean by that is we eat more rice than I think the average like American household eats. And that's okay.
- Selena:** I think it's probably true. *[laughs]*
- Ryan:** And you're probably thinking like, "Nooo."
- Selena:** I grew up on rice.
- Ryan:** And that's just cultural. And that's whatever. And I've come to like think that's normal. But my parents come over and they're like, "Rice again?" *[laughs]*
- Selena:** Do they really?
- Ryan:** I'm putting words in their mouth.
- Selena:** Oh, oh.
- Ryan:** They didn't say that. But I'm pretty sure they're thinking about it. *[both laughs]*
- Selena:** I don't care. They can bring dinner if they want.

Ryan: They probably don't care. *[both laughs]*

Ryan: Retaining some of that becomes a beautiful part of our identity.

Selena: Right. Well, because then you're able to see how God is weaving your stories together, and how the history of your family, the history of my family now comes together. He's allowing us to create our own story with Him as the centerpiece.

Ryan has strengths and weaknesses and I have strengths and weaknesses. And typically, my strengths are some of his weaknesses, even though he has no weaknesses.

Ryan: That's not true.

Selena: But his strengths are definitely my weaknesses. And we become complimentary in that and we are able to strengthen one another through those.

So I am grateful for this whole coming together two as one this shared identity is it is a bit of a battle. I think the battle changes as we are married longer. I think the individuality definitely fades because we start understanding the goodness and depth and beauty of this oneness of what God has brought to us in terms of we're both two becoming one.

And so I love the idea of Ryan and Selena. God has blown my mind through our marriage, through our children. Again, we see this idea of head and helper, what does this look like? We're going to explore that in the next few weeks. But early on in our marriage, when we're asked to give up something or resign something that we value, that we want, that's always been a part of us in the name of oneness, how do we respond? How should we respond as believers?

Ryan: Well, we can't do it from any other place other than love and sacrifice. Again, we're talking about where the rubber meets the road when you don't want to do the thing and now your marriage covenant is requiring of you. And in the name of unity, in the name of peace, in the name of love, you have to die to yourself in some way.

Selena: Right. Again, we see this war between the flesh and the spirit. There's a spiritual warfare for our souls.

Ryan: And our response comes back around to whether or not we are resigned to God's design in marriage and saying, like, "Okay, I'm going to trust, Lord that you're calling me to be a head of our household." Now, this is how we have to

be so careful is that there's an authority piece to it, but that's not primarily it. It is a sense of "I'm to die to myself."

That is my primary job as husband is to sacrifice, to give, and love sacrificially. I'm leading from the bottom up. But Christ leads. Christ did not consider equality with God a thing to be grasped. He humbled Himself to death, even death on a cross, the humiliating death. That is what God is calling husbands into.

We've asked this question, what is our response to being asked to give up or resigned something? If I don't trust God's design, then I'm going to be at the end of myself. And I'm going to be fighting tooth and nail and you're going to be wondering, "Why doesn't my husband love me? He's not willing to love me in this way." And I'm thinking, "Well, why aren't you respecting me when I'm not... you know what I mean?"

Selena: Why aren't you submitting?

Ryan: Submitting myself to God's design. Anyway, our response is going to be dictated by the episode we just recorded and looking at God's design and seeing the identity of marriage itself as a good and beautiful thing that we need to submit to.

Selena: Right. So, as believers, our response, like you said, has been one of obedience to God's authority. Death is death to self. That is the life of a believer. With a Christian couple being married, there's a calling, a death to [00:30:00] ourselves, our own desires, death to individual desire in order for the collective family to thrive.

So we're almost to this part of what do we gain? We talked about different seasons being different asks, different deaths I think in those seasons, wives submitting to husbands, you know, trusting. I'm not... submitting... I feel like your heart has to be in that. You can't just be like, "Well, I guess I'll just give up again and he gets his way." That's not submission.

Ryan: That becomes a form of usurping at that point.

Selena: Yeah, the usurping versus submission. And so, submission is requiring a heart change. Submission is requiring an attitude a perspective change. But all of that begins with the transformation of the heart. We need the Holy Spirit with us, producing what only He can produce in us. And so submission is... it's not listed as fruit of the Spirit. Part of me is like, "I feel like it's kind of an outcome, though, of God being at work in you."

So what are we gaining when we give up? What is Ryan gaining when he gives up himself for me? What am I gaining when I submit my desires or things that I think I should have? What are we gaining? I mean, Christ gained salvation and eternity for us.

