

SKILL #2: TEAMWORK (BACK TO BASICS, 2 OF 4)

<https://fiercemarriage.com/skill-2-teamwork-back-to-basics-2-of-4>

[00:00:00]

Selena: When you talk about teamwork in marriage, what does that mean? What do you think when you think of teamwork? Because I think of... I don't know, I think you're already a team, right? You get married, so you're like, "We're Team Frederick." But I think so often we fall into our own ruts, again, of who we were before we were married or who we are as an individual, right?

Ryan: Yeah.

Selena: And those individualities can begin to clash. And we can begin operating as individuals sort of headed in the same direction. I mean, we used to take care of the checklist, but I don't know, are we really living the marriage dream that God has designed for this covenant?

Ryan: So what strikes me the most about the idea of teamwork is the fact that it's a skill. That it's something that you can cultivate in your marriage. And you can learn to be better teammates in this thing. You're not just out to get yours. You're not just to get what you want but you're really fighting for your spouse, you're fighting with your spouse a lot fewer times against one another.

So yeah, we're going to talk about the skill of teamwork today. Again, this is number two in our series we're doing on back to basics. Very, very practical. So we trust you'll get something out of it. See you on the other side.

[00:01:16] <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.

[00:01:49] <podcast begins>

Ryan: Selena, things are not okay. I slept outside last night. *[both laughs]*

Selena: It's over.

Ryan: I'm feeling a little bit draggled.

Selena: We are through. *[both laughs]*

Ryan: Before we hit record, I just managed to shower.

Selena: Just some office quotes here. No, he had a camp out with the girls last night and mama stayed in with a toddler. I was like, "That doesn't sound good."

Ryan: It was incredible. It was so funny.

Selena: You guys had fun. You just filled their little buckets.

Ryan: Yeah, they were listening to the sounds of... we live near a city so there's... not near city but there's car. There's road noise and stuff like that. They're listening to sounds and seeing satellites and things flying by.

Selena: Using those five senses.

Ryan: I do explain to them what... you know, there's a few stars because there's some light pollution where we live but there's a lot of satellites and planes and things. I think it was a good time. But I also feel a little bit-

Selena: Bedraggled.

Ryan: Yes. *[both chuckles]* Like I need a shower. And it's also kind of hot today and humid. So anyway.

Selena: And we can't run a fan while we're recording the podcast.

Ryan: Yes.

Selena: Because that would be very annoying to everyone.

Ryan: Listeners, just know this. As the podcast progresses, I'll be getting sweaty and sweatier. *[both laughs]* Speaking of sweatiness, teamwork... *[both laughs]* If you're not sweating in your marriage, your teamwork is not working. So we're going to talk about teamwork today, and namely, the practicalities that it entails as a couple, and why it's a skill that is important but also can be cultivated and developed. People think it's kind of an isolated thing, but we're here to say it's a skill you can develop. And you can be on one another's team more effectively.

Before we do that, we'd be remiss if we didn't remind you and ask you, listener, if you've gotten anything out of this podcast, it would mean a ton if you would follow us on your podcasting app, also leave a rating, write a review. That means a ton to us. It helps us, it helps other people know what's going on if the podcast. Currency that matters currently.

Next thing is if you want to partner with us and be on mission with us, we just ask two things. And I mean this sincerely. Pray about it. If you feel like, "Oh, we want to be a family, that's our mission with the Frederick's. We want to be a part of what Fierce Marriage is doing throughout the world," if you feel that inclination, we just say, pray about it, talk to each other. And if God leads you, then obviously the number two-piece would be: go ahead and make take that step.

The way you take that step is you can go to fiercemarriage.com/partner, and that will redirect you to the place where you can join. We use a platform called Patreon currently. That's where basically we do behind-the-scenes releases, we do some Zoom calls back there, we do exclusive content. We also give away books to anyone who signs up at the various levels and things like that. So go to fiercemarriage.com/partner to learn more about that. There we go.

And then throughout the life of this series, so the next few weeks we're doing a special on our gospelcenteredmarriage.com online course ecosystem, you can save 20% on the enrollment there. Just go to gospelcenteredmarriage.com and use this coupon code, BASICS, and you'll get an additional 20% off.

Selena: Nice.

Ryan: That's how we support [00:05:00] our family. Anyway, if that helps you, that's great, it also helps us. Win-win. Win-win.

