

THE 5 MODES OF SEX (SEX TALKS, 2 OF 4)

<https://fiercemarriage.com/the-5-modes-of-sex-sex-talks-2-of-4>

[00:00:00]

Ryan: So far in the Fierce Marriage, I don't know, ecosystem, we've covered sex in multiple capacities, right? Covered it on the blog. Believe it or not, there is a blog.

Selena: Still a blog.

Ryan: A Fierce Marriage blog at fiercemarriage.com. That's how we started. There's still articles coming out by the way. So if you're a reader, go check that out. But we have talked about in the past on the blog the spectrum of sex. We've talked about... what else?

Selena: How to communicate through sex. We did a whole communication series, and we talked about intimacy.

Ryan: We talked about communicating through intimacy—having some of those hard talks, hard conversations around that. That's the communication side of things. Just last week, we talked about the seven reasons for sex. We've been talking about the purposes of sex. I don't know how many purposes there are. I'm going to say there's probably three, knowing us.

But today, we're talking about the five modes of sex. And it can kind of start to feel like we're just coming up with stuff. Let me put it this way, I feel like one of the biggest reasons that couples struggle in this area is they approach their sex life maybe with different modes at different times. And they're not synced up together. Maybe one has a certain intention and a certain expectation, the other one doesn't have that same intention or that same expectation. And so they'll inevitably miss one another.

So today, what we're hoping to do is to give you maybe some terms to think through, maybe the attitudes and the expectations that you bring into the bedroom. And in that, we'll give you permission to then talk about it and find greater health in this area. So we're looking forward to this conversation. We'll see you on the other side.

[00:01:33] <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:** I'm trying to find a good way to describe what we mean by modes.
- Selena:** It's kind of a funny word. *[Ryan laughs]* We started out with the word "types." Like five different types. But we're trying to be more accurate in what we're talking about. So when we say modes, we're talking about-
- Ryan:** I'll say attitudes. It could be an attitude that you have as you approach sex and during sex. I think that might be a good way to describe it.
- Selena:** Once you hear what they are, then it'll make a lot more sense. But before we do that, you should probably go through our housekeeping here.
- Ryan:** Yeah. So one of the ways that you can support the podcast is by leaving a rating and a review. That really helps us algorithmically speaking. The second thing is The Fierce Marriage podcast is set up to be supported by our listeners. There's two reasons for that. The first primary reason... the first primary. That's redundant.
- The first reason for that is that we don't want to clutter up the episodes with ads. We want them to be clear interruption-free. We want you to hear and process in real-time without having to fast forward or be interrupted. And so that's the first reason that we are listener-supported.
- The second reason we think it's a very biblical model for ministry. This is a ministry. And so if it benefits you, then we would hope and pray that God

would lead you to then partner with us. So the way you do that is go to fiercemarriage.com/partner. There's no obligation to do that. That's completely up to you, between you and God. But we appreciate our patrons that they're a big part of making this ministry sustainable. That's all we'll say on those topics for today.

Selena: So while you were doing housekeeping, I looked up "mode" just to define it. And it says a way or manner in which something occurs or is experienced, expressed, or done. So it's a very accurate term for our episode today.

Ryan: Sweet. That works out great. So we're going to stick with the five modes of sex. Before we get into the five modes, let's do a quick recap, because this episode is building, as most of these series episodes do, they build on the last week's. So last week, we talked about the seven reasons for sex. If you haven't heard that yet, we highly recommend that you go back one episode and listen to that.

Here's the quick recap. The seven reasons of sex. Now, these are to be differentiated from the purposes of sex. Because there are purposes, there are reasons, and now we're going to talk about modes. So that's a different conversation. But the seven reasons for sex are this: pleasure, procreation, connection, protection, comfort, the Gospel, believe it or not, and the glory of God.

And so we talked about each one of those in detail. And we're going to build on that today as we talk about these five modes of sex.

Selena: Yeah.

Ryan: So with that said, the primary goal of this episode is to give you, as Christian married couples, verbiage and permission [00:05:00] to put words to sexual experience, and then have tools and vocabulary now to talk about that with one another, so that you can, a) flourish in your sexual experience together, in your sex life, but you can also avoid unnecessary frustrations and arguments and hurt feelings.

Selena: Right. I think for us, a lot of the frustrations have come around not just missed expectations, but missed cues even, and missed desires. You know, he might be putting out the vibe, and I'm not picking it up the way he wants me to maybe.

