

PROTECTING THE PURITY OF YOUR SEX LIFE (SEX TALKS, 4 OF 4)

<https://fiercemarriage.com/protecting-the-purity-of-your-sex-life-sex-talks-4-of-4>

[00:00:00]

Ryan: Hey guys! Ryan here. Just a quick heads up. This episode is sensitive in nature, as with many of these episodes in our series on sex talks. You want to make sure that any young ears are not within earshot. So maybe listen in another time or put some earphones in. Either way, we hope you enjoy this episode. I just wanted to give you that quick warning before it starts. Enjoy!

Selena: We are wrapping up this series about sex. And we are excited, [*chuckles*] to be honest.

Ryan: As it turns out, you kind of take a lot of flak when you talk about this topic, because it's so sensitive.

Selena: It is.

Ryan: And it's so... I don't know it.

Selena: It's private and it's between you and your spouse. And so it's fine. We'll take the flak. We want to put the gospel out there. We want to talk about the importance of sex and the purposes of sex that God has given us. So it's all right what we've done in the last three weeks of this. We actually had an extra episode interview.

So this week, we are excited to wrap this up and talk about how we can protect our sex life as a married couple going forward. So-

Ryan: Everything we learned, everything we've talked through, we're going to bundle it up, draw some nice boundaries around it so we can keep the good stuff in and keep the bad stuff out. Is that right?

Selena: Yeah.

Ryan: All right. So let's do it on the other side. We'll see you there.

[00:01:25] <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.

[00:01:58] <podcast begins>

Selena: Sorry about that last innuendo there. I don't think we are aware of-

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

Selena: Exactly, exactly. It's all good.

Ryan: Selena-

Selena: It's really difficult to talk about sex without innuendos.

Ryan: ...keep your mind pure.

Selena: I know. I'm working on it. God is helping me. See, I'm working on it. So if I'm working on it, it's probably not going well. But if God is working on it in me, then it's going much better.

Alrighty, friends! We are excited to be wrapping up this series about sex. It's been a good talk. I think it's been very elucidating for us on many levels. But before we jump into our conversation...

Ryan: Yeah, if you want to be part of the Fierce Marriage Podcast, you can do that two ways. You can leave a rating and review. That is probably the easiest, fastest way. It helps us a ton. Just go to your podcasting app of choice, hit star rating, leave a review, a couple of sentences is more than enough.

Or if you want to go a little bit further, you can be on mission with us by way of Patreon. So you go to fiercemarriage.com/partner. That will redirect you to a bunch of tiers. You can pick one of those if one of them appeals to you. But you don't do it for that; you do it because you're passionate about seeing the gospel, God's truth spoken into the area of Christian marriage.

We can spend our lives I think encouraging, refining, edifying the church in this area. Like we just want to talk to Christians about what it means to live out the truth that we say we believe in this most important human relationship that God has given us. And that is a marriage.

So you can go to fiercemarriage.com/partner if God leads you to do that. And we're going to be so glad to have you in there. We do have lots of fun stuff that happens in there too. What?

Selena: You're just funny. Are you still using the code for any discounts?

Ryan: Oh, yeah. Gospel Centered Marriage is our online learning platform for married couples. And in this series, you can use the code SEXYTIME for 25% off any enrollment there. That's not going to be up forever. So if you hear this podcast and it's long time after it's released-

Selena: It probably doesn't work anymore.

Ryan: ...it probably won't work. You can try it. Go to gospelcenteredmarriage.com, go to the signup page there, and use the promo code SEXYTIME. And do so proudly. *[Selena chuckles]*

Selena: Do so proudly.

Ryan: Without hesitation.

Selena: And without giggling, right?

Ryan: No giggling.

Selena: I keep giggling. Sorry, guys. So last week, we talked about simmering. That was a really fun episode. I really enjoyed talking about that and getting to understand what it is. I'm just going to leave it there. You guys got to go check it out.