Selena: Win-win, win-win.

Ryan: I win for negotiating a succession. *[Selena chuckles]* Full agreement. Can't articulate it apparently.

Selena: All right, last week we began our series... we opened it up the back to basics series. We talked about self-control and how it's necessary in order to build skills needed to have a thriving or fierce marriage, and exercising self-control in our marriage in the areas of intimacy, time and priorities, and finances. They help us develop the skills needed for teamwork, essentially. Like we'll begin operating more as one unit when we start exercising self-control and listening to our spouse and being an actual team player.

I joked before this recording that I feel like it's two becoming one, not just like a three-legged race. And Ryan's like, "Three legged race seems like the perfect example for unity." I was like, "Yeah, sure." But I'm thinking like we are two is one. Like there's nothing holding us back. We're going as hard as we can. And we have four legs, but we're one person.

Ryan: Sounds like a- *[Selena laughs]*

Selena: It sounds weird.

Ryan: It sounds like an apocalyptic creature.

Selena: I know. I know.

Ryan: I like the three-legged race thing, because when you're in flow-

Selena: It is. it is.

Ryan: ...when you're doing it, I mean, have you ever been... what's your method? We always use the one-two; one-two; one-two.

Selena: Outside inside. Is that what you...?

Ryan: Well, the outside leg was the one. And the two was the inside leg.

Selena: And if you get that little hop in there, if you're that coordinated-

Ryan: No, that's next level.

Selena: Yeah.

Ryan: That's fierce right there.

- Selena:** That's fierce right there. *[chuckles]*
- Ryan:** Sorry, I like the team. You used a basketball team. You were a basketball player in high school. I played basketball like a football player. And Selena still makes fun of me. *[both laughs]*
- Selena:** I love when he shoots a basketball. It's so funny.
- Ryan:** This is a soft spot for me. *[Selena laughs]*
- Selena:** It's not really shooting. It's like throwing the basketball as hard as he can against the *[inaudible]*. *[both laughs]*
- Ryan:** You got to use the bank, you know? All right. Take it to the bank as the kids say.
- Selena:** There's not as much arc on it. *[laughs]*
- Ryan:** Not as much arc. How about none, right? Frozen rope. *[both laughs]* Getting there as fast as possible. If it goes in, bonus.
- Selena:** You know what? This just is our life. This is our marriage. This is him. Just kidding.
- Ryan:** You know, I'm actually quite insecure about you and how you tease me with my basketball skills. *[Selena chuckles]* I'm not having it.
- Selena:** I didn't tease him when we were dating or anything. But once I secured him, let the teasing begin. No.
- Ryan:** So you like to think of a basketball team. I like to think of a football team because of obviously reason
- Selena:** Well, but I just think basketball team is more... because you can be all out for yourself and be on a team and the decisions you make don't necessarily like correlate to another player. It can sometimes be... and I know that's the point.
- Ryan:** You mean like making fun of other players?
- Selena:** No, I mean if I take a three-pointer, but somebody down under is like posting up and ready for that, it's like, well, they could have made it but I made it.
- Ryan:** Or you missed it as you were trying to take the glory.

Selena: Right. But there's more opportunity, I think, for individuals to kind of shine in basketball than in football because... I don't know.

Ryan: I agree with that. But the point is, is you have complementary skills, right? So you've got somebody who's like the guy that's downplaying post guards. Is that thing? Just playing a postcard. Or like a quarterback. Quarterback is not going to be the guy that runs it up the middle or does the blocking because he doesn't have the strength. But he's got the precision when he throws and he's not fast.

Selena: Unless you're - what's his name?

Ryan: I don't know who you're talking about.

Selena: The Seahawks guy.

Ryan: Russell Wilson? I don't even know if he still plays. I don't even know. I'm not a sports guy. I'm not a sports nerd. *[chuckles]*

Anyway, we're digressing. The point is a good team, you have people that have complementary skills and you have people that stay in their lane. And you say, "This is where I'm going to play my part. And I'm going to support you and your part, knowing full well that you are doing something that only you can do." And we are in some regard, talking about biblical roles and complementarity. We won't get into that again. We talked about that - what? Three weeks, four weeks ago?

Selena: Yeah. That was episodes 230 and 231, heads and helpers, part one and two.