Ryan: Oh, baby, the vibe is unmistakable. *[both laughs]*

Selena: That's very true. I guess it's always encouraging to me when I listen to podcasts, or even when I listen to like worship music, when someone else is able to kind of put words to the struggle I might be dealing with, it feels very liberating and clarifying and elucidating. And so hopefully, this podcast episode will be that for you, listener, as we talk about sex. But-

Ryan: You get the sense that you're seen and you're known and you're not alone in whatever that struggle is. I keep thinking of your example of worship is that so many times when we're struggling with the things of God, we feel like we're subpar in our Christianity, in our belief in Christ, because we're struggling with doubts in a certain area. In reality that is the life. The struggle is the life in the sense that the victory is a foregone conclusion. It's already there in Christ, but the battle is still raging.

Selena: Right. Right. Our struggles tend to, I think, increase when we, again, focus on ourselves and focus on what our shortcomings are instead of fixing our eyes on Christ and heavenly things, and eternity.

Ryan: And I do want to spend a few moments talking through the underlying kind of beliefs around sex that-

Selena: We're big belief people. We don't want behaviors to change. They won't change permanently, unless-

Ryan: When we are transformed by the renewing of our minds, our beliefs change, then our actions will naturally follow, our behaviors will naturally follow. Behaviors always follow beliefs.

And so what do we believe about sex? Now, we've spent a lot of time unpacking this in the past. So I'll just go really quickly. Is that we believe sex is a gift from God. It's something that He designed, and we need to enjoy it within His good design.

We believe that sex is not inherently sinful. It is a good thing. It only becomes sinful when it's done outside of the context and the design that He has built into it.

The other belief is that sex serves, and we talked about this last week, but it serves very specific purposes and functions and reason. It has reasons to exist in a Christian married couple's life. And the purposes are beyond us, and that they are intrinsic to it.

And so there's this context that is now not just in whether or not I get the sexual fulfillment that I want out of my marriage, out of my spouse—okay,

how selfish is that language?—but now our sex life is rooted in the deeper things of God, in the deeper design of God.

And because of that, now, we as believers, don't have to be afraid of it. We don't have to avoid it. You know, it's not something that we are not allowed to talk about. It's something that now we need to, just like any other area of our life, press into how God has given us to design for that.

And we believe and we know firmly that if we do press into His design and understanding it wisely, applying ourselves to it diligently, that we have good reason to expect there to be flourishing in this area of our lives. And so that's the underlying thing.

And sex as an act should always edify one another. You should always glorify God and edify one another. It's not about getting from my wife, or a wife getting from her husband what he or she wants from that person. It's about giving of myself to you. And that's in 1 Corinthians 7. That my body's not my own. I give myself over to you.

So I think as far as rooting this conversation and the beliefs and the bigger things of God is it's designed by God, it's good, as believers, we can press into that knowledge and wisdom of and apply yourself diligently to it. And then to understand that it's not a selfish thing. It's a selfless thing. It's not about getting what I want but giving to my spouse. And that now helps us frame the rest of the conversation.

Selena: And in the giving, we do receive as a natural overflow.

Ryan: Absolutely. Yeah. And that's the thing about giving in marriage is it has a multiplying effect. Especially-

Selena: Literally, it can be. I don't know the other one.

Ryan: Multiplying. I see what you did there. Sorry, I was having a hard time keeping up with you. *[chuckles]*

Selena: I was trying to keep up.

Ryan: Okay. So we're going to go with this. [00:10:00] So defining these modes.

Selena: I mean, we've talked about the spectrum of sex many times. If you want to find out more about that, just go to fiercemarriage.com/spectrumofsex, and it'll give you a podcast, little bloggy blog, and you can look it all up.

Ryan: I want to make sure you don't get lost. Go to fiercemarriage.com and hit the "search" thing and then type in "spectrum of sex."

Selena: I did fiercemarriage.com/spectrumofsex and it came up.

Ryan: Okay, well, to each his own. We'll see. *[both chuckles]* We'll see what comes up. You can also find that on... I think there's a podcast episode.

Selena: It's helpful. And it was in kind of our early days of exploring this idea of sex and there being different modes and different kind of desires and expectations. And sometimes, you know, one of us coming in hot and the other is like, "I'm coming in, but not so hot" Anyways.