Today, we are going to talk about protecting your sex life.

Ryan: Protecting your sex life.

Selena: Yes. Because we've talked about, in this series, kind of the seven reasons for sex-

Ryan: Kind of the seven reasons.

Selena: Kind of. We did talk about the seven reasons that we believe-

Ryan: Which actually are coming full circle here-

Selena: They are.

Ryan: ...because we're going to talk about them again. But go ahead. Seven reasons for sex. That was a good episode. I enjoyed that one particularly. Because I learned a lot when preparing for that one.

Selena: Yes.

Ryan: We talked about the five modes.

Selena: Yeah, five modes of sex.

Ryan: Also a fun episode. And then we talked about the simmering.

Selena: Sex is really fun for Ryan. *[chuckles]*

Ryan: I have fun all the time.

Selena: He's a fun guy.

Ryan: Sometimes just more fun than others. *[chuckles]*

Selena: Yes. *[laughs]*

Ryan: Sometimes just more fun.

Selena: And then we talked about this idea of simmering that was in Gary Thomas and Debra Felita's most recent book called "Married Sex" and what that is. So go check that episode out if you want to know more because we're going to run out of time if we rehash that for you.

Ryan: Yeah. So how do we protect?

Selena: So yeah, moving forward in this and ending this series, we want to kind of be on the off fence and talking about how we can protect our sex life through boundaries, and understanding how scripture has been laid out to help us in these areas and to instruct us. Not help us. That's such a light word for the Bible and scriptures. It's authoritative. So we need to go to it and submit ourselves to it.

Hebrews 13:4 says, "Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous."

Ryan: I think it helps to maybe read some of the context around it-

Selena: Absolutely.

Ryan: ...because this is not a passage that's specifically about marriage. So let's start in verse 1, and we'll read through just until we feel a good stopping point. Probably sometime in the next book of James. *[Selena chuckles]* So let's start verse 1 of Hebrews 13.

"Let brotherly love continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them, and those who are mistreated, since you also are in the body. Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous.

Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you.' So we can confidently say, 'The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?'"

[inaudible] read the whole chapter truly. That's the end of the book of Hebrews. So this passage comes to the very end was closing out this magnificent letter. We don't know who the author is, but he's writing it to early Christians who were in a time of trial. And so because of that, focusing on the supremacy of Christ and the fact that He is our high priest and He is reigning in heaven, even as we're going through the trials.

And it's just interesting to me that he closes out this passage, this whole book rather, with this "Let brotherly love continue. Don't neglect to show hospitality to strangers. Remember those who are in prison. Remember one another." Now then he turns his gaze to marriage. So be brotherly toward another-

Selena: Yeah. I mean, the title of it is "sacrifice is pleasing to God." It's as if he's listing out the overflow of the Christian life. He's encouraging like "Let brotherly love continue," this is what it looks like. Not neglecting to show hospitality to strangers, to remember those who are in prison. Yes, it's like a crusader, a call like to live for God. But it's not like, here's our swords and our shields and we're going to go out and fight. It's like, no, let your brotherly love continue. Why? Because that's a difficult thing to continue doing every day, right?

Ryan: Yeah.

Selena: To show hospitality to strangers.

Ryan: And in some ways, it's the natural outworking of truly-

Selena: Absolutely.

Ryan: ...embracing the truth that Christ is a supreme. That he is our high priest and he reigns throughout the culmination of history, and he will continue to reign. That's an amazing, life-altering revelation. What strikes me though is he turns right to marriage after that.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: "Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous." And that's what I want, I think, start with is the idea that so often when we talk about boundaries in marriage, Hey, protect your sex life, the immediate thought, at least in my own gut is what we want to protect your marriage and protect your sex life because it'll be better that way. Like, your marriage will be happier, your sex life will be healthier, you'll avoid the pain, you'll avoid, you know, all the drama and the brokenness that happens when the opposite is true. When you don't hold it in high regard, it ends up being defiled somehow.