Ryan: Wow. That's interesting. Well, the first thing that we gain when we give ourselves up for one another, and we join as one flesh is that we're fully known, fully loved by another human being. And we talked about this a little bit how it's a dim reflection, a shadow of the gospel. In that I can be fully known to you and trust that you'll fully love me. And you can do the same. You can be fully known and trust that I'll fully love you.

But not only that. I now have freedom to fully love you in a way that I didn't have before. I'm giving myself up. You know how freeing that is to just let go of trying to get what you want from this life? When I say that, I don't mean stop being ambitious, don't stop working hard. I'm saying that when we stop sacrificing to the wrong idols, how that frees us up now to live on to God's glory and the freedom that He's given us to live in.

Now, husband and wife, you know that when you've been holding out and you've been living selfishly in this area, you need to resign that to God so that you can now love your spouse better. And that's such a freeing thing to be able to fully love without reservation to your spouse. That's the first thing I think you gain when you give yourself over to this... yourself rather to God's design.

Selena: The second thing is intimacy with transparency. So not just sexual intimacy but also emotional intimacy, spiritual intimacy. I think we talked about that in a whole episode. There's no one else I'm as transparent with as I am with Ryan.

Ryan: Same.

Selena: Our depth of transparency or our ability to be transparent is the level of intimacy that we will have. So, again, marriage was created for a certain level of intimacy and transparency, but it requires transparency.

Ryan: One thing that I want to add that we're gaining to is the joy of... I kind of mentioned it, like giving yourself and loving fully. What is the joy of seeing your spouse respond to being loved? Right?

Selena: Right.

Ryan: Again, when you make that decision to not be selfish, but to instead be generous and to give over to your spouse, I think that's a beautiful thing. You

get a lot of joy from that person. I think that multiplies the joy in your marriage. That generous love has a multiplying effect. We have a lot within marriage.

This one I love too is your unity in your desires. So as we were kind of brainstorming, we're thinking... Selena asked, she's like, "What is hard for you to give up individually for the good of our marriage." And I thought about it for like five seconds and I was like, "What's really hard is everything that I want you want? We are on unity on that." It would be-

Selena: We're not chasing some other desire that I'm like, why are you chasing this? But that wasn't always the case.

Ryan: Yes, not always the case. One clear example of how we didn't have unity in our desires. I don't want to point just at you, but when we had our first daughter, you were still steeped in-

Selena: My career.

Ryan: ...equestrian photographer. So you were going to different events, going around taking pictures of these really, really fancy horses. Like Olympic-level horses. And you did not want to give that up. And as a husband, I'm thinking, "This kind of needs to go because it's costing our family a lot." But I also didn't want to just dictate that, right?

Selena: Yeah, it was hard. You knew you couldn't just keep that on because I'm already in this fragile state of new motherhood, thinking, "I'm not going to give myself up. I will keep this desire and I will keep my career for the name of... And God's like, just... [00:35:00] He gave me Dela who needed and wanted me and probably will to the day she... or till I die. I will say that. She's just wired this way. She wants her mom, she wants her parents, she wants her family.

God used that desire in her to basically break the desire for me to be out on my own, away from my family doing something that really wasn't even beneficial financially for our family. It was not beneficial in any way, except for my own desire to take pictures and watch pretty horses basically.

Ryan: Yeah. Well, it was more than that, but okay. I try not to, you know, throw that in your face or be like, "I told you so," but instead of just praying God, "Please, bring us to a place of unity. Help me to love her well. I don't want to just..." Like if it came down to it, yeah, we would have big fights and I would probably be more heavy-handed than I should have been in terms of like, you know, this needs to stop, that sort of thing. But we got to a place of unity.

For me, like I used to travel a lot more. I think before our daughter was born, our first daughter, I climbed Mount Rainier twice, which is the second-highest peak in the US. I would be still in California to do that. I traveled all of Central America by bus with Jeff. Remember that?

Selena: Mm-hmm.

Ryan: And I would love to do adventures. I'd go to New York City. We had a watch brand. We still have it. It's called Crux Watches. We don't sell watches but it was there. *[both laughs]* That's just long of a joke of ours. We sell them but people don't buy them. I'll put it that way. *[both laughs]* I think they're beautiful. But when we were planning that stage, the planning stage of that, I went to New York for a week. Remember that?

Selena: Yeah.

Ryan: And I just was planning and imbibing the city. *[Selena chuckles]*

Selena: The idea of him being gone for a week, I'm like, "Huh." Fuse is blown. I can't even comprehend it.

Ryan: I sit on the board for nonprofit and we had a board retreat scheduled for a couple weeks ago and it was canceled because all the forest fires in the northwest here. And it was just a sigh of relief because I do not want to leave my family. I want to be with my family. But that's a night and day change from...