Ryan: This is almost like an evolution.

Selena: Yes. Yeah. It's like an evolution to that conversation. So, understanding-

Ryan: What was the old conversation though?

Selena: Oh.

Ryan: That's what might be helpful. I caught you off guard there. The old conversation as I remember it was that on the spectrum of sex, you have some sexual experiences that are a lot more-

Selena: Like sports cards, we would say. It's kind of quick and gets you from A to B. I think now looking back we would say it's a little bit more on the functional side of like, we need to stay close, we need to protect our sex life, protect each other's hearts. And we just know that this needs to be kind of a regular rhythm of just having sex every couple of times a week. And so that was kind of...

I hate to lay what we did before because I think we got too much pushback on some of that.

Ryan: Really?

Selena: Because there are caveats to this.

Ryan: What do we call it?

Selena: Like snack sex or like a sports car sex.?

Ryan: We've got some really funny messages on that.

Selena: We did.

Ryan: People have their own analogies.

Selena: We did. But I mean, again, there's always the caveat, right? There's always a caveat of this is not just like, "Hey, I need it, you give it to me, let's do it quick." Unless there's a full like, "I know you need it, and I'm there. So I want to help you, I want to love you. I want to be there for you in this way," then that's one approach. But if it's somebody's basically taking advantage of the other, then that's not what we're talking about here.

Ryan: Right? All of these have this baseline understanding this agreement that we would say, as a couple, it's time for us to engage in the marital act of sex. Is it going to be a sports car? Or is it going to be other end of the spectrum, which is a freight train? Sports cars can start and stop on a dime; a freight train takes many miles to get up to speed, and it takes many miles to slow down depending on what it's carrying.

The point of that analogy is that on one end, they're both okay, as long as you're in agreement about which version of sex you're in for in that moment, really intense or really light, quick, functional. So we're adding some texture to that in this conversation. It's evolving. This is maybe the spectrum of sex 2.0.

Selena: 2.0.

Ryan: Dunder Mifflin Infinity up in here. *[both chuckles]* Let's just go through the first modes. I just want to say them upfront, and then we can talk about each one. So the five modes. Why don't you say these? The five modes of sex?

Selena: Okay. The first one is soulful. Second one is passionate. Third one is fun. Fourth is adventurous. And fifth is functional.

Ryan: Soulful, passionate, fun, adventurous, and functional.

Selena: But there was some argument about some of these because I'm like, "Ah, these sound like they're one in the same. I think we could narrow it down to like three." And he's like, "No, this is how they're different." So already we're having good conversations about these clearly.

Ryan: Hardly argument.

Selena: It's not argument.

- Ryan:** Just conversation.
- Selena:** Yes, conversation.
- Ryan:** Very amicable conversation between husband and wife.
- Selena:** Sorry, I didn't mean to say argument.
- Ryan:** Hmm. You were being nice. *[both laughs]*
- Selena:** Okay. I think I got a bit minimalistic here and he was more nuanced. So-
- Ryan:** You were being nice. So back off. So the first one, soulful.
- Selena:** Soulful.
- Ryan:** So this was the biggest tension is what's the difference between soulful sexual mode and passionate sexual mode? And so my argument was this, is that passionate... We'll talk about these both kind of in tandem, if that's okay.
- Selena:** Mm-hmm. I thought they should be one. But go ahead. *[laughs]*
- Ryan:** So my argument for passionate was, by God's grace, there are times in a married couple sex life when you are firing on all cylinders and both of you are there in present in every way.
- Selena:** Well, think about it. What did you say? It's like watching the equalizer...
- Ryan:** Like an old 80s stereo?
- Selena:** Yeah. And you see the music go up and down and like-
- Ryan:** So maybe we should back up and talk about the types of intimacy because we've talked about that too, and this plays into it. So the three types of intimacy. You have emotional intimacy, you have physical intimacy, which you could break it down into physical and sexual. We'll just say physical. And then you have spiritual intimacy.
- If you picture those three things are like the low frequency, the mid-frequency, and the high frequency on like an old school stereo EQ made out, when the music's playing, the lows will go up and then the mids will go up and down. And they're all kind of going up and down-
- Selena:** Not together, right? There's this agreement, and there's this-

