

## SKILL #4: MAKING SEX BETTER (BACK TO BASICS, 4 OF 4)

<https://fiercemarriage.com/skill-4-making-sex-better-back-to-basics-4-of-4>

[00:00:00]

**Ryan:** All right, Selena, today, we're going to open up a brand new can of worms as we close this can of worms- *[Selena chuckles]*

**Selena:** We're going to open one and close one at the same time.

**Ryan:** ...on basics. So today we're talking about this basic skill of intimacy. And it is a massive- *[Selena laughs]*

**Selena:** That's so funny.

**Ryan:** Let me tell you something, boys and girls-

**Selena:** Sorry, basic skill.

**Ryan:** ...here's how sex works. *[both chuckles]*

**Selena:** It's not that.

**Ryan:** Oh, by the way, you might want to... if you have young kids around-

**Selena:** Here's your warning.

**Ryan:** ...this is your warning. We're going to talk about stuff. We're not going to be super graphic, but they may or may not be ready for this. But the reason why I say we're opening a can of worms is because actually next month our whole theme is sex and intimacy. And we actually have a dynamite interview with Gary Thomas and Debra Fileta on their new book coming out, which is-

**Selena:** "Married Sex."

**Ryan:** ...called "Married Sex." I've never read a book quite like this one. *[both laughs]*  
I've never read a book that makes me blush.

**Selena:** But it's good.

**Ryan:** It's good.

**Selena:** It's Christian. It's like bringing the theology with the counselor, and it's dynamite. When we're recording this, it hasn't even been released yet. But it will be.

**Ryan:** The book itself, not the episode.

**Selena:** Anyways.

**Ryan:** Today we're talking about it more I think probably from a 50,000-foot view kind of some of the common kind of inhibitors of a healthy skillset in this area. It is a skill set, believe it or not. I don't mean that in a funny way. But you can get better at this in your marriage. You can have better closeness, intimacy, sexual relations as a married couple. *[chuckles]*

**Selena:** And you better believe there's an acronym coming at you.

**Ryan:** Oh, baby, it's going to be a good one. So welcome to this, the fourth, in our series on basics on the Fierce Marriage Podcast. We'll see you on the other side.

**[00:01:35]** <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.

**[00:02:07]** <podcast begins>

- Ryan:** Selena, I can just tell you're so excited to talk this.
- Selena:** So excited. It's my favorite topic ever. *[Ryan laughs]* Anyways, we are-
- Ryan:** It's a good topic.
- Selena:** It is a good topic, yes. I just don't like to be the one talking about it. I'd rather listen to someone like Debra Fileta and Gary Thomas talks about it.
- Ryan:** Well, it's very personal, of course.
- Selena:** It is, yes.
- Ryan:** So you don't like feeling like you're... I'm speaking for both of us. Our sex life is ours alone. But we happen to be people in the marriage space, and God has asked us, we believe, to speak honestly into every facet of marriage and shine the bright light of the gospel into every dark nook and cranny of marriage. And here we are. And this inevitable this topic comes up.
- And we're not in any way ashamed of it. Nor do we think it needs to not be talked about. I just don't want to be the guy that always talks about sex. That's just my honest thing.
- Selena:** Well, we're going to be the next month. So-
- Ryan:** Okay, we'll take one for the team, the corporate church team.
- Selena:** Yes.
- Ryan:** Hopefully it'll be edifying.
- Selena:** So please subscribe and follow, give us a rating before this... No, I'm just kidding. *[both chuckles]* If you haven't already, please do follow us on whatever podcasting platform you have and give us a good rating and review if you've listened to one whole podcast episode. That would be great to not just stop in the middle.
- Ryan:** Maybe not like an early episode. Maybe listen to the later ones.
- Selena:** Like around 200 level.
- Ryan:** We did some growing. *[both laughs]* It's good to say that.

**Selena:** Some people are like, "We started out at your first one." I'm like, "Oh, dear, we should take those down."

**Ryan:** Yeah. It's about to happen.

**Selena:** Do you want to be the part now? Spiel.

**Ryan:** Yeah. Okay, guys, this is our livelihood. And I mean that sincerely. God is gracious, He's provided for us. And one of the ways He's provided for our family for our kids and for, you know, just keeping the lights on-

**Selena:** Our community.

**Ryan:** ..our community is through our patrons. And so if you feel led to partner with us on that level, we would be honored. There are currently over 400 of our faithful patrons who are giving each month. And it's various amounts from \$3 on up.