He doesn't talk about that. He didn't say, Keep the marriage bed pure, let the marriage bed be undefiled because that will be healthier for you. Or that will be easier for you. Or you'll be happier that way."

Selena: More enjoyable. *[chuckles]*

Ryan: This is the key and this is why the gospel is absolutely central to this. The reason we protect our sex life has to do directly with our relationship with God because He has commanded it. He has said, "Be pure in this area, exercise..."

We've talked about the last three episodes of the beautiful gift that it is within the context that He's given for it. Sex is not beautiful outside of marriage. It is not holy outside of marriage. It is not all the things that we've spent the last three weeks uncovering outside of the marital covenant which God has designed sex for. So the calibrating effect here is not just it'll be better for us but it will be because God will judge the sexually immoral and the adulterous.

Now, grace is true. We believe that we are saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. But there is judgment around sexual immorality and adultery. And there's a lot to be said around what that text could mean for somebody who is sexually immoral, who is adulterous. Here's the tricky thing is we know a lot... I don't want to say we know a lot. But we know of a lot of Christians that are sexually immoral, or they call themselves Christians, but then live a sexually immoral life.

Selena: Right. It's unrepentant.

Ryan: Unrepentant. Yeah. And so the lack of repentance is a warning sign. So anyway, we don't have to go down that rabbit trail.

Selena: No, I think it's good to say that, you know, there is no sin that God... that is outside of His ability to forgive and atone for. Right?

Ryan: Right.

Selena: Even though, you know, if you are in that camp or that as part of your story, right, adultery or defilement, which we're going to define a little bit more, God can restore sexual purity and holiness. But the key there also is that we are repentant in our lives, are now committed to Him, and to following Him.

Ryan: Which actually raises another interesting thought is that in that moment of redemption or in that moment we are restored in Christ, that doesn't erase any of the things that we're talking against. So the temporal, the consequences here now in this earth are still there. Even though your eternal consequences now have been erased because you have given your life to Christ, your sin was nailed to the cross in Christ, and then you were raised from the dead with Christ, and you will follow Christ up into heaven. Like that conclusion is foregone, but the effects of that sin exist here now.

So it's almost like there's this... Okay, so God is not saying, "Keep the marriage bed undefiled to avoid the effects." He's saying, "Keep it undefiled because I said so. And that's my good design. Even when you defile it and you come back to Me, I will not judge you for that but you still will have to sit in the

consequences of that." Anyway, I'm just trying to pick this apart. I'm not trying to subtext anyone.

Selena: Right. And I think that's important. Because it's the repentance and the commitment. What would be the most... I mean, if this is a part of your story and God has brought you out of it, your natural response would be one of worship,-

Ryan: Amen.

Selena: ...would be one of, you know, gratefulness and thankfulness and repentance and wanting to turn from that, because of the judgment of God, because of the wrath of God, and understanding the weight of those things. And I think He allows us as believers to understand and know those things. I think some of us are still learning the weight of our sin.

Ryan: So please don't hear what I just said. I don't want to keep shame.

Selena: No.

Ryan: That's not our goal, nor is it I think godly because we are calling people to repentance who have yet to repent. If you're in repent, like if we've repented of sin, that sin is no more. Your nature has been made new. That's what's Psalm 112 or Psalm 103:12. "As far as east is from the west, so he's removed our sins from us."

Selena: Right. And we are now walking in the light, like 1 John 1:7, and living in the light. So walking in the light, having some boundaries around us. What do we actually mean by boundaries? We did a whole series on boundaries. If you just type in the little search engine there, I'm sure it'll come right up. But our simple answer for this is just keeping good things in and growing and thriving while also keeping bad things and threats kind of outside of the marriage bed in this particular conversation.

Ryan: We see this in Song of Solomon when she says, "Keep the little foxes from our garden." They want to get in and gorge themselves on the fruit of our healthy union. And we need to be vigilant and keeping the foxes out of the garden. And that's what boundaries are all about.