- Ryan:** But they all kind of go up at different times. And so for me, passionate sex is where all three of those are maxed out. Like the mids, the highs, and the lows are all maxed out in both of you. So you're connecting physically, you're connecting emotionally, and you're connecting spiritually. You are both just there and present. And the result is passionate. It's a passionate mode.
- Selena:** High level there. Not just like... I mean, I think you're always there. But I don't know, I think there's different levels of emotional experience.
- Ryan:** And each mode maybe has different EQ readouts.
- Selena:** There you go.
- Ryan:** We'll keep using this analogy. It seems to work for us. And so the difference being passionate and soulful is I think there are times when a married couple is having sex and they like, say... I don't know to how to describe it beforehand. But like-
- Selena:** You said "everything feels great, but I just want to show you how much I love you." Like it's a different embrace.
- Ryan:** Yeah. There are high levels of intimacy happening, but it may not be on every front. But the objective is the same in that the soulful sex is all about just showing to one another regardless of the outcome, regardless of whether or not you're on the same perfect bandwidth with one another. I'll use us as an example. It's the best thing I know how to do.
- Selena:** Oh boy!
- Ryan:** Is there are times when I can tell that you're there with me spiritually, you're there with me emotionally, but physically you're just not feeling it. You're not there physically. It doesn't mean that you don't love me.
- Selena:** Right. We've had to learn this. We've had to learn and interpret this because you very much could have felt rejection.
- Ryan:** It doesn't mean that you're phoning it in. It just means that-
- Selena:** Trying to grow in this area.
- Ryan:** And this is particularly true when you have young kids in the house. And depending on how young they are and the types of personalities they have, they may or may not leave a lot of margin in your life. We have a two-year-

old. This is especially margin sapping at the moment. And so I have had to learn that Selena, she can still be with me on a soulful level. But the passion, the full spectrum, like physical side is not there too. And so you can appreciate both modes.

Ryan: Yeah. And the thing is you have to understand that there are different modes, and that's okay. It doesn't mean that your spouse doesn't love you if they're maybe not firing on one of these levels.

Selena: Yeah. Like I said, someone's coming in hot and the other ones just not quite as hot or excited. It doesn't mean we can't give to each other in that way. Again, it's this agreement. It's not this one person only. But someone might be leading the charge a little bit more. I would say it like that.

Ryan: Yeah. And I feel like there's times-

Selena: The passion is when we're both leading the charge.

Ryan: Yeah. You're struggling to find a leader. Too many cooks in the kitchen.

Selena: Too many chiefs.

Ryan: I want to touch on the soulful piece again, because I feel like there's time as a husband in particular, that a husband can embrace his wife in a way that says, "I love your very soul. It's not just your body that I love, but I love your soul, I love your heart, your mind, your body, of course." But there's a different embrace, and I felt it toward you, where it's like I am just trying to hug your soul. I'm trying to embrace your soul. And of course, your body's in the mix. But that's a different type of mode that you can approach.

And so if you haven't experienced these, I would encourage you to try and think through what it might look like for you in your marriage. Hopefully, us sharing is not TMI, but it's actually helping you in some way.

Okay, so the third one, fun. The only thing that comes to mind when we say the mode of sex and it's called fun, all I think of is the ridiculous caricatures of a husband and a wife dressing up. It's all I could think of. Maybe it was the Gary Thomas and Debra Fileta interview when he talked about getting a job is like a really sexy thing for a husband to do. And I was like, "All I hear you saying it's like we're construction [inaudible]. It's all I hear you saying, Gary?" *[both laughs]* But that's not what we're talking about.

Selena: No.