Anyway, if you feel called to do that, we ask you pray about it. And if God confirms that and you are in agreement with your spouse, then you would then act on it by going to [fiercemarriage.com/partner](https://fiercemarriage.com/partner). You'll see tiers there. There's all kinds of good stuff: rings, books, free access to Gospel Centered Marriage, our online learning platform.

**Selena:** But don't do it for those reasons.

**Ryan:** But you don't do it for those reasons. You do it for the cause. *[both chuckles]* Fierce marriage cause.

**Selena:** Fierce marriage cause.

**Ryan:** We want to keep doing this thing as long as God allows it. As far as we're concerned, God allows it at least in part and major part through the global church, people like you partnering with us. So that's the pitch.

**Selena:** We are again closing out this series on the basics of marriage, building basic skills in order to have a thriving and fierce marriage. [00:05:00] Last week we talked about communication and conflict. And we discussed how to develop skills for being able to have hard talks well. How can we communicate good to each other and with each other.

**Ryan:** Pretty useful. Talk good.

- Selena:** We talked about the six Ps to having transparent, living in the light, hard conversations. I'm not going to go through all those. You're just going to have to go back and listen to that episode. So today we are jumping away... I mean, there's still going to be some communication aspect in this one, but-
- Ryan:** Body language. *[both laughs]*
- Selena:** Okay. Our goal for this episode and our hope is that you'd walk away feeling encouraged and maybe bolstered to imagine what your sex life could be like with your spouse. It doesn't have to be kind of end of the day, "I'm tired, he wants it, okay, fine" type of experience.
- Ryan:** I don't like when you just go to that default. What about when I'm tired and you want it?
- Selena:** She wants it.
- Ryan:** Which by far happens.
- Selena:** Yes. And it can be more than, you know, once a month or an anniversary only occasion. Sex is a gift from God and it has to be opened as much as married folks want to engage in open it. It's something to be both given and received, which is so beautiful in terms of like a gift. It's full of purpose and passion and power.
- But it's a struggle for us to cultivate, I think a good sex life because I think we oftentimes assume that it's just something we'll be good at. It's just I'm intuitively like, We'll just have sex. We get married, we have sex, you just do it.
- Ryan:** It's just instinctual.
- Selena:** Paul David Tripp he's got a lot of great books obviously out on marriage. But one quote that he said that really helped us is "You and I simply need to admit that the things that make sex gorgeous, exciting and fulfilling as per God's design are not natural and intuitive to us."
- Ryan:** Wow.
- Selena:** I took this as good news. Because at least for me, you know, I think we went into marriage with quite a few misconceptions about sex, right? Like when we got married, we're like, "Oh, yeah, we'll do it." You thought you'll never want for sex again, and-

**Ryan:** So far so good. *[laughs]*

**Selena:** ...I'll always be ready and willing without complaints, and I'll always be energetic. I mean, for the most part I think the beginning, that's true. But once you start throwing kids in the mix, sex life evolves a little bit. You got to play a little differently.

**Ryan:** Your tactics do have to change. *[Selena laughs]*

**Selena:** As a Christian married couple, you know, we kind of just I think thought, Well, just yeah, I mean, I guess we're good at it. We've never had any other partners, so we'll just automatically be good.

**Ryan:** Jokes on us.

**Selena:** The reality is I don't think we're all naturally like... I didn't know what you always wanted or liked. But we had to kind of figure it out. It takes work.

**Ryan:** There's this thing called sin and sin nature, and it gets in the way. You think about Adam and Eve in the garden, and they were naked and unashamed, I have to imagine that their sex life was everything they wanted, because it was completely-

**Selena:** Inhibited.

**Ryan:** Inhibited and unchanged by the effects of sin in the fall. So I think it is helpful at this point. So we've kind of painted this picture. Sex is good, it can be a gift. God created it. It can be more than you thought. And you can just try to imagine what your sex life could be like. And that's really enlivening.

