

## HEADS AND HELPERS, PART 2 (IDENTITY, 4 OF 5)

<https://fiercemarriage.com/heads-and-helpers-part-2-identity-4-of-5>

[00:00:00]

**Selena:** It's so important for us as believers and as the saints to have conversations around identity, to have conversations around roles because of our identity. That's why we're here today. That's what we're here to talk about.

Every instance we are being deconstructed. As a woman, I've been questioned. As a wife, I'm being questioned. As a mother, I'm being questioned. And Ryan, you as a husband, as a man, as a father, and how all of these relationships interact, these are being chipped away at by the lies of our culture. They're not being rooted in the truth.

And so this is why we're here. We're here to talk about these things in light of Scripture with the truth, because it's getting pushed aside, it's getting broken down, and it's trying to get thrown out. And we're here to say, Nope, God's way is here to stay.

**Ryan:** There we go. *[laughs]*

**Selena:** That'll tweet, right? I don't even tweet. I'm not even on Twitter.

**Ryan:** So today is dedicated to looking at the biblical roles as God has given them to us, namely, in Ephesians 5. It's going to be a good episode. We'll see you on the other side.

[00:01:06] <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.
- [00:01:37] <podcast begins>**
- Selena:** Oh, man, I'm sure glad you're the head because I forgot we were even on the other side. *[laughs]*
- Ryan:** Runaway train action going on over here.
- Selena:** I was just like, "We're just jumping in. Here we go."
- Ryan:** So we're talking about deconstruction. The crazy thing is you'd mentioned a few aspects of someone's identity. You talked about your womanhood, you talked about your wifehood, motherhood in some ways-
- Selena:** All the hood.
- Ryan:** You didn't mention it. I think that's in there.
- Selena:** All of those.
- Ryan:** Also just as a Christian, right?
- Selena:** Christian.
- Ryan:** If we want to really get into it, like your sexuality is being deconstructed, race has become this big, explosive thing to talk about now, ethnicity, all that kind of stuff. It's like everything is up for grabs. And everything means anything. We're a marriage podcast. So we're going to talk about all that stuff but we're going to... We're not going to talk about all that stuff. We're going to focus in on marriage. Excuse me. *[Selena laughs]* I needed less caffeine today.
- Selena:** We're going to talk about it all, but not really.
- Ryan:** Forgive me. So anyway, before we do that, let's jump into some more housekeeping. Please make sure to follow, rate, and review the Fierce Marriage Podcast in your podcasting platform of choice. If you want to partner with us, you can do that through [patreon.com/fiercemarriage](https://patreon.com/fiercemarriage). There's benefits there.

But the big thing is that you pray about it, if God leads you to partner with us, we'd be honored. That is how our family survives in most ways. So thank you in advance for considering that. If not, we'll continue doing what we're doing because we want to bless you and God has called us to this and it's an honor to be doing it.

Finally, we have mentioned it, but [gospelcenteredmarriage.com](http://gospelcenteredmarriage.com), that is our place for all of our online learning resources. Our hope is that we can help you and your spouse get on the same page, you can connect and stay connected like never before. So if you want to learn about that, go to [gospelcenteredmarriage.com](http://gospelcenteredmarriage.com).

So we're continuing this conversation on biblical roles, and namely, the identities that we carry as spouses, so me as a husband, you as a wife, and by extension, husbands and wives who might be listening to this episode, and the whole premise of this.

Maybe it bears repeating, it's worth repeating. We talked about it last week. But we aren't trying to [inaudible] our opinions, our desires into scripture. I think man left to his own, woman left to her own, we won't arrive at these conclusions. I don't think.

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** God's Word has a way of aligning us to His physics, I would say, the way that He's designed the universe to work, the way He's designed relationships, marriage to work. And He's given us His word to come underneath that authority.

And all of last week's episode was dedicated to looking at some of these critical passages. We looked at the idea of submission. We looked at why that's a tough idea to swallow, and how we should give up kind of our baggage at the door, and we should accept God's vision for submission, and how submission is not a terrible thing. It's not a bad thing. It's a good thing.

And how its submission is not about hierarchy. It's not about power. It's not about status. It's all about order. It's all about just the way God designed it. Just like if you try to build your house upside down, it's going to collapse. But if you build your house on a sound foundation, you build the walls first and you put the roof on, there's an order to that. Does that mean the walls aren't good because the roof is on top? No, it just means that there's an order for flourishing. And so it's not about power, hierarchy, or status. It's about order. And that's a good thing. And we can get behind it, the Biblical idea. [00:05:00]

So today we're talking about how the ideas of headship and submission have been kind of distorted. So maybe we just spend a few minutes talking through that. I know it's not necessarily in the outline, Selena, but how have these roles been distorted?