- Ryan:** That's not what we're talking about.
- Selena:** We're talking about a lightheartedness to your sex life. It doesn't always have to be so intense, I think. I think it can lead there. Again, these are approaches. These are kind of stepping into the bedroom and the approach that you're going to take, the mode that you're taking in the attitude of being kind of light-hearted. Because sometimes I'm laughing and having fun with him and [00:20:00] Ryan's just like, "No, I don't..." He's feeling soulful. *[both laughs]* So I gotta find my way back to the soulful train because I'm often-
- Ryan:** I'm like, "Oh, I see what you're saying. Oh, yeah." And she's like laughing. I'm like, "What am I? A joke to you? *[laughs]* Is just a joke to you?"
- Selena:** This is real talk, people. It's real talk. But you gotta be on the same page with the approach because yeah, there can be some hurt feelings.
- Ryan:** It's forced us to have some really good conversations and to grow up a little bit in this area, and to not take it so seriously. I'm talking to myself.
- Selena:** Yes, yes.
- Ryan:** But you don't have an agenda when you're just like, I'm just having fun with you. And we're having fun together. And you can laugh and tickle and wrestle and do whatever the thing is. Tickle fights. And what we've found-
- Selena:** Married people style. *[chuckles]*
- Ryan:** Married people style. And what we found is that oftentimes it's fun. More than any other mode, fun will lead into another mode of soulful or passionate. Like if we start out with one of the other modes, say functional or adventurous, they can get there, they can get to the soulful. To me, I feel like soulful and passion are like the pinnacle of... at least in our own lives.
- Selena:** Yeah. It's a bit of a progression, I think.
- Ryan:** Yeah. And maybe we should have put these on the spectrum truly. *[chuckles]*
- Selena:** Guys, we're trying to figure this out just as much as you. So the-
- Ryan:** That's the thing about fun is it does lead more than-
- Selena:** It leads the same place.
- Ryan:** I think- *[Selena laughs]*

Ryan: Yes, Selena, thank you. Pragmatic Selena. It's all just going in the same place.

Selena: It's fun that you get to go-

Ryan: Going to pleasure town. *[both laughs]* We needed a laugh today, folks.

Selena: You get there in different ways.

Ryan: Whether you're going to pleasure down via sports car, freight train, you're going to get there. *[laughs]*

Selena: It's been a hard day, guys.

Ryan: It's been a hard day for the Fredericks.

Selena: Not because of that, but other things. So anyways, fun, laughing, playing tickle fight games, whatever you got to do. Well, within, you know, keeping it pure.

Adventurous is the fourth one. Again, I thought fun and adventurous were like kind of one and the same. But again, my husband was like, "No." *[chuckles]* So kind of the words that came to mind for this or like exploration or trying new things as a couple. Again, within the means of purity, agreement, no pain. I think those should go without saying but we're going to say them here.

Ryan: Which by the way, in a future episode we're going to talk through. I don't know how to articulate this. But-

Selena: Struggles and the-

Ryan: What's out of bounds.

Selena: Yeah.

Ryan: Within married sex, we have a lot that God has given us permission to do. Are there things that are outside of that permissive circle, right?

Selena: Yeah. So these adventurous things we're talking about that are inside the circle of that God says, "yeah, greenlight. Go ahead." So when we say quote-unquote "exploration," we're just saying like, maybe try something that is a different position that you guys don't normally do or something that is healthy and fine and in agreement. Maybe it's spontaneous sex, you know.

I feel like the older we get the less spontaneous I am. I'm more like, "Okay, can we put this on schedule?" Super fun. But it is fun in any way. Sorry, we're sitting here trying to like sell you on this. Not sell you but like, "Hey, yeah, get your rhythms in order because it's super fun." *[both laughs]* It is. It is good to know these things. It's different seasons. I feel like these are all modes for different seasons sometimes. So there's a spontaneity of it.

And then location. Like, hey, you're on a lonely beach somewhere. There's no one around hopefully. Or you know, somewhere in the woods. I don't know. Again, you gotta have some agreement here. You got to have some agreement. And people like hiking. So take a hammock. I don't know. Be adventurous. That's what we're trying to say.

Ryan: I'm just saying hammocks aren't all that bad. You might think you need to be-

Selena: It's a little cold sometimes. But yeah, no, it's not bad. *[chuckles]*

Ryan: So you had said that adventurous and fun should be the same thing. And I can't imagine how-

Selena: I think something that's adventurous should be fun. And something that's fun should be a little bit adventurous?

Ryan: Okay. I think you can have... Okay, we can we could definitely mince words...

Selena: Explain this model.

Ryan: But you can have adventurous times that are also passionate and they're also soulful. And I think these are primary modes and they're secondary modes.

Selena: We can also fun times that lead to the passion and soulful.

Ryan: And you could have functional times that will lead to the passion and soulful. [00:25:00]

Selena: See, this is the amazing thing about Sex that God created. There's so many different approaches, so many different modes.

Ryan: Sorry, I'm laughing now because it sounds ridiculous. But we tried to create a Venn diagram that would somehow-

Selena: You tried to create a Venn diagram. *[laughs]*

Ryan: You were there. *[both laughs]* It wasn't just me. I tried and Selena was like, "Ah..."