I can also hear the voices of a couple saying, like, "You don't know us. You don't know the things that we faced. You don't know the damage that's been done or our pain in this area." We're not trying to discount any of that stuff. Of course, we're speaking kind of in ideal terms. And that can be the caveat is that, in general, I think couples can progress and grow in this area.

But it's also important to recognize when you can't grow without help. And what I mean by that is that maybe you've got some... God forbid, there's any sort of sexual abuse in your past, or just general abuse that makes you really difficult to have intimacy of any kind with your spouse. Maybe you feel pain, physical pain, during the act of sex.

This is something that I think every couple deals with at one point or another in their marriage is that we don't have enough of it because we are just too

busy. It's not that we can't find time, 10 minutes, 15 minutes to do the act. It's that we don't have the time to actually grow in our friendship to where it doesn't feel like we're just completely in the flesh and having physical sex of with another but there's no emotional or spiritual connection there. And so you lack the time and the margin. Or again, very relevant for our season in life, you have young kids, and they love to suck the air out of every room.

**Selena:** And they want to climb in your bed at night because they get scared or whatever. [00:10:00]

**Ryan:** Totally harshing my mellow all the time. I'm trying to put out the vibes and they need the diapers change. [Selena laughing] Very vibe crushing. And boy, can I put them out! But I can't compete with dirty diapers. *[both laughs]*

We're being silly. But the point is, is there's very real kind of challenges in this area. And that's again, as with all the other caveats to the episodes in this four-episode series over the last month, is that the beauty of it is, is that you have your married life to grow in the skill together if only we will a) submit ourselves to God's word, and we'll look at His model for things. And if we will do it together, if we'll both come to the table, so to speak and talk and trust and take actions and-

**Selena:** Get help when we need it.

**Ryan:** ...get help when we need it, and prayerfully lean into the things of God, knowing and trusting that they will lead us to flourishing even in this area. And I would even argue, especially in this area.

**Selena:** And I think I laugh and giggle because I just am not super comfortable in this area of ministry. *[chuckles]*

**Ryan:** It's okay.

**Selena:** So if I am a little more giggly, that's usually the case is I'm just trying to keep it-

**Ryan:** I'd rather you be a little comfortable than really comfortable because that would be weird to me.

**Selena:** Okay, good.

**Ryan:** I'm also a little uncomfortable.

**Selena:** Okay, good. See, I don't know these things. If you don't say it, I don't know that it's true. So I'm glad that you said that. Thank you.

**Ryan:** You're welcome.

**Selena:** I think we can start to understand maybe some of our struggles and deconstruct some of our assumptions and beliefs about sex if we start just asking questions. We talked about this a lot, actually, in our book, *See-Through Marriage*. And some of these questions, I'm just going to go through them. You can kind of answer them rhetorically in your head. We can go through a few if you want.

But do we understand that sex is a gift from God? Even growing up in the church and the whole purity culture and all of that, it influenced, I think, my view of sex being something that is preserved for marriage. But then once I'm in marriage, I don't understand what this gift is for, right? Do we know how it... I'm not going to veer from questions. I'm going to stay in. I'm sorry. Do we know or understand that God created and gave us this gift for a purpose, for many purposes? What is the role of sex in life and marriage?

I think part of that education after marriage is tough for some Christian couples. Because no one really wants to talk about it. Thank goodness a new book is coming out about it. I'm really excited to dive into that more.

**Ryan:** That's next week's episode.

**Selena:** That's next week's episode.

**Ryan:** Real quick. I'm going to hover on that. What is the role of sex in life and marriage? We can fall on both ends of that spectrum where we say is only for procreation or this cultural mandate, which happens to have in it "be fruitful and multiply."

And therefore any sex that's just for pure pleasure is bad. It's intrinsically bad. I don't want to say it's obviously the case, because it's not. Because a lot of people do think that it's just kind of dirty. And they may not say it's dirty, but they act like they think it is.