If we take as truth, which we should, Ephesians 5, where it says, "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 if we hear those words "submit to your husband's, be his helper, husbands love your wives, be her head," what are some distortions of that?

**Selena:** The two sins that we kind of see or the distortions that we see are the sins of aggressiveness or aggression, sins of passivity. So for a husband, aggressive, he might take on the tyrannical role because he's the head and this is what he does. Or he might just be completely passive and lazy and doesn't engage at all. So both of those land you in sin.

For the wife, she may just usurp her husband's role and take on, you know, this aggressive, like, "well, he's not going to do it. I'm going to do it. I'm going to lead." Or impassivity, being kind of a doormat of like, "Well, he said, and he's the head, and I guess I just have to do what he says, even if it goes against, you know, what God's telling me kind of thing."

**Ryan:** So we see in the garden there's these roles that exist, and then there's the fall has twisted these things. And there's the sins of aggression, sins of passivity.

**Selena:** Right. The fall brought a distortion of the roles, it brought in pain, and it brought in, I think, more toil around those roles.

**Ryan:** Right. Last week, we covered Genesis 1 and 2, and kind of established how even in the garden, these roles existed, these roles themselves, the headship and the helper ship aren't a result of the distortion. Right?

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** They're not a result of the fall. They were there before the fall. But they've been twisted and distorted. So this is to help you, spouse who you feel like... wife I'm talking to you now, your husband maybe is so passive, you can't get him to engage or you can't get... he's just mean to you or he's a tyrant, you

feel like he's not loving towards you. That would be distortion of the headship piece. He's using his authority for sin, whether it's passively or aggression.

Husband, if you feel like no matter what you do, your wife won't follow you. She won't get on board. She won't be your teammate. She's always undermining you. Or if you feel like she's a doormat. In other words, she's totally passive. She doesn't push back. And what happens is you get couples who have shared sins of aggression and passivity.

Usually, they complement one another, to use that word. Like you have one who's aggressive and the other one ends up being passive as a result. So you have a tyrant. So now you have the wife who just says, "Whatever, honey." She's an enabler, right?

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** Or you have the wife who she wants to be the authority, she wants to be the head, which we'll talk about that next.

**Selena:** Or she may not want to, but she feels like she has to because of the passivity of her husband.

**Ryan:** Interesting. Funny how they kind of push and pull. Right?

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** Let's look at those distortions. Selena, do you want to read this passage. This is Genesis 3:14. Is that right?

**Selena:** Yeah.

**Ryan:** Okay.

**Selena:** How far did you want me to read?

**Ryan:** Actually we start in verse 3:16.

**Selena:** Okay. "To the woman he said, 'I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.' And to Adam he said, 'Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,' cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field.'"

He continues to go on about what's going to happen.

**Ryan:** The crux that is in the woman's... the part "I will surely multiply your pain and childbearing and pain you shall bring forth children, your desire shall be contrary to your husband, he shall rule over you. So there's this sense that if I'm going to want his... as a wife, you as a wife are going to want, not just... It's not desire for him, it's desire for his place, his position, his role. But he shall rule over you in a way that grates on you.

**Selena:** Right. So again, we see conflict being introduced into the relationship. And there's this between Adam and Eve and a desire on Eve's part to rebel against Adam's authority. So he shall rule over you. That word "rule" in Hebrew, *mashal*, I think, it's used more for like a monarchical [00:10:00] government term not generally like within a family. But it does imply that there's a ruling or-

**Ryan:** A hierarchy.

**Selena:** A hierarchy. Yeah, the authority there. So it's suggesting that there is now going to be... like he will rule over you. It's suggesting that there's going to be a harshness rather than kindness because of the brokenness that sin has now brought. And there's also kind of a sense here that Adam might misuse his authority. So we see the sins of aggression here toward his wife.

So we have pain, we have conflict, we have a distortion of the roles all being brought in chapter 3.

**Ryan:** Wow.

**Selena:** The cool thing about this—and a lot of this is in *Systematic Theology* by Wayne Grudem. It's an incredible book to just have on your shelf. You can look up anything. It gives a great account. But I think the thing that we want to speak to... because when you look at Genesis 3, you see the fall, you see these words of the woman is going to want to desire the man's position, but he will rule over her, and now her role of bearing children will now be multiplied, like things will be brought now in pain... things. Life and children. I'm talking about both roles.

**Ryan:** And work.

**Selena:** And toil. Yeah, yes. So we see God is saying, these are the things that are now going to happen. And then we see Christ comes on the scene hundreds of

years later. The redemption of Christ is aimed at removing the results of sin in the fall.

So in Ephesians 5, when wives are called to submit, it is, I think, in part a reference to Genesis 3 of, women, your distortion now of wanting to usurp your role, as a believer now, as one who's professing Christ, you're now called to live out in this way of submission. Again, this is not a hierarchal thing. This is an order thing. So that the order will then produce the harmony and the peace and the unity and the flourishing that God designed it for.