Selena: I kept saying-

Ryan: And then I tried doing X-axis, Y... What are those called? Matrix of like this takes this much time and this much connection or energy. And Selena just said-

Selena: That's just the beauty of sex, that it doesn't fit into these diagrams, and the fact that it can just kind of... it's hard to restrict it, I guess. Because God has made it creative. It's not a challenge. It's just an observation. *[both chuckles]*

Ryan: I think you're right. Especially when you start talking about the differences between couples and how their specific relationship works-

Selena: How you give and receive love.

Ryan: And so it's up to you, Christian, fierce listener to discern your way through this married couple. Yeah, how to figure out your way through this.

I feel like fun and adventurous modes will have a lot of overlap. But the key of adventurousness is you're both approaching it with this attitude of we're pioneers right now, we are Lewis and Clark. We're blazing a new trail in this wilderness that is our sex life, and we don't know what we're going to find.

It's going to be a little bit more challenging, it's going to be a little bit more... I'm just going to use this term. It's going to be out of our comfort zone. In other words, it's not in a cushy, predictable thing. Instead, it's like being in a hotel versus out camping. One's going to be a little less comfortable, but you might wake up to an incredible view. And it's something that may be worth it.

Selena: And it can be a great memory, you know. It's not a memory until after it's happened. *[laughs]*

Ryan: And the key to the adventurous thing is you guys talk, talk, talk through it. And I think many times, couples, you get into the act of sex, and all of a sudden, it's like your mouths stop working to speak words. And what I mean is you stop-

Selena: No.

Ryan: ...articulating things and saying, "That's good, that's bad. I don't like that. What do you...?"

Selena: I think that's part of it. But I also think that you say things that are misunderstood, because I can say something that I think is very clear, and you will understand exactly what I'm saying and what I'm talking about. But instead, you're either defensive, hurt, or mad or something. And so then there's no even room for conversation because somebody's gotten hurt feelings or been gotten angry-

Ryan: Creates a tailspin and you have to pull out of it.

Selena: Yeah, it's not always about not having the words. I think that is definitely part of it. But part of it is also just communicating clearly and in a shared meaning type of way.

Ryan: Well, hopefully by having some-

Selena: More of these conversations, right?

Ryan: And having some of this verbiage maybe just... not necessarily these five modes, but you will have your own modes in your own marriage and having the vernacular to use that within your own relationship to say and set expectations.

And here's the thing is if you husband or wife are feeling like, listen, we've been missing out on this whole adventurous side, like the spontaneity I've missed that, we were more spontaneous when we were first married, now we're not. If you have that verbiage, go to your spouse in an opportune moment, not in the heat of the moment, not when you're tired, not at the end of the day, but maybe say, "Listen, I love you. I want more of you. And I really miss this aspect, this mode that we used to participate in more, that we used a share together. How can we go back there?" And that at least we'll get you talking about it.

It's tricky there to not then get mired down by the feelings of guilt. "Oh, now I'm a bad wife, you get defensive. I've been..." You know what I'm saying?

Selena: Mm-hmm.

Ryan: It feels like I'm out on the limb here.

Selena: No.

Ryan: But you can start to read into it and don't get defensive. So the hope is that you have this vernacular to use within your own marriage. And then you'll

have the wisdom and frankly emotional maturity to talk about these things in times when it's going to be productive and fruit-bearing in your marriage and not discouraging and heaping on shame and condemnation. So we've talked about soulful, passionate, fun and adventurous, and now functional, which-

Selena: Functional. I think this is where we probably get some of the most pushback, because we've addressed it in the past I think of sometimes you just do need that physical release, right? And it feels like somebody might be taking advantage of the other partner.

But again, with this foundation of agreement, of saying... of even like, "Hey, I'm not really feeling it, but I know you have to go out of town for a couple days and I want to protect our marriage, and in protection and in the name of loving you well, let's just do this," it's okay to do that.

Ryan: But there's a caveat there.

Selena: I think it starts there. [00:30:00]

Ryan: That it's not up to the wife to make her husband be integris.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: Husband should have integrity whether or not his wife has been able to meet the needs that he has sexually.

Selena: Right. Whether or not the couple has agreed that this is an opportune time that we need to do this because we're looking ahead.