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** That's on one end of the spectrum. On the other end of the spectrum, we can see the role of sex in life and in marriage as far too overblown. And then we think that if our sex life is struggling that our whole marriage is on the rocks. We can tend to put that much weight in it because our satisfaction is attached



to it. Because our culture is over-sexualized. I think everybody knows that. And there's this whole idea of sexual identity and your sexual experience and how it is so interwoven and intertwined with love. It is, but it also isn't like.

**Selena:** We elevate it.

**Ryan:** We can have a bad month sexually and still say I love my spouse intensely. But if we overblow the importance of sex in our married lives, it will begin to cause us to question the very love that's at the foundation of our marriage. And that's the other side of the spectrum. It's not biblical, and that we want to urge you away from that.

**Selena:** The next question you've kind of talked about in your little spiel there was what type of sexual... I'm sorry.

**Ryan:** My little spiel? *[chuckles]*

**Selena:** No.

**Ryan:** Is that all I am to you?

**Selena:** No. A spiel.

**Ryan:** Schlepping my *[inaudible]*.

**Selena:** Stop.

**Ryan:** All right. I'm sorry. I don't know what to say. You added on... the words that you just said. What type of sexual-

**Ryan:** Somebody totally killing the mood over here. Good luck getting lucky later. *[both laughs]*

**Selena:** What type of sexual experiences do you believe to be deserved, right, and appropriate within marriage? Some good questions and things to think about.

**Ryan:** That's loaded. It's a great question.

**Selena:** What responsibility do you have and what role should you play in cultivating a healthy sex life in your marriage? Do you want to read that last one?

**Ryan:** Does God have an opinion about your sexuality or your purity as an individual and as a couple?

- Selena:** All really big questions in "See Through Marriage" that we would [00:15:00] encourage you to go through. We will talk about them. We're going to talk about kind of the purposes of sex, which you've probably heard us talk about.
- Ryan:** I think we should just take four or five of these questions and just blow them out over the next three, four weeks and expand on them.
- Selena:** Mm-hmm. So, which one do you go for? You pick one.
- Ryan:** I'm talking about the next four weeks.
- Selena:** Oh.
- Ryan:** In the next month.
- Selena:** Okay. I was like, "This feels like a lot to just do right now. But go!" That sounds great. Note to self, note to feature Ryan and Selena, do this next week.
- Ryan:** I would just like to acknowledge to our fellow listeners how difficult it is to do a podcast episode about sex and navigate the veritable minefield of innuendos and jokes that just are begging to be made in the name of decency and Christian goodness.
- Selena:** Christian purity.
- Ryan:** We're doing our best, people. We try to be upstanding Christians, all for the glory of God and our good. Okay, where are we going? That was a sidebar.
- Selena:** Ryan's just... woo!
- Ryan:** I'm over clamped.
- Selena:** What does that mean?
- Ryan:** I'm feeling overwhelmed.
- Selena:** Okay, well, God created sex for many, many purposes as we have already discussed. There is purpose in the passion. Our enjoyment and fruitfulness, the procreation which you touched on a little bit earlier, that will, in turn, bring Him glory.
- One of the purposes that I think in this... It should be one of the Ps that I was just kind of told later on in our marriage was that your sex life is a way of protecting your marriage as well. Us engaging in it is a way that I can preserve

and help protect the purity and the desires and the motivation and covering each other to ward off those temptations.

**Ryan:** You know what? Maybe we'll take those purposes or the various functions of sex and talk about those for the next month. I don't know.

**Selena:** Just stay in this episode. We'll get to that in the next month.

**Ryan:** Because we're leaving a lot of open endedness in this conversation.

**Selena:** Yeah.

**Ryan:** And I think the reason is this, is it's a huge topic. We're not trying to be all-encompassing in one episode. Selena has come up with this acronym. Bow body.

**Selena:** I did not come up with that. *[both laughs]* If you know you know, people. Sorry.

**Ryan:** It's a good chance from "The Office." It is. But the acronym is extremely tangible. And the reason why I like it is because it's focusing, again, on the actionable basic stuff. Because a lot of times we go very foundational. And of course, we want to do that. We're going to do a lot of that in this topic in the next four or five weeks.

I mean, let's go through the next outline here. This episode specifically we'll get to the tangibles and how you can, as a couple, today begin growing in this basic skill of intimacy and availability, not just sexual availability, but emotional availability, and of growth in this area. I don't want to jump ahead too far.