Ryan: Yeah, heads and helpers. And you guys, it's a beautiful, beautiful theology. There's something to be just so embraced in how God has designed us as equal in value, worth, and importance, which we will talk about a little bit today, but different. Equal in value, worth, and importance, but different. And it's not hierarchy, it's not power. It's all about order and it's about celebrating those differences as a couple within the community that is marriage.

That's, I think, what teamwork really gets down into is the skill of living that out. And not just within... Because the biblical roles, as specific as they are, they aren't all-encompassing in that that we don't have... God doesn't give us anything [00:10:00] in terms of like only husband or wife should be fixing the dinner. That's not something we see in Scripture.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: Only husband or wife should be the breadwinner. We don't see that in Scripture. You might be able to come to those conclusions by various gymnastics. But the point that we're trying to make is that there is some gray area here and there's some Christian liberty here and there's grace here. And that's where teamwork is a huge thing that we need to work on. And teamwork is communicating through that, but also resigning ourselves to those bigger truths that we're-

Selena: And one caveat to just be mindful of is that nailing teamwork really takes a long time. I mean, you see all those sports teams that maybe have been winning for years and years and years, championship after championship, they've probably been playing together for a number of years. Or they just have players that are really in sync maybe naturally together.

But whatever camp you might fall into, I think it's just good to be aware of the fact that it takes time to become a functioning, well-to-do, accomplishing team. So hear all of this, know that it takes time, understand that we are just trying to put some basic skills and helpful encouragements out there. But yeah, don't get frustrated. I think we have many opportunities within our marriage to build our ability to be a team.

Ryan: Yeah. And this has been a game-changer for us. And so we've actually, I think, grown in this area significantly over the last two years and it's born really specific good fruit in our lives and a lot of joy and unity. It's deepened and strengthened because we've just really embraced and realized the intricacies of what it means to be on the same team. And so we're going to get into that.

I think it's helpful to first recap last week's episode because it's so foundational to this. We don't have to spend a lot of time on it. But the self-control piece, did you already recap that? I'm sorry. I was listening, I promise. *[both laughs]*

Selena: It's fine.

Ryan: Okay. We got new mics, and so I'm kind of distracted. I'm watching the different levels and things go by and making sure that we're not making too much noise. Hopefully it sounds better for our listeners.

Selena: Yes.

Ryan: Yeah.

Selena: So we referenced episodes 230 and 231 for heads and helpers. The other episode that we would like you guys to check out, if you have not already that

kind of helped us outline this one is who we are as us, which is episode number 229. So it's the one right before that. It was from this last series on identity.

So, when we're talking about teamwork, we're talking about this idea of oneness, we're talking about how to be rooted together, to be advocating for each other. Don't worry, we have an acronym for you, too. I feel like you can't talk about teamwork without having an acronym.

Ryan: Bow body. *[Selena laughs]* We filled out every letter. You're going to get a lot of use from that.

Selena: So let's begin by rooting ourselves in Scripture so that we can understand first and rightly God's design, and then take His instruction and framework and apply it to how we can work as a team when it comes to our marriage.

Genesis 2:24, the verse that we all know, "Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed." Obviously, a lot of context here.

And I don't want to gloss over the fact that a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the relational aspect there, right? And they shall become one flesh. So the idea of oneness, the idea of being a team is here. I feel like team kind of waters down what this is actually saying.

Ryan: Oh, for sure.

Selena: Because there's just so much depth and beauty to be mined here.

Ryan: That's what you were saying is that a team is by nature made up of individuals. And in marriage, a lot of that goes away. We are individuals in many ways, but you never use one flesh to describe any other social device, right?

Selena: Right. Relationship, yeah.

Ryan: Relationship. There you go. It's only used in the marital context because it is deeper than team. What I like about the team visual is that it helps us to remember to advocate for one another. And actually, that's one of the letters in the acronym.

Selena: Don't give it away

Ryan: We'll leave it for later.

Selena: Stop. Stop.

Ryan: Okay. *[laughs]*

Selena: Okay. I just want to re... Oh, go ahead.

Ryan: I wanted to add one other piece of texture to this because when you think about marriages as a team and clinging to one another, the leaving and cleaving piece, there are aspects of our relationship and our teamwork that are exclusive to our marital relationship. But there are also aspects of our teamwork that are not exclusive to our marital relationship.