Ryan: Yeah. As long as it's not a husband using that as a tool to manipulate his wife. I like to think of it as appetites. You said you're meeting... What did you say?

Selena: A need?

Ryan: Having a physical release?

Selena: Oh, yeah.

Ryan: I wouldn't compare it to like having an appetite where... I'll use this. I'll just keep pressing into this analogy for a moment. So I've been working in the yard all day, and I come in and you say, "Oh, you look hungry. Can I make you a sandwich? And then I sit down and say, Yeah, I'd love a sandwich. I'm really hungry right now." I say, "Aren't you going to eat a sandwich?" And you say,

"No, I'm not hungry. I already had a snack. Maybe that's a bad analogy because I want you to *[both laughs]* have a snack elsewhere.

Selena: It breaks down there. Stop there. You say, "Nope, I'm not hungry. So I'm not as hungry right now."

Ryan: You say, "I'm not as hungry. I haven't worked up an appetite." *[both laughs]* And so here's the thing, am I going to be all up in arms because you're not also eating a sandwich? I'm going to say, "No, I'm hungry right now. I need a sandwich." Or you're saying you're hungry-

Selena: Because mama's going to be hungry later. You know that's true. *[both laughs]* You know that's right.

Ryan: So I don't know. Maybe the analogy doesn't work. The point is sometimes there's just an appetite there that needs to be met. And it just comes down to just feeding the appetite. As long as it's done in love, it's done in agreement, it's done in an edifying, God-honoring way, I think you can, in good conscience, just give to one another now in that area.

Selena: I think it's one of the ways that I feel that I can tangibly love you and love my husband is saying, "I'm not really feeling it. But again, it's not really about me right now. I want to love him. Well, I want him to have protection around his heart and his mind." Again, it's not my job, but it's part of I think my role as a helper that I can help in this way.

So, again, there's two parts to this functional part. So we talked about meeting the appetite, a physical release. The second part of this functional is when your people are trying to conceive a child. Sex is different, I think. I don't know if it's different. I don't know. You say it's different. I think it's more-

Ryan: What do you mean? How do I say it's different?

Selena: Because you said when you're trying to have a child, you're doing it on purpose. Like there's this reason for like always... I guess I just think of-

Ryan: It's really hard to speak to this because there are couples that struggle for years to conceive the child. And so sex carries a very different meaning for them-

Selena: It can, yes.

- Ryan:** ...when it's time to try and conceive a child. And they're saying, "All right, it's that time, we can't miss the window. So let's go do the thing." That's going to feel very different. That's not what I was saying is it feels very different than-
- Selena:** It can. Yeah.
- Ryan:** "I just want to be close to you and I miss you."
- Selena:** Well, those are some big assumptions, though, too, right? I mean, I guess-
- Ryan:** Of course, the two could intersect and you could have a "we need to meet the window, and I also miss you, and therefore we're going to be intimate." And it's going to have all these layers to it.
- Selena:** Right. It's just the agency question of like, how much should we be? Oh, now it's time to have kids. Well, why is it now and not...?
- Ryan:** I'm talking about the monthly window, ovulation, and all that kind of stuff.
- Selena:** Okay. Sure, got you. Okay.
- Ryan:** Just trying to time it.
- Selena:** I get you. *[Ryan chuckles]* I just think of... What's that movie where they're all like pregnant?
- Ryan:** What to Expect When You're Expecting?
- Selena:** Yeah, "What to Expect When You're Expecting." And this one has like an app. You know, and it's so true, because everybody has apps now. Right? But she's like, "Honey." Like her app is going off and it's like ding, ding, ding for ovulate. So she's just like, "No." She's just like, "I'm ovulating right now. We got to do it. Let's do it."
- Ryan:** It's the epitome of functional.
- Selena:** Right.
- Ryan:** And the question that I want to raise is, is that bad? And I think it's not. I think there is a very physical functional component of sex. It's built in from the beginning. Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth. Well, what are you being fruitful with? Bearing kids. How are you multiplying? By bearing kids. How are you filling the earth? By bearing kids. And that was in conjunction with the two became one flesh.