**Selena:** Go ahead. Wherever you want to go. I'm following you.

**Ryan:** Okay. Again, underlying premise. And that's what we were getting to here is that sex is good, and it has many good, good purposes, deep purposes, profound purposes that God has designed and kind of-

**Selena:** And layered in.

**Ryan:** Layered into, yeah. And it's inbuilt. There features of a healthy sex life. And that has to do with enjoyment, fruitfulness, unity in your marriage. It's a reminder to us that we can be naked and unashamed. And that's what love looks like. That's a glimpse of shadow what it looks like to be completely and utterly known by God and still loved by God and Christ and the gift that that is. Sex can be a reminder of that.

It helps us to love unconditionally in the same way. And so we can fully engage in sex within our marriage if we don't... excuse me, there's a question here. You said, how can we fully engage in sex within our marriage if we don't first understand the greater purpose? So anyway, those purposes are foundational.

So we have scriptures. Hebrews 13:4, "Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled..." 1 Corinthians 7 talks about how your body is not your own. It is to be given to your spouse and done so generously, essentially, is what Paul is saying.

**Selena:** Yeah, it's a whole chapter on principles for marriage.

**Ryan:** And sex is in there. Proverbs 5 talks about keeping your cisterns from being contaminated. We've talked about that at length in previous episodes. Genesis 2 talks about being naked and unashamed, the two became one flesh. All of these have to do with sex. So the Bible's not silent on this.

And so there are those foundational pieces that we can rely on. And for today's episode, we're just going to taking those for granted, I'll say. [00:20:00] We're not convincing you of those. We're not dismissing those. But we're just saying those are there and we acknowledge them. Now-

**Selena:** Let's step into that next step of understanding them and how can they tangibly be worked out.

**Ryan:** Exactly? Yeah.

**Selena:** So my acronym. Are you ready for it? It's three letters.

**Ryan:** Okay. *[chuckles]*

**Selena:** It's not what three letters you're thinking though. It's act ACT. A-C-T. So Assess your current sex life, Communicate, and then Try. So assess your current sex life, communicate, which we'll talk about, and then try. A call to keep fighting the good fight of faith when it comes to your sex life.

So let's talk about assessment. Because it's really difficult to say, "Hey, you're really good at this," or "I really like this," or "we're not good at having sex. We don't have it very often." Taking an inventory, taking an honest inventory can be difficult. I think it's kind of an emotional roller coaster sometimes for most of us. *[chuckles]*

**Ryan:** One of the things Gary Thomas said in our interview with him, again, we'll go live next week or at some point in the near future, is he said we're very good at... What did he say? He said, "We're better at having sex than we are at talking about it most times." It's easier to just do it than it is to talk about it. And he couldn't really put his finger on why that is. But I'd have to agree in that it's sometimes things feel better left unsaid.

And we're here to say that maybe that's not the case. In fact, we're going to tell you it's probably not the case. And one of the best ways for you to grow in this area is to take a solid, honest inventory of your sex life. And what does an inventory even look like?

I think it's looking backward and saying, "Hey, what has our sex life historically been like? Take some time to do this. Sit down on the couch, grab your favorite evening beverage, whether it's a glass of wine, or glass of tea, or whatever, coffee if you're a psychopath... *[both laughs]*

**Selena:** Or a mom trying to stay awake for conversation. *[both chuckles]* Just kidding.

**Ryan:** I'm kidding. Ask yourself this question. When we were first married, what did our sex life look like? In terms of frequency, in terms of the quality of it-

**Selena:** Engagement, yeah.

**Ryan:** ...in terms of the passion involved, the spontaneity, even the nature of it. I mean, it's your sex life, you can talk about it. And even if you feel a little bashful, give yourself some time to warm up to the conversation. I'll use this word. I feel like it's kind of not the right word. But how adventurous were you with each other? And being a little bit... I don't know.