In other words, they have to do with us being brother and sister in Christ. They have to do with us being co-laborers with Christ, co-commissioned into the gospel. [00:15:00] They have to do with us being members of Christ's church. And the fact that there's various numerous calls to unity that are specific to the body of believers that is the church. So there is some overlap there and there's some giftings that-

Selena: Do you have an example?

Ryan: Well, I'm thinking of things like someone who's called to teach versus someone who's not called to that role is obviously one way that that plays out in the church.

Selena: Sure.

Ryan: In terms of unity around doctrine, not letting divisiveness work its way in, not letting gossip be part of the culture of our church, and part of the culture of our marriage, our family. We're not going to gossip about each other. That's where the advocate piece really comes in.

There's other ways to be unified. Self-righteousness. So a lot of what Paul was talking about in his various epistles, he's talking about how God's grace is sufficient for the Jew and the Gentile. And that's a new thing. And the Jews had to get their heads wrapped around this, that this Messiah that they've wanted so badly and waited for and came, was their Messiah.

And here Paul is saying, "He's not just your Messiah. He's everyone's Messiah—anyone who puts their faith in Him." That created all kinds of conflict in the early church, and had to do with... I present to you I think it had to do with the idea that they thought they had moral high ground, right? "Well, you're kind of a second class citizen because you're a Gentile. But we're God's people." Right?

Selena: Right.

Ryan: "And you're allowed to come in, but just you can stand against the wall. Like you can be here, but not here."

Selena: Right.

Ryan: So that's part of the unity piece, too. And that has to do with equality and equality in the sight of the Lord. And that's equal value, worth, and important thing, which we'll talk about as well.

Selena: You just keep jumping ahead.

Ryan: I'm sorry.

Selena: Slow down.

Ryan: You know what?

Selena: I think I'm going to make team into teams, because I liked how you said, "You added an S." I don't know, you had some good s-word and I throw it in there.

Ryan: You don't want to give it away. Is that why you're not saying the word?

Selena: Yes, because you've just been giving away the whole farm today.

Ryan: Oh, well.

Selena: So, yes.

Ryan: People sometimes don't listen to the whole episodes. *[both laughs]*

Selena: And then they leave stars. Oh, just kidding. I'm going to do a quote from John Piper, on one of his Desiring God podcasts when he's talking about Ephesians 5:31, which is Paul referencing and quoting Genesis 2:24, where it's the leave and cleave and the two shall become one flesh. And there's a mystery there.

And he says, "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 definitely goes all the way back to the two episodes on heads and helpers.

Selena: Yes.

Ryan: That's a beautiful thing.

Selena: Yes. I just think it's hard to talk about teamwork when you can't identify what your role is in the team. That's why I kind of am drawing this back to we do need to talk about roles. It's good to understand how God created them.

They're distinguished but they're also... they're distinguished from one another. They're distinctive. Sorry, maybe that's a better word. But they are also complimentary. And they also are reflective. I love that God just layers in the meaning and purpose in everything that He designs. So understanding our roles is important in order for us to function well as a team.

Ryan: It really does tie back to the entire identity series. Because even if you understand your roles, if you don't understand the design of marriage and the identity of marriage itself, which was the first episode in that series, which was I think 228, if I'm not mistaken, it's the identity of marriage itself.

How did God design this? In other words, what is the goal we're working toward? Everybody has seen those videos where you have like a little kid soccer team or something, and one of the kids they get the ball and they start dribbling so fast and they go on the other end and they score a goal and they're so happy, all to realize that it was their own goal. *[laughs]*

Selena: Mmmh!

Ryan: Sorry.

Selena: All those are nightmare of mine.

- Ryan:** The point is that kid lost sight of the goal. He lost sight of the plot. Like if you're shooting on this net and I'm shooting on that net, how are we going to ever get to the point together, get to the goal together. So you do really have to understand why God designed marriage the way he did and put value in that. Don't just know it, but actually internalize it. Let it drive you. Then you begin to-
- Selena:** Let it be your authority.
- Ryan:** Let it be your authority. And then learn about the roles and embrace those two. Again, all of this is conforming ourselves to God's design for things. [00:20:00]
- Selena:** Right.
- Ryan:** We tried to lay all that out really, really deeply in the previous series. And now again, this is a really practical series. So now we're saying, here's how that works out when the rubber meets the road and it's time to actually live out this reality of being on the same team in light of God's vision in light of our roles. Now, how do we do that on a day-to-day basis?
- Selena:** Right. So we're going to share our acronym even though he's pretty much shared the whole thing.
- Ryan:** No, we haven't. *[Selena chuckles]* There were two letters. You added one.
- Selena:** Well, we'll see if I need to keep it. You can decide at the end, I guess. *[both laughs]*
- Ryan:** It's kind of a big one now that I read it. But it's also pretty generic. We'll see. We'll see. We'll let our listeners decide. What does "t" stand for, Selena?
- Selena:** T in team stands for two is one.
- Ryan:** Two is one.
- Selena:** So talking about this idea of unity, which is what we kind of opened up with. That we're not just two people sort of checking off all the to-do's while we're married. We're not just, Okay-
- Ryan:** We're not roommates.
- Selena:** Yeah. Who does what and who pays for what? And how do we do this and we're married? Yay. God has, obviously, so obviously layered in the