Selena: And Proverbs 5, we've talked about many times with the cistern—protecting your cistern and not spilling it out into the streets and sharing of that time.

Ryan: This is for you alone.

- Selena:** It's just for you alone to-
- Ryan:** And then also not allowing contaminants to get into the water source that it is that will bring life to you. And that's keeping bad things out.
- Selena:** Right. So these boundaries or these hedges of protection are because there is a thief. There is an enemy that comes to steal and kill and destroy. But God He's our good shepherd and He provides us not only with His word but Himself as the Holy Spirit to empower us to live righteously. It's not always easy, but it is always the better way.
- And so ideally, how do we put boundaries in place? I think one question we have to first ask ourselves is, are there bad things that we're trying to keep out? And what does that look like? You know, we talk a lot about the phone drop test. We're all about transparency here at Fierce Marriage. Why don't you tell them quickly what the phone drop test is.
- Ryan:** Pretty simple. You just at any point in time... Again, this is not about-
- Selena:** Policing.
- Ryan:** ...policing. It's not about-
- Selena:** It's in a spirit of transparency and living in the light.
- Ryan:** Yeah, yeah. So here's the theoretical piece. At any point in time, Selena could say, "Hey, can I see what's on your phone?" And without worry, without care, without kind of a flinching, I could put my phone down, I could drop my phone on the table and say, "Go ahead. I have nothing to hide." I'm completely open to you looking at my browser history, my text messaging, my messages, my DMs in every app and every social network, my emails. I'm totally fine with you seeing all that stuff.
- Selena:** And that I think is more of a space to live in. And that's kind of the ideal as far as like maybe trust has been broken and now we're trying to get back to this way of... or get to. Maybe we never were there to this level of transparency that we can be confident with each other in. And so the phone drop test I think is just kind of an indicator or showing us that we can do this, and we live in this now, and this is good.
- It's just kind of a gauge of like, "Oh, he's flinching with the phone or she's getting angry that I'm asking her these things." So what's kind of the underlying frustrations or tension there?

- Ryan:** I don't think you've ever asked me to do that.
- Selena:** We do use it as-
- Ryan:** It's more of a theoretical like, where's my heart?
- Selena:** Yes.
- Ryan:** It's more of asking yourself, like, Could I be known and exposed in this way without my wife feeling she'd been betrayed in some way?
- Selena:** It's a boundary for you and you and your spouse, I think.
- Ryan:** The other one here is transparency. That's very similar. So transparency is just like Selena, you know all my passwords to all my everything. Even just internet in general, not just on my phone.
- Selena:** And not in an interrogating way. The transparency piece is really something you have to build I think brick by brick in a marriage, especially if there has been trust that has been broken. We have, by God's grace, not ever experienced anything-
- Ryan:** Infidelity you mean?
- Selena:** Infidelity or adultery and kind of the defilement piece. But there's been, you know, times where the transparency feels foggy. And so how can we keep living in the light. God, how are we not? Why is there darkness here? And how can transparency be viewed as a boundary to keep the good things in and not as like policing, like bad things? So how is transparency helpful?
- Ryan:** Yeah, we've talked about it at length-
- Selena:** In other series.
- Ryan:** We wrote a book called "See-through Marriage."
- Selena:** That too. *[laughs]*
- Ryan:** It's all about being transparent with one another. But here's the thing. Transparency is not just about you catching me in sin or me avoiding sin.
- Selena:** Absolutely.

Ryan: Transparency is about being known. And we struggle with our transparency before the living God. That we are fully known and still fully loved in Him. And once we know ourselves as those who are redeemed in Christ, we are transparent with ourselves, with our true identity. Then from there, I can now say, "Here I am, Selena. All my faults, everything that I thought would cause me shame, Christ has taken all those things, He's forgiven them. Now I'm making them known to you so that I can now be loved more deeply by you. And I'm asking you in return to show me the same levels of transparency."