And husbands, you're called to love your wives. Why? Because when God said in Genesis 3, "he shall rule over you," there's a suggested harshness, right? He's going to now rule over you. And Christ came to redeem all this, therefore, following Christ as a husband, you are now called to love your wife.

**Ryan:** Wow.

**Selena:** So it's an interesting relationship.

**Ryan:** It's so profound. I mean, that's what Paul's getting out for all Ephesians is saying, like, "This is the reality, your inheritance as one of God's own now." He says, "As a citizen, as a saint, as a member of the household of God," that's in Ephesians 2, "you are brought into this new reality, this redeemed reality."

So this distortion that happened in Genesis 3, now he's saying in Ephesians 5, correct it. Here's how we correct it. Husbands, love your wives. Wives, submit to your husbands. And there's a lot to be said around that.

One of the things I heard someone say is, it's easy for wives to love. In some ways, it's easy for men to submit because respect is kind of one of our native languages. Respect for one another. Always wanting respect, always wanting to give respect. Women, generally speaking, want love, give love a lot more easily. This is generally speaking. It's not scriptural. It's just kind of my own commentary.

The point is, is Paul is righting this. He's righting around is what I'm saying. And that's what Ephesians 5 is doing. So let's step through these.

**Selena:** He's bringing Christ on the scene and how Christ has redeemed this brokenness in the roles and relationships of husband and wives.

**Ryan:** Because you don't just submit; you submit as unto the Lord. You don't just love; you love as Christ has loved you. So he brings Christ in front and center

and says, now it is redeemed through the Redeemer only, through the redeemer's way, not your own way.

**Selena:** Right. Because as believers we are in Scripture all called equally to surrender. Like you look at Romans 12:1-2, we're called to surrender to the Lord, we're both called into service, and we're called to just be dedicated to each other. I think we read that in 1 Corinthians in terms of just sexual intimacy, like there's an equality in those areas.

**Ryan:** And giving unto another freely. And again, it's not about power, hierarchy, it's about order. And that's a good thing. Let's walk through these verses 22 through 24. I want to go word by word almost. It's not going to be - what's the word? It's not going to be drudgery. But it'll be I think, really helpful. So let's read it.

"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." So that's Ephesians 5:22-24. The first line "Wives, submit."

**Selena:** Right. [00:15:00] And we mentioned this, I think, first thing in the last episode because my husband likes to just jump in and we're going and I was like, "Wait, I thought I'm... okay. Here we are. Here we are." [Ryan chuckles] But the wives submit. Again, a big piece of this is how we read that word "submit" and how we understand it. It's very telling. Our response to that word is very telling of what we believe.

So, submission is not to be subjugated or subservient. Biblical submission, as described throughout Scripture, is never conflated with inferiority.

**Ryan:** That's important. It's never conflated with inferiority. In other words, don't read inferiority into the text. Because culturally, that's kind of what we've done. But we must not read that into this text. When the Bible says, "wives submit," it doesn't mean "wives, be inferior to your husband." That's not what it's saying. So submission is not negative in Scripture. It just is what it is. It's like saying love. It's like love is a thing, submission is a thing, both of them are good.

**Selena:** Right. Right.

**Ryan:** Can we wrap our heads around that? We just said that last episode is that is absolutely critical. But here's the thing. That only becomes negative when we read the negative meaning into the text. And we do it in two different ways.



We read into that word of subjugation by assigning to Paul or God motives that we think they have to keep women beneath men. How can I say this more clearly? God and Paul, neither of them, in this case, scripture, so God does not want to keep women beneath men. Instead, He wants men and women to flourish together alongside one another. That's the first one. We can see submission is negative when we read wrong intentions into the mind of God. We must not do that.

The second way we read "submission" in a negative way is that we ourselves desire power, and we see this as the lever by which it is either taken away or reclaimed for ourselves. It's funny to me how the people who are most concerned with power are the ones that want it the most.

**Selena:** Wow.

**Ryan:** I'm sorry, but you think about any sort of political movement, any sort of-

**Selena:** Hey, we're sticking to marriage here, Mr. *[chuckles]*

**Ryan:** I'm just going to say, in general, somebody who's got this is another hobbyhorse where it's all about defeating the patriarchy, like smashing the patriarchy or whatever that thing is, whether it's in the church or in the world, they're the ones that want power. They're just fighting tooth and nail to get the thing that they want. And so the irony of that is you're not changing the structure of things, you're just flipping the pyramid on its head so that you can now be on the top. So we must not read our negative definitions of submission into the text.