distinguishing features of male headship, women as helpers, talking about the big things of submission and service and leadership, and all of that, which you can go listen to that in the other episodes.

Ryan: You're just dropping all these bombs.

Selena: Yeah, they can go back and listen.

Ryan: Please do if you haven't.

Selena: Yes. So are we really operating in unity at a foundational level? Or are we simply just existing kind of in the same space? Or do we really understand the value that God's placed in His design for our covenant for our marriage? Like you said, do we submit to that authority? Do we embrace that?

Because I think the problem starts to come when we think that we might know better, right? I mean, hello, origin of sin. When we think that that we have a better way of figuring out unity, or we're good, we're good.

Ryan: This is such a foundational piece and it does go back to that purpose that we just talked about in the identity of marriage itself. But here's what's really cool is this is actually the language roughly that Jesus used to rebuke the Pharisees and actually answered them. When it came to the subject of marriage, He used this specific language.

In Mark 10, he said, "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." Now, he could have quoted any number of Old Testament texts, right? But instead, he's choosing to quote Genesis 2. And in this case, why did he do that? Because it's so foundational. Two shall become one flesh. The implication of that are so vast and that I am no longer just me.

Selena: Right. Right.

Ryan: So I am now tasked with advocating for you. I don't mean to preview, but I'm tasked with looking out for more than just myself as if you were me. And that has vast implications for how we live out our lives as married couples.

Selena: Right. Again, it's not about checking off the boxes of what we have to do each day. But really, when we are living in unity, when we're living on purpose, on mission together as a team, as a married unit, those tasks that we are given by God, they hold a deeper meaning. There's more joy to be had when we are doing them in unity, not just, okay, you're doing when I'm doing one. It's like,

no, we're doing this together for this higher purpose that God has given us. And so the two is one definitely, I think, exemplifies that. So that is T.

Ryan: So the E. I had another thought I was going to share, but then I lost it. So it's happening a lot today.

Selena: It's happening a lot today.

Ryan: E is... this word is loaded, but you have to hear us out. So equality. So T is two as one. E is equality. What we mean by that is admitting and resigning ourselves to this reality that my spouse is of equal value, worth, and importance. She is of equal value, worth, and importance.

And that's not based on merit. That's not based on intellect. It's not based on earning potential. It's not based on anything other than God's design. It is the image of God that has been placed on you as one of His own. And that's actually the image of God is on every human being, not just believers. It's on every human being. It's part of God's common grace. It's part of His covenant with humanity. That's more general.

I'm thinking of if you have an unequally yoked marriage, and I don't mean, you're not both Christians, but there's typically one person in the marriage that's kind of the brighter bulb in the pack, I'll say.

Selena: The brighter bulb. That's me. I claim it. *[chuckles]*

Ryan: It's for sure the truth.

Selena: No.

Ryan: So because of that, there tends to be kind of this power dynamic sometimes. You got somebody [00:25:00] who's really good at arguing, you got somebody who's really good at manipulating, you've got somebody who's really good at communicating or someone who's just good at maneuvering.

And because of their inequality of intellect, they develop inequality in value, worth, and importance. Or because of their inequality in their emotional intelligence, there isn't an equality in value, worth, and importance. So somebody ends up being kind of suppressed the whole time while the other one ends up kind of running the show. And that is not a team activity, that is a self-serving activity.

So I just want to encourage you, husband, wife, do you, do you see your spouse as somebody who is equal to you in these ways, in equal value, are just

as valuable before God? They're equally as important. "Well, yeah, but He doesn't earn what I earn, or she doesn't earn what I earn, or he's not a good speller, he's not a good communicator, he's not all these things."