So like you said at the very beginning, it's like flipping the script. It's no longer just defending. But I'm on the off fence and saying I'm going to live in the light because I'm called to live in the light. It's where life is.

Selena: Right. And transparency piece is not a manipulation tactic. It's very much an invitation into being known and be known fully and knowing your spouse fully. Not like, "Hey, I'm being transparent with you, so you better be transparent with me." That's not what we're saying here.

The next piece of boundaries, quickly, is community. So being known by your brothers and sisters in Christ. And when we're talking about this in terms of protecting your sex life, I think it just obviously... it's alluding to pornography or maybe just an emotional affair. I hate to say "just." So an emotional affair.

Anything that you might struggle with sexually outside of your marriage, even in your marriage because of your past or whatever's happened to you, I think that it's very key. It's a huge boundary that helps protect our marriage. Again, keeping bad things out and good things in and growing by having a community—my brothers and sisters in Christ.

Ryan: Yeah, that's really good. I want to add a fourth boundary. And I think it probably goes without saying, but I'm going to say it because I found a lot of things I think go without saying don't actually go without saying. *[both chuckles]*

Selena: I agree.

Ryan: And it's this scripture. So the boundary of God's word, in that God has drawn a line in the sand. There are good, pure, right things and there are bad, impure, wrong things on either side of that line that He's drawn. If we can just get on the same page as a couple and we can both acknowledge that God has a way, a right way for us to express ourselves within the marriage bed, to express our sexuality within Christian marriage, God has given us a good right and true way. That boundary is massive. Because then you can start to then decipher like, "This stays, this leaves. This is allowed, this is not allowed." And it gives

us an absolute standard by which to measure our desires, our communication, our actions.

Selena: The gray areas they kind of dissipate, I would say.

Ryan: Which we had thought about doing an episode all around those gray areas. Like they're the hard questions that people are asking when it comes to married sex. Basically, like, what sorts of actions are okay and not okay? What sorts of requests are appropriate, not appropriate?

We had thought about drawing those boundaries for you. But then, by some wise counsel with some really dear friends of mine, I basically said, "How do we approach this conversation?" They said, "I think you're asking the wrong questions."

Selena: Right.

Ryan: They said, "The questions that we need to look back to, how has God designed sex? What did He design it for?" And then we leave you Christian with those convictions in mind to then go through and work that out in your own sex life. And so I think that's what we're going to do toward the latter half of this episode. But first, we're going to talk about what defilement is.

Selena: Right, the bad things.

Ryan: What's on the bad side of the boundary?

Selena: So protecting your sex life from what? And defilements was basically, you know, anything that is impure. And the Bible outlines this. There's an article we can put in the show notes from Got Questions, that kind of exegesis Scripture, a little bit more and talking about what defilement means. But there's a list of a few things. And we only picked a few to talk about here that we thought were beneficial.

The term "fornication." So two unmarried people having sex—that's 1 Corinthians 6:18—they don't have a marriage covenant, therefore, they are defiling God's gift of sex. So if you are single person and you are struggling with your girlfriend or boyfriend or wherever you're at, and you're moving towards marriage or whatnot... I think that term of fornication feels like a heavy word. And I think it should because again we're facing God's judgment, not just like fighting the urges to stay pure. It's not about us in a lot of ways. *[chuckles]* It's about God and His judgment and His gift to us.

And by waiting and by doing it... obeying God, not doing it God's way, God's way is the way, but by being obedient and choosing to live righteously, by the grace and ability of the Holy Spirit, we are abstaining, and we are protecting your future sex life with your spouse. So I just thought that was an important one to bring up because they're still Christian people saying they're Christians and having sex and they're not married. And that's not okay. [chuckles] It's a defilement of their future marriage life.

Ryan: That's tragic that a lot of folks... I mean, we've just kind of lost the sense that there is a right and wrong in this way. So hopefully, we're helping.