**Selena:** Right. We have to understand the true biblical definition of submission. And I love how Rachel Green Miller says it. She's the author of *Beyond Authority and Submission: Women and Men in Marriage, Church, and Society*. She's an incredible author and speaker.

But she talks about submission of a wife to her husband is not subordinating or making her less than or inferior to her husband but it is a voluntary submission of an equal. It's something she does out of respect for her husband and in recognition to her ultimate lord.

I think [Steven Tracy?] said it also when she quoted saying, "Submission is voluntary yielding to another in love." So again, if we're looking at Ephesians and we're looking at this passage specifically, we're seeing an emphasis on how we are caring for one another, how we are loving one another, how, as believers, we're called to live out these different roles as wife, as children, as

parents. Children, honor your parents; wives, submit to your husbands; husbands, love your wives.

It's very clear that this is instructional as well as dealing with the heart of how, as a believer, you are called in this way to care for your husband. There's all these distinctions, right? It's a function of the relationship, the marriage relationship.

**Ryan:** So, again, we're parsing through this scripture. Ephesians 5, "Wives, submit." And that's the first piece. Now, "to your own husbands." This is really critical. And this is how we've distorted it in culture and in the church, unfortunately, is it's evolved into something that's more like, "Wives submit to all men. Women submit to all men." That's not scriptural.

Women are not called to submit to every other man. They are called to submit to their own husbands, not to all men. So here's a funny thing. I watched R. C. Sproul talk on this a little bit. He said, "The Greek word beneath "own" is actually the same word from which we get the word idiosyncrasies. Which idiosyncrasies has to do with a person's unique quirks and personality traits, things like that. But he said this is also the same word that is used to derive the word "idiot." *[laughs]*

So it's almost as Paul was saying, "Wives, submit to your idiot husbands." *[laughs]* And he got a good laugh. It was funny. But the point is, is that there's a very specific "own" in there. It's your husband. We were talking about this before. We have elders in our church. That's how our church functions. And we believe that there's a specific call to elders and specifically men in the church to serve the church as elders. So it's a unique calling.

And we were talking about it and I said, "Selena..." You asked me, "Do I need to submit to Ray?" Now Ray is a good... probably my best friend. He's awesome guy. He's one of the elders alongside me and two other guys. And you said, "So I need to submit to Ray?" And I said, "Well, only in the same sense that I also have to submit to Ray as one of my elders." Because he is-

**Selena:** And I understood the question that I was asking. We just wanted to vocalize what it was. I wasn't truly asking like-

**Ryan:** You don't have to submit to every guy in the congregation just because he's a guy. That's not what Scripture tells us. And so that's a really... submit to your own husband.

**Selena:** Again, submission is a function of the relationship. If we're talking about church and we're talking about elders and that structure, then yes, there's a

submission there. [00:21:00] But outside of church and in the household, submission functions differently in that relationship.

**Ryan:**

And we see that work out in the workplace where it's like... we talked about in the last episode how there's been sexism and things like that, because men have distorted their role and it's become a societal distortion. Where now women are not equally valued in the workplace or whatever, in voting rights or in the past, or whatever way there's been women's rights that have been eroded, that aren't against biblical things. So there are some aspects of like second and third wave feminism that we would absolutely push back on, fourth-wave feminism now, that we would absolutely push back on from a biblical standpoint.

But in the first wave feminism, those are responses to distortions in male headship, that men somehow got in their heads the idea that all women should be in submission to them. That's not biblical. So "to your own husbands," that's what Paul is saying.

And then the next part. "As to the Lord." So this is not a blind or baseless submission. Submission to your husband should never trump obedience and submission to Christ. This comes up a lot. One of the examples that we talked about is if a husband saying, "No, I'm not going to go to church, and I'm not going to let you go to church either." What does the wife do in that case? She says, "I'm sorry, I really want to be on the same page with this, but I'm not allowed to forsake the gathering of the saints." God has said gathering is important. I am going to gather. I'm sorry, I cannot support you in that. That's an example here.

Here's what Sproul says, "The Scripture tells us we may disobey authority whenever that authority commands us to do something God forbids or forbids us from doing something that God commands." And that I think that would apply for wives in this case, because we're talking about wives here. So as the Lord.

The next line is "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." So the word "head." So for the husband is the head. Again, we talked about that last time. In this case, "head" does have an authority connotation there. But here's some other ways to think about it. A representative or responsible party, the shepherd, the one who bears the weight of the decision, the one who... we don't want to lose the servant piece because that's definitely in there, but we'll talk about that next.

So that's the headpiece. So his body. "For the husband is the head of his wife, even as Christ is the head of the church, his body. There's 1 Corinthians 7:3. I won't look that up. Listen to that on your own time? *[Selena chuckles]*

Here's a question I want to ask. So talking about loving your bride as your own body, why would a husband, or Christ for that matter want to harm their own body? We want our bodies to thrive. It is your body. The church is Christ's body. It's our joy to see the body thrive and flourish in every way. So if I'm loving you like my own body, I'm wanting to meet your needs in ways that are even beyond my own. Because, I don't know, there's just a sacrificial timbre to that.