That doesn't matter. He's still worth as much as you. He's still as valuable as you. He's still as important as you in God's eyes, and therefore in each other's eyes. So that "E", that equality piece is so, so foundational if you're ever going to live out this reality of being a marriage that's a team.

Selena: Right. And I think even overcoming some of the struggles that you face as a couple, because of the breakdown... I wouldn't call it a breakdown. I just think some of it is just natural ability. Right? Some of us are better at things than others. Like Ryan is a very gifted arguer and convincer. I'm convinced of this. He can argue his way really well. I don't know, what do I do? You say I manipulate probably.

Ryan: That's me manipulating you. *[both laughs]* I'm kidding. I think unknowingly you have a few manipulation tactics that are-

Selena: Yeah, it's me trying to defend myself when he's going...

Ryan: We have a whole episode on manipulation tactics and we own up to a lot of that stuff.

Selena: He calls me out on those things, too. He's like, "You know what you're doing right now." And it's like, "I don't care what I'm doing. I'm just trying to hold my own and win and not get mulled over."

Ryan: Your response is, "Did you know you're an idiot right now?" *[Selena laughs]* Guys, we never say that stuff. No, we never.

Selena: No. But anyways, I think, yes, understanding, "Okay, he's really good at arguing, God, please, like soften his heart towards me. Lord, I'm good at manipulating or something..." It's hard to say that because I don't feel like I'm good at it but I think you're saying that I am.

Ryan: No, no, no, no, I don't mean to throw you under the bus at all.

Selena: I'm just trying to think of what my shortcoming is. And so how do I ask the Lord right in my shortcomings? If I'm praying for my spouse and myself, or praying for myself, "God helped me to really see him for what he's actually trying to say and not just see the fact that he's just trying to win this argument." Right?

Ryan: Yeah.

Selena: So being cognizant of the equality factor is a prayer for both of you.

Ryan: We have to value one another how God values us if we're ever going to be on the same team, we're ever going to communicate in a healthy way. That's what really changed the script for us, I think, is we started... I started like... and I will come to you and I'd say, "Selena, I want to speak to you kindly, considerately, calmly, lovingly, all the time." All the time, across the board, not just when we're having a good moment. All the time.

I don't ever want to use my words to, in any way, harm you because of your value, your intrinsic value to me, to God, to our children, to our church. Like you are valuable. Therefore I cannot use argumentation to skew the power dynamic. Anyway. Again, that goes back to roles, it goes back to love, it goes back to covenantal aspect.

Selena: Knowing yourself too, I think.

Ryan: Yes.

Selena: A huge one of knowing yourself.

Ryan: A. I already said it, so I'm going to say it again.

Selena: Go for it. You go.

Ryan: T is two as one. E is equality in value, worth, and importance. And then A is advocacy. And that's to be contracted with somebody who's adversarial, right? So don't be adversarial, be an advocate for your spouse.

Selena: Right. It's a way of protecting your relationship.

Ryan: Yeah. And the way I like to picture this is how do you treat your spouse when they're not around? How do you treat your spouse when you're around everyone else? Especially when your spouse comes up, or even when they don't, are you advocating for them? If an in-law is speaking ill of your spouse, are you going to speak up? Are you going to do the hard thing and speak up and say, "Hey, you know what? I love my wife. I don't want to hear you talk about her that way." Or bringing her into conversations when you're not even present.

Selena: Right. And I think even speaking up in the fact even if they're not deserving of your defense. Like, "Yeah, he was not very nice to me and he's also had a long

week." Whatever the thing is, I think we need to always have that default of standing up for our spouse, protecting them, defending them, being an advocate for them, no matter [00:30:00] what current situation we're in.

That's something that I fall into. Like, if you and I have had a fight or something, I may not be as charitable in a conversation with someone else about, you know, you being tired or whatever.

Ryan: It's funny in our group of guys, I don't ever... like even if we're having a fight, I kind of handle it myself and I'm thinking about it myself. And if somebody says, "How you doing?" I'll be like, "We're going through a patch right now." But that's all I'm going to say. Unless I need help or I'm needing clarity.

But in our group of men, even if that wasn't my tendency, these guys would never stand for it. The default in our guys is always if you're having a fight with your wife, like, "What did you do? Like what did you do wrong?" Because frankly, we have amazing wives, and we all know it. And we're like, "How are you a bonehead in this situation?"