**Selena:** What did Gary say? Athletic? *[laughs]*

**Ryan:** Yeah. Athletics.

**Selena:** What are you talking about?

**Ryan:** That was interesting. So reflect back. That's taking an assessment. That's your history. Start beginning of your marriage. Now think through the various seasons. Maybe you moved or maybe you had a job, or maybe there was some sort of military deployment. How did that affect your sex life? How did you return into that? Or even having kids? Take that inventory, assess it.

Now, try to map that from a) the beginning your marriage to b) today. What's the trajectory of that? So if you've drifted apart, what's the trajectory of that

trend? If it's gotten nuanced and different and it's changed, and maybe you've had expectations that were let down and you didn't know how to communicate those, this is the time to get all that stuff out? Assess that.

**Selena:** You know, because our routines kind of can make our sex life fall flat. So how can we just take that into consideration of "Well, we do it. We just kind of do it." It's not really meaningful at that basic level.

**Ryan:** I'm going to shoot from the hip here for a minute.

**Selena:** Oh, boy!

**Ryan:** Maybe say like on a scale of 1 to 10 how satisfied are you with the frequency of your sex life. It's really difficult because a spouse could say, "I'm at 2," and the other spouse is left hanging. "I'm here. What...?" You know, you feel all this guilt, but hopefully you can navigate through that. But how satisfied are you with the frequency? How satisfied are you with the nature or I'll say the content of your sex life, in other words, the experience itself?

I think those are two pretty solid questions. Start there and then based on your answers, talk about it. If one of you is not satisfied, talk about why.

**Selena:** Yeah. Which actually leads us into our next part of this acronym which is communicate. And there are a lot of things to communicate when it comes to talking about sex. So like you just said, talk about your sex life before you have sex, during sex, after sex. And like you were talking about going into your past sexual history of, you know, [00:25:00] when you were first married, maybe even before that. If there's things that need to be disclosed or talked about, or if there was abuse-

**Ryan:** At least acknowledge that they're playing a role in-

**Selena:** In your current situation.

**Ryan:** ...in your current situation. That history isn't without its wake.

**Selena:** Absolutely.

**Ryan:** And it doesn't mean that God's redemption is not there and grace is not there-

**Selena:** Yeah, God's powerful.

**Ryan:** ...and that somehow He won't turn that into joy and glory for Him.

- Selena:** Yes.
- Ryan:** But at least acknowledging that it's part of your story.
- Selena:** Right. And I think learning how to communicate through the difficulties of sexual frustration. We might have to just push pause on a situation. You've all been in those moments of disconnect, right? Things are kind of going, but then they just stop and everything falls flat. And there's just this tension and frustration, not really sure how to get around it. Sometimes it's just pushing pause.
- But we're here to just say, on a skill level, get comfortable with talking about sex in your marriage. And you may not be good at it yet. The key word is "yet." You will get better at it the more you communicate about it to your spouse.
- Selena:** Again, that's this conversation for you and your spouse. And if you're needing help, you're needing guidance and counsel, seek that from a trusted source of another... I don't know if a guide couple would be appropriate I guess. It would be a mentor, guide couple that's been married-
- Ryan:** Yeah, there's relationship and you trust them.
- Selena:** ...or a counselor, Christian counselor, who can... When we're talking to Debra, she's a licensed professional counselor, she practices, she has clients. She was able to clearly-
- Ryan:** She fears the Lord, she loves Scripture.
- Selena:** Yes. And she could clearly articulate what people would call one thing in the psychological sphere. She's like, "Oh, this is exactly what the Bible says." We just call it something different in the, you know-
- Ryan:** Like to have this breakthrough, psychological discovery and you're like, "This has actually been in Scripture all along."
- Selena:** Yes. And so I think there's just a lot of clarity and wisdom and freedom to be had from a Christian counselor.
- Ryan:** I'll say this is maybe the one tip that I have right now in this moment for these conversations if they're difficult in this, communicating about your sex life is framing like this. The point of the communication is not to just get your desires out on the table or your frustrations on the table. The point of the communication is to figure out how to love your wife better, how to love your husband better.

You're asking questions to get down to the roots of things. And you're revealing truth, revealing parts of yourself to, again, get down to the roots of things so that you can love one another better. It's not just so I can get from my wife what I want from her. It's not so I can air my frustrations in a place that feels neutral, but really is contrary to a fight.