Selena: It's like abstinence is out of style. And it's like, Well, no.

Ryan: This is the hard truth. If you're a teenager and you've even internalized sex culture in your teenage years in that like hookup culture, and whatever that ends up looking like, you are what the Bible calls a fornicator. And that's really hard for people to swallow, because this is one of those old words, and it's old idea.

Selena: Kind of that old world.

Ryan: And we're here to say it is not just a boundary... It's not arbitrary, for one. It's also not to just keep you from doing the things you want to do. It's to help you flourish and live in. And the flourishing begins in obeying God. It begins in submitting ourselves to Him and trusting that His way is higher and better.

Selena: Right. And for spiritual flourishing, that then will eventually lead to the physical enjoyment and pleasure. So I think we tend to have those in reverse of I want the physical pleasure and enjoyment. The spiritual will come but like, "I don't care about that. I just want to feel good." Those are just I think the conversations to have and to be talking about.

The second one here would be adultery, which is when one or both parties are having sex when they're married to someone else that they are not. So they're having sex with each other, but that's not their spouse.

Ryan: Well, here's the thing. Jesus said this in the Beatitudes, right?

Selena: Mm-hmm.

Ryan: In Matthew 5, he said, "If you've looked at a woman," or you can switch it and say, "woman, if you've looked at a man with lustful intent, you've committed adultery in your heart." Can we just grasp the weight of that thing? The fact that if you are accustomed to looking at other people who are not your spouse

with lustful intent... now there's a lot of conversation we can have around what lustful intent is. Is it noticing? Is it by virtue of looking or you lusting? Or is there more to it than that?

I tend to think that there's more to it than if you've noticed someone. That's one thing. But you have to make a conscious decision in your mind to-

Selena: To go further.

Ryan: ...go further or to abstain from going further. And that's where you choose righteousness over sin or you choose the right way in that moment. I don't think by looking and noticing somebody who's attractive you're automatically lusting. I think you have an opportunity at that moment to make the right choice or the wrong choice.

But the point being made there is that adultery isn't just what you said at the beginning, which is, okay, I've made this decision to go and have sex with another person outside of my marital covenant. Jesus leveled the playing field. He said that if you've even thought it, it's as if you've done it. So the same thing with anger. If you've had anger and wrath in your heart, you have murdered that person in your heart. And these are sins worthy of condemnation.

Selena: Worthy of God's wrath,-

Ryan: Worthy of the wrath of God.

Selena: ...the judgment of God that we talked about in Hebrews 13.

Ryan: And if I'm honest, I really struggle with the Beatitudes, because Jesus ends it and He's like, "Therefore be perfect as My Father is perfect." And so if we read scripture and we don't have kind of a mature understanding of what Jesus is doing there, we can read that as if it's a list of things that we are... we're either going to pick ourselves up by our bootstraps and say, "We have to do better." That's moralizing. I need to do better. Or we're going to feel completely and utterly crushed. I think what Jesus was doing was the latter. He was saying, "Listen, my standard of righteousness is so high,-

Selena: It's unattainable.

Ryan: ...it is unattainable. It will crush you. It will crush you. That is why I'm here."

Selena: So good.

Ryan: "That is why I'm here because I have upheld this standard." Christ speaking, of course, not me. He has upheld His standard. And He's saying, "You must be perfect. And by the way, I'm here to make you perfect. I'm here to die for those sins that you've committed, for the lusts that you've committed in your heart, the murders you've committed in your heart. I'm here to bear the wrath of My Father for your sins on the cross. I'm here to live a perfect life, I'm here to die as sinners death so that you can live the life that I'm now giving to you."

Anyway, that's a sidebar. The point is, when we take these defilements or these bad things seriously, they have one effect in the life of a believer. And that's to drive us into the arms of our Savior. And it reminds us of the depth of our sin and therefore the need that we have for a savior. So let that do that for you right now. *[chuckles]* It's doing it for me.