Selena: Our desires have definitely... and it has not been without struggle. We have had huge amounts of struggle. And I think this is probably where it does fall for most couples is we have these different desires, they're individual desires, and they're not mutually beneficial for our marriage first and our family. So at that expense, they're going to have to get chopped or at least put on the chopping block.

But in order to gain intimacy with transparency, to be fully known and fully loved, to experience God's abundancy in our hearts, in our lives, in those places that we are insecure and not confident in who God has created us to be... There's no one else that has encouraged me as Ryan has to step into the roles of motherhood, of being a wife, of writing, and doing all of these things.

Ryan: Writing.

Selena: Writing. Right, yeah. Not riding horses. He does want me to do that. I'm kidding. *[chuckles]*

Ryan: Yeah. Well, you don't want to do that.

Selena: I never want to do that.

Ryan: You've said that to me many times.

Selena: So there's no one else that has encouraged me or spurred me on in the things of God as my husband has. I couldn't have done this. We could not be here without death along the way of some of those desires in the name of oneness, in the name of a shared identity, two becoming one flesh.

Ryan: And it's not a death to itself, but a death until life.

Selena: Yes.

Ryan: Yeah. And that new creation. And that's only possible when we look to Christ and submit our vision of marriage over to Him, and then submit ourselves to one another and loving one another sacrificially. That's such a beautiful thing.

I think the encouragement here is press into your marriage identity, like your couple's identity, if that makes sense. That's a weird way to put it, but like, who aren't you as a couple? What is your mission? We really encourage couples to live on mission. So much of that has to do with your response to the gospel and how He's calling you to be complicit in the Great Commission and to make disciples and to go and to preach the gospel in the various capacities that He's calling you to do that.

Selena: Amen.

Ryan: So suppress into that. That's a wonderful, beautiful thing. My favorite things is to talk to couples in the conferences or the Zoom calls or online and just to be reminded that our God is at work in the various contexts of the very diverse couples that have come to be a part of the Fierce Marriage community. And I'm just blown away and I'm humbled to just be one co-laborer alongside my wife, but also alongside other couples in the work of Christ.

What's the couple's conversation challenge?

Selena: So this next week, take some time and see if there are any areas in your marriage where you're not living out fully two as one, but rather kind of one for itself. [00:40:00] And you'll know this. I think it's probably pretty clear if you can't think of one already or two or three. But what are the areas in your marriage where you are having a division in those desires that you know you

need to bring to one another and talk about what does it look like giving this up in order for us to experience greater unity, more abundancy in our marriage-

Ryan: Abundance.

Selena: Abundance. *[both chuckles]* I like to make up words.

Ryan: You're like Shakespeare. You're a genius. *[Selena chuckles]* All right, that's awesome. That's a great challenge. Next week, we're talking about roles. We're starting the two-week roles kind of back-to-back series, husbands and wives, heads and helpers.

We're going to do our very best to treat it biblically and without letting our own desires, good or bad bleed into it. But really just what does the Bible say about these two things? And our prayers that it can help us to live more faithfully according to God's identity that He's placed into marriage and into us as husbands and wives? So let me pray us out. All right.

Lord, I thank you for the gift of marriage, the blessing it is to just to see You work through it and through the lives of these husbands and these wives listening to this. Lord, I pray that you would bless them, whether you bless them with the sweet resignation into Your design, and in that they would flourish, they would learn to love their wives, husbands love their wives, wives to love and respect their husbands in ways that they never thought they could. Because, Lord you have enabled it and you have allowed it and you have allowed them to bear fruit in that regard.

Lord, I pray for the husbands and wives who are struggling, their marriage is struggling. I pray that you would bolster their confidence, give them strength, give them joy, help them make peace and reconcile, help them to get through to their spouse. Lord, I pray that you would repair marriages and restore them all for Your glory. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Selena: Amen.

Ryan: As a reminder, gospelcenteredmarriage.com is there for you. If that is something you would like to take us up on, please check out gospelcenteredmarriage.com. Also, [patreon.com/fiercemarriage](https://www.patreon.com/fiercemarriage) is where you go if you want to partner with us. Well, that said, this episode of the Fierce Marriage Podcast is—

Selena: In the can.

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

Selena: Stay fierce.

[00:42:25] <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

- **[00:09:48]**
 - Scripture references:
 - 2 Corinthians 5:17, ESV
 - 1 Corinthians 7:4, BSB

- **[00:16:22]**
 - Scripture references:
 - Genesis 2:24
 - Ephesians 5:22

- **[00:41:58]**
 - Recommended resource:
 - [Gospel Centered Marriage](#)

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