**Selena:** Right. Right.

**Ryan:** And the final piece is "his body, and his himself its Savior." So there's a sacrifice there—given to for the life of the other. Giving myself up for your life. We talk about all the time so the man goes down to the girl goes free. Or the boy goes down so the girls... That's referencing like taking one for the team or like jumping on the grenade sort of thing. That's a sacrifice.

Why do men have this innate desire and this need and this hardwiring that says, "I will stand up for a girl. I will fight for her. I will defend her." Not only just defend her physical safety, but I'll defend her honor [00:25:00] because she is something different, she is set apart from what... she is to be protected and regarded as beautiful and to be held as beautiful.

**Selena:** Right. And that is the conversation unfortunately that is not as front center as it should be. It's battling things like pornography. It's battling cultural... just the water we swim in, and the messages that are being sent out about who boys are, who they're supposed to be, or who they could be and what they're supposed to do and why they're supposed to do it. And all of these things. The narrative is fighting and battling for I think the hearts of our young men.

So it's just so good for me to even hear that. Again, having three daughters, we have three girls, hearing that this is the heart of our Savior. This is to sacrifice, to love to give to defend, to honor, to fight for, to protect, to provide for. What an embodiment we have, at least I feel like I have, first of all in Christ but then secondly in my husband to see those examples lived out day in and day out 1,000%.

So what does this mean? For wives, how can we embrace this idea of submission joyfully? First of all, by understanding its true meaning. That it is not an inferior or sub-oriented term. It's a call to order, not hierarchy. It's not a grab for control.

When I really believe in grab onto that idea of submitting to God's authority and His word with joy and gladness and trusting that His design is good, my aim then becomes more of one that is, you know, I want to be active and intelligent, I want to have joyful submission to my husband. I want those things.

And then there's always that decision of like... or the tension point of like, what about big decisions? Like, the 50/51, or what is that? As a wife, I can absolutely be subject to the authority of my husband and still fully participate in decision-making processes for our family. That is 100%.

So to the wife, we talked about briefly, who might be married to an unbelieving husband, 1 Peter 3 talks about winning him over with not just your words, but your actions, and modeling Christ to the unbelieving spouse. There are also rewards and blessings for being a submissive wife, but honor is given to the godly wife. We see this in Proverbs 31. My right understanding again, of submission, my embracing of that will bring freedom, joy, and ideally a deeper desire to obey God's Word through submission.

One last kind of quote that is, I think, really encouraging for us is that, as wives—it's in the Systematic theology—that when wives feel rebellious, resentful of their husband's leadership in the family, or when they compete with their husbands for leadership in the family, they should realize that this is a result of sin, a result of the fall. They should not act that way because to do so will bring destructive consequences to their marriages as well.

A wife desiring to act in accordance with God's pattern would rather be submissive to her husband and agree that he is the leader in their home and rejoice, rejoice in that. In avoiding the mistakes that we're talking about earlier with the distortions of roles, as wives, we can discover, and again, this is great, I'm saying wives will discover the true biblical manhood and womanhood and all of their noble dignity and joyful, complimentary as God created them to be. And will thus reflect more fully the image of God in their lives.

So I can be actively engaged, I can be submissive, I can be joyful, there's honor to be had in taking on that belief, and that understanding, that right understanding of submission. And it's a call not to be limited... it's not to limit me, it's not to make me lower, it's not to keep me in my place. No, it's a call into flourishing, it's a call for growth, it's a call to reflect who God is and what the work that Christ has done in my brokenness, in my sin.

**Ryan:**

Thank you for that. It's helpful to hear you kind of process through it in real-time. And I do want to follow up with one question is, have there been any

moments in our marriage that you have felt the desire or the difficulty in kind of submitting in these biblical ways?

**Selena:** Yeah. I think the submission part is hard when I feel that you're dealing with me harshly, you know. They said it exactly. [00:30:00] Like when there's a harshness there, it feels like that's underlying more blind in with pride. Then I'm just like, "I'm sorry, who are you?" The lack of submission rises up in me because I'm like, "You're not treating me with dignity and respect. I'm supposed to submit to this?"

**Ryan:** And that's your response. There are those that would fold under that and just kind of become...

**Selena:** Right. The aggression or the passive. *[chuckles]* I guess I go to the aggressive side.

**Ryan:** Yeah, that's interesting. Wow. Actually, this is a thought I had. It's interesting to me how those acts of aggression or that harshness, they're so relative, and they can be so finely tuned for that couple. Like, "Don't take that tone with me." Anyone listening will be like, "What tone?" They're like, "Oh, you know. Your spouse knows." *[Selena chuckles]* You know what I mean?