Selena: Wow.

Ryan: And then almost inevitably, it helps to see it more objectively.

Selena: Sure.

Ryan: You can think to yourself, you know what? Here's my part where I'm responsible. It doesn't mean my wife's not partly responsible too. But I at least need to be a man, recognize, own up, and repent of the part that I'm responsible for. I need to lead in that way. That's something that... again, headship. That's a unique thing that I think men are called to do is to lead even in repentance.

Selena: Another point of advocacy for your spouse, just be the biggest cheerleader for your spouse and advocate for them for whatever God's calling them into. Whether that be maybe you guys are having your first baby or something. Like there's just new pathways, new opportunities or things that the Lord is opening up. I don't think anybody's words fall the heaviest as Ryan's do in those moments. I think back to when we had Dela and things that I was struggling with-

Ryan: With our oldest.

Selena: Yeah. ...he'd be like, "You're her mom. You're doing awesome. Keep loving her. You're not going to spoil her. If you do this..." Just be that voice of clarity if

your spouse is struggling. Be that cheerleader that says, "Man, I've just been noticing you've been doing such a good job on this." And it doesn't have to be patronizing. It's just "Gosh, I'm so proud of you. You've really owned this and you've really taken the steps into writing this book," or whatever the task is that God has called them into. Just advocate and be their cheerleader. I think that's a good thing.

Ryan: I love that. Good job.

Selena: Go me.

Ryan: Go you. *[both chuckles]*

Selena: Good job. We had to model that. *[both chuckles]*

Ryan: This one was really fun. Selena thought of this one. *[Selena laughs]* And it's "make." So make memories, make love.

Selena: That's what Ryan said. He also said, "Make out." *[laughs]*

Ryan: What can I say? I specialize. Make food together. I probably said that one too.

Selena: You did. *[both laughs]*

Ryan: In that order.

Selena: He said "make fun of each other," too. *[chuckles]*

Ryan: You said that one, not me.

Selena: No, you said that.

Ryan: No.

Selena: Anyways, be a maker in your marriage. Definitely make memories. We're all for married people making love. So intimacy, make it happen.

Ryan: Make it happen.

Selena: Just make whatever it needs to happen.

Ryan: Make the party.

Selena: Make the party. *[laughs]*

Ryan: ...in your marriage. I gotta speak to the make fun of each other piece. Because there is a sense of like sarcasm and dry humor. That's degrading and ends up being at someone's expense. But there is a healthy amount.

I know a lot of marriages like this. I know that you and I are like this, where we tease one another and it's all in good fun. So it actually builds up in a weird way. And so just be careful with that. Be mindful of that. But yeah, the joking piece is I think we're trying to get out of it. Have fun together. Have fun.

Selena: And making memories really serves as a great way to build unity, to build friendship. And to just model, I think, for your kids, if you have them, or model to the people around you that you can have fun, that God is at work and you're enjoying one another.

Ryan: One of the most powerful team building things you can do is have shared experiences. And that's what making memories is, is that you're... Think of any retreat you've gone on, think of any camp you've been to, think of how that seals those relationships, do the same thing in your marriage. Make special memories together.

Selena: *[chuckling]* I just think of some... Okay, this is a funny memory. But our friends let us use their blow kayak. And I think we like we're like, "Man, if you ever want to like-

Ryan: Marriage counseling on water.

Selena: ...marriage counseling, like pump up a kayak or haul out a boat." There's some stressful moments. Think of any stressful moment where you're trying to keep your cool because there's like lots of people around, but you're supposed to work with your spouse to make it work and not damage anything on the way. And I'm just like, "Oh, yeah, there's some marriage counseling right there."

Ryan: I've never been so exhausted and traveled so little distance. *[Selena chuckles]*

Selena: In a blow kayak.

Ryan: It was so funny. I think something was wrong with how we blew that thing.

Selena: I think it was too. And I think we got caught in one of the tides or something. We were just like, "Were we just here?"

Ryan: We literally went in circles for two hours, wore ourselves out, [00:35:00] and we were like, "This is terrible. We'll never do this again." So make memories, people. Have fun together. Be friends in that way. Selena added this. This was off-script. So and it's like-

Selena: It's kind of encapsulates a lot of stuff.

Ryan: It's very tricky because you can't just throw it out because the S stands for sufficiency in Christ. *[both laughs]*

Selena: I just go deep real quick.