- Selena:** And how are you being blessed? Through kid. So interesting.
- Ryan:** But if that's the mode, that one of you is in the functional mode and the other ones not... I'll use this example. And this was maybe the last example. But again, if a husband or wife has a sexual appetite that needs to be met... And I'll just use our example. If I'm coming to you and saying, it's been three, four days. I'm feeling kind of... *[both laughs]* I don't know. I was going to say angsty *[inaudible]* is the wrong word. I don't know how to say it. The point is, I'm feeling the vibe-
- Selena:** You're hungry. You're hungry.
- Ryan:** Okay, I guess hunger is the analogy we're going with for today. If you're saying, "Great, then functional it is." And I'm saying, "Well, no, soulful is what I'm hoping for," *[00:35:00]* and you're expecting functional, now that's not a problem if we talk about it. Because then you can say, "Oh, I see where you're at. Functional will do. I'm okay with that. I get that you're tired."
- Or maybe I say, "I'm hoping for soulful and we've not connected in the long time. I really miss you. Yes, the physiology of it is a big piece, but still, I miss my wife. I love you, your soul." And then hopefully, we could find the middle ground there. Soulful doesn't mean it has to be 45 minutes session. It could still be less.
- Selena:** Right. Your soul is involved I think no matter what the mode is. It just can be I think different levels and attentiveness.
- Ryan:** So, as a recap, soulful, passionate, fun, adventurous, and functional. Those are the five modes of sex that we've come up with for today's conversation. There probably are other words or maybe other modes that we haven't thought through. I'm really curious.
- Selena:** For sure.
- Ryan:** The point is, is there are different attitudes with which we can approach this gift that God has given us in the marriage bed, that you can approach your marriage bed with similar attitudes. Our hope and our prayers that we've helped you kind of understand and think through those modes and those attitudes in different terms so that you can find more health, less frustration, and ultimately, a flourishing sex life for a healthier marriage. Is that all right?
- Selena:** Yeah.

Ryan: Folks, I realize this is a really sensitive topic, and we have fun when we talk about this topic. And there will be times when we talk about sex that are not as playful, I'll say, on the podcast. So we don't mean to in any way gloss over maybe some of the difficulties in this area that couples face. It's actually a very heavy topic. And one of the reasons we do tend to take it more lightheartedly is because it is heavy on our hearts, and we realize how heavy it can be on the hearts of couples. So-

Selena: And also we aren't counselors. And a lot of I think sexual past and pain and experiences they can't be dealt with over a podcast. So we would encourage you, as always, to find a counselor that is biblically-based, gospel-centered, loves the Lord, and wants to help walk you through anything that you might be facing as a couple in this area.

Ryan: Yeah. Well said. I'll pray. Lord, we thank you, again, for this gift. That you've given us such a good design for sex, Lord. But we also know that we are living in a fallen world and we are sinners, that we've been saved by grace, but still parts of our flesh and our sinfulness they remain. God, you're sanctifying us.

And those parts of our lives and our history and our, our present realities, God, they can contaminate this area of our sex life, or that can create pain and dysfunction and frustration and bitterness in some cases, and it can fracture and damage a relationship. Lord, we pray that You would enter those broken spaces and heal.

We pray that you would minister to the hearts and minds and the lives of the husbands and the wives who are listening to this. That you would encourage them and show them Your hope for this area, the hope that You have for them in this area.

Lord, we pray that You would give them wisdom and tenacity as they pursue health and right living in this area. Whatever that looks like for them, I pray that they would pursue You even in this area of their sex lives in their marriage.

I pray for the broken marriages that you would mend them. That you would reconcile husbands and wives so that they could be one flesh truly, and that they would enjoy the communion they have with one another.

Jesus, it's only by Your grace that we are able to share any modicum of truth. Lord, we pray that our words would make much of you and they would edify your bride, the Church. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Selena: Amen.

Ryan: All right, ladies and gentlemen, join us next week for another episode of the Fierce Marriage Podcast. But for now, this episode of the Fierce Marriage Podcast is—

Selena: In the can.

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

Selena: Stay fierce.

[00:39:08] <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.

FIERCE MARRIAGE RESOURCES

Main Site: <https://fiercemarriage.com/>

Shop: <https://shop.fiercemarriage.com/>

Patreon: <https://www.patreon.com/fiercemarriage>

Podcast: <https://fiercemarriage.com/podcast>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/fiercemarriage>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/fiercemarriage>

Instagram: <https://instagram.com/fiercemarriage>

Facebook: <https://facebook.com/fiercemarriage>

Pinterest: <https://pinterest.com/fiercemarriage>

Ask Us Anything: <https://fiercemarriage.com/ask>