**Selena:** Right. You know each other.

**Ryan:** You hear things that you just know... It's so finely tuned the senses that you have for one another. And so harshness is relative. So when Selena says I'm harsh, I mean, it's not that I'm like-

**Selena:** He's not.

**Ryan:** I'm not berating you. I'm not yelling. I'm not like swearing calling you... there's just little tones that feel harsh to you. They feel harsh. That's the relative piece. And every couple has their version of that.

**Selena:** I'm not trying to throw you under the bus at all. *[chuckles]*

**Ryan:** It's all right, it happens all the time on here. *[both laughs]* So every couple has their version of that. So don't just hear Ryan and Selena hashing through this but think to yourself. Like how do you deal with each other harshly? How do you usurp your husband, wife? Husband, how do you deal with your wife harshly? How are you passive?

So speaking of husbands, let's go into the husbands now. So for husbands, let's go through this passage again. Or this is the husband side, continuing, I think

in verse 24. Yeah, 24-ish. 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. In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself."

I love how Paul leaves... there's no room for ambiguousness there, right? He says, "In the same way..."

**Selena:** Ambiguity?

**Ryan:** Ambiguity. Thank you. He doesn't let us get away with saying, "Oh, Paul is just totally... it's an analogy. He's just talking about Christ in the church. Husbands you're off the hook. It's really just about Christ in the church." No, Paul comes in says, "In the same way..." and we'll get on to what it actually means, "Husbands love your wives in this way."

So starting in the beginning of this passage, husbands love your wives. So, love being what it is. Okay, we've talked about love a lot in marriage podcast. But love is not an emotion. It's an action. It's a decision. It's a commitment. It's costly. Hear me there. Love is costly.

In fact, love is the most costly, sacrificial, all-encompassing, and self-refusing command that could possibly be given to a man. There's no greater thing that can be asked of husband toward his wife than love. So men should hear, hear me now, we should hear this, we should respond soberly, we should respond diligently, and we should do so with trembling. Men, love your wives, as Christ loved the church.

That's the next part, "as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her." So the sacrifice, giving himself up. We all know what Christ did on the cross. He died the sinner's death so that we might be raised with Him in new life. He died for us so that we could have His righteousness.

So Christ loved the church in that way; He gave himself up for her. So that responsibility, no one else could do it but Christ. Just like no one can love your wife the way you're supposed to love her, like you can. No one else can do it. That's your responsibility. It's your sacrifice. So there's the absoluteness of that, the absoluteness of it, the depth of it, the anticipation of it, the ridicule of it, the utter resignation it is to the decree and promise of the Father. Men, we need to do that—love our wives as Christ loved the church, that he might sanctify her.

This gets a little bit kind of foggy, because you're thinking, "Well, if I love my wife so that she's somehow holy before God," I think there's something else that Paul is saying here. We don't make our wives holy before God, but our actions contribute to their holiness. Does that make sense?

So it's through this type of love... if I'm loving my wife well as a disciple of Christ, I'm discipling her, I'm loving her as the daughter of the King, it's that type of love that Christ sanctifying power is that work through from husband to wife. Does that make sense? I mean, we can talk about... I don't know. I was going to say a million. That's probably exaggerating. But hundreds of examples where my softness towards you has softened your heart toward me and toward God.

**Selena:** Right. It's very disarming.

**Ryan:** Right. So if I'm loving you sacrificially, I'm dying. [00:35:00] Remember Christ was ridiculed on the cross. I'm giving up my pride. I don't have to be right in this case. Sometimes I just need to love my wife. And what does that do? That disarms, that sanctifies, that cleanses in a very unique way. Again, it's not for her salvation, but it is for her sanctification. That's a beautiful thing.

So that he might sanctify her. In the same way, husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. Here's where English kind of falls flat. English falls flat a lot compared to Greek and Hebrew. Hebrew is just amazing language. There's so much meaning packed in there.

But so up above, and this is the thing, it says, "...as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her..." It should say in exactly the same way as Christ has loved the church, that's how husbands should love their wives. So when Paul says, "In the same way," that's what he's talking about. Exactly the same way as Christ loved the church, now you should love your wives as your own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.

So again, I'll reiterate what we kind of said on the wife side of things, but no man hates his own body. Hear me out here. I'm not talking about vanity. I'm talking about we love our own bodies, we care for ourselves, we watch out for ourselves, we feed our appetites at great expense. Not just food, but our cravings, our desires, our wants, our needs, the things that we seek after. We satisfy and feed our appetites at great expense, we mend our own wounds, we preserve our own lives, we groom our own hair, and we tend to our cleanliness.