Ryan: What did you mean by that? What was going through your head and your heart when you thought to-

Selena: Well, when you were talking about two as one, I mean, S could be so many things, right? Spouse. *[both laughs]*

Ryan: You're not very good at thinking on the fly, so I'm going to let you just...

Selena: So just let me [inaudible]. When you were talking about sufficiency in Christ, I think the idea of knowing my abilities as a team member, but also knowing our abilities as a couple, and that our sufficiency isn't found in ourselves, it's found in Christ.

And so the fullness of our marriage and our ability to be a team and be unified relies on our identity in Christ and our ability to take hold of the sufficiency that is in Christ, and what His model of love and His model of grace and His model of everything that He is. And knowing that He's not just like a dictator. He's our Savior, and He's our King, and He is...

There's a lot that God's been working on my heart and helping me understand the relational aspect of Christ. And that He came to save us so that we could be in relationship with the Father. And we didn't have to offer sacrifices every week, every day.

I mean, just the fact that He gave us that... I don't even know what to call it. It's not a freedom or ability, it's access. That He provided the access to the Father. I think that really just brings a foundation to our understanding of what a team is, and can be, but it's not... There's no I in team friends. So it's not based on me. But it really is based on Him.

Ryan: What that makes me think of is the fact that He has grace for our shortcomings. That even if we're lacking, both of us are lacking something that

we need in our marriage... So you both came from broken backgrounds, so you both are emotionally immature, and you don't realize it, you can look to Christ in that. And you can say, "He is sufficient. He's going to help us." And if we both look to Him, that's better. That's always going to be better. It's always going to be more biblical, it's always going to be more solid than looking to ourselves or looking to others.

So, I love that. That's good. I just don't know how teams, if it's one marriage team, we're not on two teams.

Selena: Teams of marriages.

Ryan: All right, so we got another 20 letters to go through. *[Selena laughs]* Yeah. So again, just as a quick recap. I'm going to kind of fold into the couples conversation challenge. Pick one of these. Pick one of these that jumped out to you as we were describing these, and go to your spouse and have a conversation about how are we a team, specifically in this one area.

And the areas are these: Two is one. So unity. That's T. E is equality—seeing each other with an equal value worth and importance. A is advocacy. Are you cheering one another on together and apart? Are you advocating for one another? M is making memories, making love, making food together, having fun together, making each other laugh. All those sorts of things. How are you doing that as a team? And then finally, the sufficiency in Christ? How are you looking to Christ in your shortcomings?

Pick one of those and have a conversation. Maybe pick two. Maybe pick all five. The point is connect around this topic and resolve and talk about how you can be a better team as a married couple. Is that good?

All right, let me pray and we will call it an episode. Lord, I thank you. I thank you, Holy Spirit for just being our helper in these moments that are difficult. When we feel like we are not on the same team with each other in marriage, Spirit, you are so faithful to come alongside us and to convict and to help and to encourage and to sanctify and to use our words for your perfect ends. So, Lord, I thank you for that.

I pray for couples that are struggling with unity, are struggling with having fun together, they're struggling with advocating for one another, and maybe even not seeing one another with equal value, worth, and importance. I pray that you would sear into our hearts the truths that underlie these ideas, the truth that you have made marriage, you have made us in your image, and you have called us to love one another how you have loved us. Sear that into our hearts.

Lord, help us live that out. Help the husband and the wife listening to this help them to live that out in Jesus' name. Amen. [00:40:00]

All right, quick reminder. If you sign up for gospelcenteredmarriage.com, which is our online learning ecosystem—we're always adding to it. There's a ton of content there—if you sign up for that in this month and use the promo code BASICS, you can get an additional 20% off.

I hope that you'll get there and take advantage of those courses. We're constantly making them better. We got some new equipment that we're going to be churning out more content regularly on that front. So definitely get in while you can, while the value is growing, and it will be growing indefinitely. We don't have plans to stop it. So use the coupon code BASICS to save 20% off there.

With that said, This episode of the Fierce Marriage Podcast is—

Selena: In the can.

Ryan: See you again in about seven days. So until next time—

Selena: Stay fierce.

[00:40:51] <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

- **[00:13:09]**
 - Scripture references:
 - Genesis 2:24

- **[00:22:23]**
 - Scripture references:
 - Mark 10

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