**Selena:** So good.

**Ryan:** The point is you want to communicate so that you can actually... This is part of the intimacy. It's part of how do I love you well? How do I care for you? How do I protect you? How do I fight for you in this area? And let's have an honest conversation around that. And you know what? Your grown adults, you can go where that conversation leads you, fierce listeners. So A, C... T is the last one.

**Selena:** Assess, communicate, and try! With an exclamation point. Again, it's a call to keep fighting the good fight of faith when it comes to your sex life. So let's not stop learning. Is that double negative? Don't stop. Keep learning about how sex can be a blessing and how it is a gift and a wellspring of life for your marriage and your souls.

It is not just something that you come back to and it's ahh, just checking it off the list because we're Christians and we believe this. No, God has designed and purposed this gift. And if we're kind of in that rut, let's acknowledge it and let's find help. Whether it's on a book, whether it's a counselor. Let's keep trying to get out of this rut and ask the Lord to help us.

Be willing to try and have the hard conversations like we talked about in the communications section of this, as well as maybe some awkward ones and ones that you don't really like because this is where the growth happens. So let's try to have some of those hard conversations. Try to understand and give to your spouse in new ways when it comes to sex.

**Ryan:** I think one of the most helpful things you can do to try is to ask the Holy Spirit to show you what to pray for in this area. Because sometimes we want to grow in this specific area, but we don't know what that even should begin to look like. But we forget to ask God to give us the things to pray for. And that's a biblical thing that Paul thing talks about.

The Spirit tells us how to pray and leads us in our prayer. And so maybe just being still and saying, "God, how come [00:30:00] grow in this area?" Listen for the Holy Spirit, what comes to mind. Just pray for that thing together. And then you said, don't stop learning about how sex can be a blessing. That's just



not just some sexual revolution remnant that's bled itself into Christian culture.

**Selena:** Amen.

**Ryan:** The Bible has an entire book about sex, Song of Solomon, which is another way of saying it Song of Songs. If you think about Song of Songs, it's like saying King of kings. It is the song to trump all songs. And it happens to be a poem between a husband and his wife, a lover and a beloved. That's the Song of songs, the song to trump all other songs.

Again, this is not just some bleed-over remnant of the sexual revolution of the 60s in the 70s that is backlash to prudish sexuality of the 40s 50s, all that kind of stuff. No, that's not what this is. This is a biblical thing. And so it's not ultimate. Your whole marriage won't rise and fall with your sex life. Pardon the wording choice there. *[both chuckles]* But it does have an important role to play.

We can't let culture hijack this any longer. We need to put it in its right place. It's good and right and true and to be enjoyed within the confines the boundaries of marriage, a biblical gospel-centered, Christ-centered, love-based marriage.

**Selena:** Amen.

**Ryan:** Amen.

**Selena:** So in the name of that, try knowing what makes your spouse feel loved both inside and outside the bedroom. I think this was more of a note to self for me because I think I know what makes you feel loved but I don't always engage in it, or I'm too busy or too distracted. But I've got to take that time to stop and know and then try to know new things about how you feel loved. Because we grow, we evolve, God is sanctifying us, we are becoming more and more like Him.

So how we might experience love could change throughout the years of our marriage. So again sex starts outside the bedroom as you've probably heard. And so how can we try in this area? How can we try knowing our spouse better and then, therefore, loving them better?

And then like you said, there's some caveats to this one, but maybe trying something new that you haven't done in your marriage that is, of course, pure, that is not painful, that is not bringing anything into... Good ahead. You're always good at clarifying this.

**Ryan:** It's keep your marriage bed pure and keep it between you. Let it not be contaminated. It's between you two alone. That's Proverbs 5. Don't let it your cistern be spilled out into the streets so to speak. That's for you and you alone. And so be really careful how you do this, but also within the confines of your relationship, within the confines of your Christian conscience. Really it's whatever you can imagine as long as it's not degrading, painful, or in any way lust-driven. I can go on and on.

We're going to talk about that in the coming weeks. So my point that we want to make today is that this is something you can grow in and it's something that you can... it's a skill that's compounding I believe. That if you take the time to work on it and do it together and to have the hard talks and to go through it together, it'll pay dividends for the... Like right here and now, that's awesome. But also for decades, God willing. However long you're married—your rest your lives, I mean.