Selena: Yeah. The repentance.

Ryan: The third one.

Selena: Yeah, the third and final one.

Ryan: Pornography.

Selena: Of course, it's pornography.

Ryan: This goes alongside the adultery piece, because pornography is obviously other people having sex in some lewd manner on... any manner for other people to watch. And then other people-

Selena: On display.

Ryan: On display. There you go. And then bringing that into your marriage is defiling your marriage bed because you're basically bringing other people in. It's adultery in the emotional sense.

Selena: It very much leads to things like coercion, which I don't know if you want to define that a little bit.

Ryan: Okay. It is adulterous in the sense that we just defined it. But yeah, it does defile your marriage in other ways besides just bringing in adultery. In that it will bring in sometimes desires that are not born from within the purity of your marriage.

Selena: Of God.

Ryan: They've been leaked in from the outside. So a lot of times what will happen is a husband or a wife will have over their history, they've seen some sort of act played out through pornography, and they want to now experience that act themselves. And of course, they're in their marriage and they're saying, "Well, you're my sexual partner, therefore, I want to experience that act with you."

Oftentimes with pornography, the act is not loving. I mean, I would say 100% of time, it's not loving, but the reenactment of that is oftentimes not loving, no matter where your hearts coming from. I'm not choosing my words super precisely. So just give me some grace as I'm trying to think through this in real-time. But it can lead to coercion, where it's like, "Hey, I want to do this thing." "I don't feel comfortable with that." "Why not? Why not?"

Selena: It's stepping into manipulation, you know, especially down the path.

Ryan: Especially if you hear someone like Ryan and Selena on the Fierce Marriage Podcast talk about, you know, "Hey, sex is great is supposed to be an expression of love." And you start using words like that against your spouse. You're coercing them to do something that out the gate they don't feel comfortable doing, for whatever reason they don't feel comfortable doing. And I think the reasons for that go back to the reasons for sex. And that's why we'll get into that next.

Selena: Right. And I think the important thing at that point is to stop and to keep communicating, but to stop whatever you're doing at that point. And then, at a later time, discuss kind of the motivations there and the expectations.

Because again, I mean, if you're living in sin and you don't really know maybe that you're living in sin, we're here to say that if something else like pornography is driving those desires, then that's definitely sin. If something outside of you loving your spouse well is driving some desire that makes them feel uncomfortable or unsafe, that is sin.

So again, if you and your spouse are dealing with one of these three defilements, I guess we're here to say like, go to your pastors, go to a counselor, go to a guide couple or someone that is qualified. There is no podcast episode that can help you get started on the path to healing. Like you have to do that face to face with another believer, someone who's qualified and capable. So we would say, go, go, go find that help.

But these are the defilement items, I guess, or things that we're trying to keep out. We're trying to protect our marriage and the purity and preserve our sex life through phone drop tests, and building transparency, and having good

communication with each other and with our community of believers and living under the authority of Scripture.

So why? What are the good things? Let's leave our conversation here of what are the good things that we are trying to protect and to grow and thrive? And this goes back to our very first episode of the seven reasons for sex.

Ryan: I love what you said. Each one of these will tie into what you said. If you need a really clear standard, listener, and you're wondering... we have this question about our sex life and maybe some of the things that he's wanting, or she's wanting, what Selena said, I think gives us a really good clear line.

It says if that thing is born from a heart of love and wanting to serve your spouse, and not just get from them something, but if that action is not coming from a place of wanting to love them more and love them more purely, more way intensely the way Christ has loved, then it's safe to say that it's probably going to be categorized on the sin side of it or the selfishness side of it. And therefore the sin is inside of it.

And so there are times to have conversations. But if your sole motivation, your main motivation is selfish, then that's a very clear kind of indicator, red flag. And then you always talk through that, and then maybe the actions come out another way. That is... I don't know. So that's a really clear indicator.