But before doing all these things, you recognize your wife is your own body. Here's the counterpoints. Feed her appetite, her righteous desires, her



longings before feeding yourself. Mend her wounds, even as you bleed out on the floor. Dress her, care for her, make her radiate with beauty before you worry about your own appearance or status. This is what it means to be the head, to go before, to lead, to bear the full weight of the rest of your body's health, to at any cost to get what she needs to be alive and to thrive. That is a type of headship, men, we are called to in Christ. And is only by trembling first in submission to Christ that we may serve our brides in the way that He serves is.

**Selena:** And what other response can a wife have other than joyful submission? Like it brings tears to my eyes just hearing you saying those things. There's nothing more that I would want and could desire than for somebody to love me in that way. And my response, how could it be anything else?

**Ryan:** Well, because you have that trust, and you know that I'm looking out for you. I'm not just looking out for myself. You're not a means to my end. You are, in a sense, my end because you are me. And I'm going to fight for you in every way that matters.

I mean, you start to see why God gave us this design, right? It's not just because He's a tyrant, because He's trying to somehow subjugate women under the leadership of tyrannical men. Instead, He's trying to help husbands and wives flourish. I don't know, I kind of wanted to reiterate what it is.

We went through Ephesians 5 and talked through the wife's side of it, the husband's side. I just want to say clearly what it is to be headship in the New Testament, what that actually means here. It means to be in the position of preeminence and in the position of leadership. So that means you are a leader. I love how they worded this in the podcasts we listened to. They said, "It's not a leader who serves but a servant who leads."

**Selena:** So good.

**Ryan:** The very starting point is that I'm not a leader who's doing the leader thing which happens to be serving. Instead, I'm a servant by default. And now I lead as a service unto my wife. So I'm leading, again, with her in mind.

**Selena:** So good.

**Ryan:** I'm not just dragging her along but I'm trying to lead her along. *[chuckles]*

**Selena:** Sometimes you drag me. *[chuckles]*

**Ryan:** Responsibility. Again, this is what it is, this is what leadership and headship is. It's responsibility, final authority. Now that sounds like it... depending on how you read it, you might feel great. You know, final authority, perfect. It's going to...No. But like, it comes down to I'm going to bear the brunt of this thing. I'm responsible, I want to bear the brunt of it. Selena, if we disagree on something and we cannot agree, I'm just going to ask you to trust me. And if it goes wrong, it's on me. *[Selena laughs]* It's on me, sweetheart. And I promise that I will bear the brunt of that. And that's by design.

**Selena:** So good.

**Ryan:** Leadership in the home. One of the examples we had of this is, we do family worship, and we do it just about every morning. Any given morning, if I just ignore that responsibility... We've gotten in the habit to where you would probably pick up and do it anyway. But if I were to ignore that responsibility over time, I can almost guarantee you our family will stop doing it. Because you get busy, the kids get antsy, they want to get up, [00:40:00] it gets loud, it gets late, and it just does not happen. It doesn't happen.

And so leadership in the home, that's just one example. There's plenty of examples for that. Listen to the Fierce Parenting podcast, which is available actually.

The final piece is provision. R. C. Sproul mentioned... I mentioned that study in the 80s. He's talking about kind of things that... So the study was this is that they found that men have five times as many nightmares as women, which is intriguing. I don't have a lot of nightmares, so I'm thankful for that. But apparently, five times as many as women is what men have.

And the number one fear of men that occupies and drives those nightmares is it always has to do with their providing for their families or their failure to do so. We are wired like... I worry about money more than anything else. And I don't say that with pride, I am not worried about getting a nicer, car a nicer house... I want to be able to provide for my family. I'm worried... Selena, I have a document on the computer that I told you, "Selena, if I die, open this." *[both chuckles]* It's what it's called.

**Selena:** It's terrible. But it's true.

**Ryan:** It's because I want to make sure you're taking care of. I want to make sure our daughters are taken care of.

**Selena:** All these steps to go through.

**Ryan:** Like call this person, do this. Here's the bank account stuff. Here's where you find, here's how all the stuff set up. Get everything because I want you to have it all. I want you to be taken care of.

**Selena:** Not that I don't know where those things are and I don't have access to them, people. We are equal in this stuff. But he runs most of it because I-

**Ryan:** It's logistics. It's all logistics.

**Selena:** It's just logistics.

**Ryan:** But that's the whole point is that there's this innate need and desire to provide as a head of the household. And here's what it isn't. And we've talked about this a lot, so I'll go quickly. But it's not a chauvinistic thing. I'm not lording it over you. And you said it, we said in the last episode, God didn't just wake up and say, "Oh, men are awesome, so they're going to be the leaders."

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** No, He said, "This is the order. Men happen to be men, women are women. They're different. They're both valuable. This is the order."