**Selena:** I compare it to like a hike through the mountains. It's like you're starting, you're like, "This is really fun. We're together. We've got all our stuff pack. I'm just enjoying this time with you." And then the inclines start coming. And then you're in the trees, and you can't actually see the mountains and you're just like, "Why are we doing this? Did you pack enough food. I'm thirsty, My feet hurt." *[Ryan chuckles]* There's all these things.

And then you actually summit. This is again, not an innuendo, but the whole journey of your sex life, your sex, your married sex life, it just keeps getting... It's those hard and difficult moments that you're kind of growing in to get you to those mountaintops of "Wow, here we are, we've struggled through, you know, not being able to communicate, we've tried some new things that we found enjoyable. I know you better and I know what you like and I feel like we are one. We are for sure one and we're at this level of oneness that I wouldn't trade for anything. And now we can know how to navigate and keep growing in these areas."

I think you got to get through some of the weeds and the frustrations and the trials to really just step into and enjoy that gift of sex that God has given us.

**Ryan:** I love that analogy. It is a journey. It's not [00:35:00] without its challenges, its difficulties. But here's the two things we're here to tell you. We've been married 18 years, and yeah, we're going strong. I still love you. I love you more than the day we got married. I'm hanging on by a thread. *[both laughs]*

We've been already 18 years, and we can at least say this. And I know people have been married longer that would say the same thing. And there's two

things. You can grow in this area, you can progress, your sex life can change and get better. And two, the journey is worth it. The view is incredible. The experience is worth it. And it's not something that you're going to manufacture, but instead, you're going to just, I think, experience all that God has designed and built into it by His grace.

Let's pray. This is a tender conversation.

**Selena:** We've got a whole month.

**Ryan:** Our prayer is that over the next few weeks that it would be encouraging to you, that you would be enlivened, and equipped, and helped by God's grace through that. So keep joining us. It's going to be a good few episodes coming up here.

Father, thank you. God, you're so gracious. You didn't have to give us this gift of sex. You didn't have to make it all that it is, but you did. And we get to be here beneficiaries of your goodness and your grace and your design. And boy, is it good!

So, Lord, I pray that you'd help us trust you more in this area. Help us trust you with our behavior, with our conversations, with our thoughts in this area, that you would sanctify and challenge us and Holy Spirit enable us to change in the ways that you're leading.

Help us husbands to love our wives well in this area, to flush worldly passions and worldly desires and imagery. Help us to get rid of all that stuff, in the name of purity, in the name of honoring You, in the name of loving our wives well.

We pray for the wives in this area, that whatever is challenging them, that you would equip them with the knowledge and the skill and the courage to walk through the hard conversations and to trust you, to entrust their hearts into the hands of their spouses, of their husbands. Lord, by Your grace, we can flourish and grow in this area. And it's for Your glory. In Jesus' name. Amen.

**Selena:** Amen.

**Ryan:** All right, quick reminder, we have a special [gospelcenteredmarriage.com](http://gospelcenteredmarriage.com). That's our online learning platform for married couples to get on the same page once and for all and then to stay there and rooting their marriage in the Gospel and covenant and biblical love. And then how to live that out in communication and intimacy and even the economics of the home, finances, chores. You can get all of that.

We have a six-week marriage course. There's mini-courses. We're adding to those regularly. And it's all available to you. You can have 20% off any plan there for the remainder of this month. We'll probably leave it up a little bit longer. But use the coupon code BASICS and you can get that 20% off. We hope that blesses you. We're confident that it will, by God's grace, once again.

And with that said, this episode of the Fierce Marriage Podcast is—

**Selena:** In the can.

**Ryan:** See you again in about seven days. Until then—

**Selena:** Stay fierce.

**[00:38:05]** <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 on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Thank you so much for listening. We hope this has blessed you. Take care.

**PODCAST NOTES**

- **[00:19:19]**
  - Scripture references:
    - Hebrews 13:4
    - 1 Corinthians 7
    - Proverbs 5
    - Genesis 2

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