**Selena:** They're both have responsibilities. They both have authority. And there's a lot that will be held accountable for it equally.

**Ryan:** Also, it isn't tyranny. It's not permission for me to make my wife lower, or to treat you poorly, or to treat you like a slave. You don't live at my beck and call. That's tyranny. That's selfishness. You don't exist to make me happy. That's not why you exist.

**Selena:** Sometimes I make you happy.

**Ryan:** Oh, you make me happy way more than you know. *[Selena chuckles]* But you exist to glorify God. And my role is to help you do that better and to do that alongside you. You help me glorify God better.

And the third thing, and I'll just do the last one, but it's not passivity. My leadership, my headship is not an excuse to disengage. A lot of men will disengage in various ways. I think the most common way is emotionally, is that you just aren't available.

That then presents itself in all manner of issue. You overwork or you're playing too much, whether it's video games, or whether it's out with your friends, or whatever. Or you weren't coming to the table and leading in the ways that you

know that God would have you lead. Instead, you are just relegating that responsibility and saying, "You know what, God looked at her. She's got it. You don't look at me, look at her. It's her fault." That's Adam in the garden with passivity.

No, men, we need to step up. Again, embracing this idea that I am losing myself, first in submission to God, then in service to my wife as the head of the household because he's put me here not because I deserve it, not because I'm awesome but because this is just the way God has called us as unique husbands and wives in this marriage equation. Anyway, that's what we have for you today.

**Selena:** Wow.

**Ryan:** A lot going on in here. Okay, we know there's going to be some questions and we want at least open up a channel for you to ask those. I think the most obvious one is for you to text in 971-333-1120. That's our question line. You can text or call. In fact, I prefer text. Keep it short and succinct even though this is a nuanced topic. That helps us answer those more efficiently.

We may or may not do a Q&A episode, but at some point we will try to get those answered for you. But other than that, I think this has been also a good episode, also intense. So there's probably a lot of things going on in the hearts and minds of our listeners.

**Selena:** Yes.

**Ryan:** So why don't I pray for us and then we'll call it an episode. Okay?

**Selena:** Okay.

**Ryan:** Father, thank You for Your truth. Thank You for Your word that is clear if we let it be. Lord, I pray that You would help us bring ourselves under the authority of Your word and do so gladly, not grating our teeth, and begrudgingly but instead that we would do so with trust that You are a good God and You are a promise keeper, and that You are a covenant of God and You have kept the promises you've made, and that You have come down, you've condescended so that we could know You personally.

So, Lord, we submit to You. Lord, we submit our thoughts and our emotions and our desires [00:45:00] around marriage, around headship, helpership to You. We give it all over to You. And we ask, Lord that you'd help us live out faithfully as couples, Your design, Your model for our relationship as husband and wife.

Lord, I pray for the couples struggling with this. I pray for the wives, the husbands who are dealing with their own version of struggle for this, that You would help them Holy Spirit, You'd come alongside them, convict them, find them, bring people into their lives that can walk alongside them. Lord, all for Your glory and for our good. In Jesus' name. Amen.

**Selena:** Amen.

**Ryan:** All right, that's it for this episode. I do want to mention the resource at [gospelcenteredmarriage.com](http://gospelcenteredmarriage.com) once again. And the reason why we always mention that is because (a) we put a lot of hard work into it and we want it to be useful to as many people as possible. But (b) we really do believe it's a valuable tool for getting on the same page with your spouse once and for all, getting connected like never before, and staying that way.

So when you do enroll and you do a six-week kind of onboarding course, there's all kinds of hard questions around expectations, around sex, around communication, around household economics, namely finances and division of labor, it's very tangible, lots of really tangible tools.

**Selena:** You can blame us for your arguments if you want. *[both chuckles]*

**Ryan:** But that's available at [gospelcenteredmarriage.com](http://gospelcenteredmarriage.com). You have to invest in your marriage. The tool is not free, but also it does not price you. I feel like it's very affordable. So check out [gospelcentermarriage.com](http://gospelcentermarriage.com). We trust that will bless you if you take advantage of that.

So this episode of the Fierce Marriage Podcast is—

**Selena:** In the can.

**Ryan:** Thanks, everyone. We will see you again in about seven days. So until then—

**Selena:** Stay fierce.

**[00:46:45]** <outro>

**Ryan:** Thank you for listening to the Fierce Marriage podcast. For more resources for your marriage, please visit [FierceMarriage.com](http://FierceMarriage.com), or you can find us with our handle [@Fiercemarriage](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**

- **[00:08:40]**
  - Scripture references:
    - Genesis 3:16-18
  
- **[00:23:39]**
  - Scripture references:
    - 1 Corinthians 7:3
  
- **[00:45:35]**
  - Recommended resource:
    - [Gospel Centered Marriage](#)

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