So with that, let's talk through the seven reasons for sex. Let's just go through real quickly. Again, go back to that episode. It's three episodes back or four episodes back. We talk about each one of these in greater detail. Today, we're going to contrast those with the good they bring about that's worth protecting within the marriage bed.

So here they are all seven of them. Pleasure, procreation, connection, protection, comfort, the gospel, and the glory of God. So for the first one, we're protecting the pleasure of our sex life.

Selena: For both the husband and the wife.

Ryan: For both the husband and the wife. We're protecting the enjoyment that we take in one another. It's when I trust that I am your only-

Selena: One and only.

Ryan: ...yeah, I'm your one and only, you're my one and only, our pleasure is going to be multiplied. If any defilement comes in, like if you've got in the back of your mind, "Is he thinking about so and so? Or thinking about such and such?"

that's going to take away. It's going to rob from our pleasure. So we're protecting against that.

Second one: procreation. I'm going to have you answer that one. *[both chuckles]*

Selena: Just a means of being fruitful and multiplying. So protecting that instruction and that mandate that God has given us. By having sex within the marriage covenant, we are being fruitful in the way that He has instructed, and ordered, and purposed.

Ryan: I was having a hard time connecting the dots. So, yes, when we protect marriage within the covenant and that fruitfulness of procreation, the reason for sex has its right place, and therefore it is protected and can flourish when our children are now born within wedlock. Again, there's grace all around. But the point is, is that when we protect sex for what it is, then we are protecting one of the reasons which is procreation. One of the seven reasons. This is one of the seven reasons.

Connection. I think this goes back to the first one, pleasure. When I know that you're not in the back of your mind thinking of someone else, we're going to connect physically, emotionally, spiritually in a deeper, more enjoyable, richer way.

Selena: Right. And I think, yeah, with your spouse, you can only go... you just go deeper together. And it's just more enjoyment, more... you can't do that with various people. *[chuckles]* It's just not possible. And so I just think that the connection aspect, it grows. And there's this emotional connection that can grow and the spiritual development of connection can grow, again, with this repetition. Protection is the next one, which we've been talking about.

Ryan: Funny because the boundaries are to protect the protection.

Selena: Yes, protect the protection.

Ryan: I love that. Because it does say that sex has a reason, a purpose within our marriage, and it's to even be one of the weapons that we use in protecting against defilement. So by drawing these clear boundaries, we're saying that not only are we protecting our sex life, but we're also recognizing that our sex life is part of that protection.

Selena: Yeah. I mean, if you think about just you guarding your thoughts, and walking out... just living righteously, by the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, by the grace of God, having sex protects us and allows us to engage in loving the Lord

our God with all have our strength, all of our soul, all of our might, and our mind.

And so there's so much there to be gleaned, but I know protection against protection is [inaudible].

Ryan: It's all right. Comfort. If one spouse is going through difficult season, the external factors, career switch or loss or death in extended family, sometimes sex can be a... one of the reasons for sex is you can comfort one another with it.

Selena: It can be a very familiar place to kind of land again when maybe there's just a bunch of turmoil in your life and you're going through a hard season.

Ryan: This next one, the Gospel. What I love about this is remember we're talking about how to protect these good things, these good reasons that sex facilitates, that sex does, right? Say, as a husband I've been struggling to keep my thought life pure, right? And I fight that fight. And I go to my brothers and I go to prayer, I go to the Lord, I go to the scriptures, and by God's grace, you win that fight.

Now, I can go to you. Even if you lose that fight... I was going to say because you're going to lose that fight at times where you're going to slip up, you're going to sin, it's still time to go to your spouse. You don't even have to be worthy. You can go and repent to your spouse. But I can say that "I've transgressed this boundary. I've done this wrong. Christ has forgiven me." Now, I'm going to bring it to you and confess the sin to you, my wife. And I'm going to ask you for your forgiveness. Which has happened in the past. And what are you going to say?

Selena: Whatever I can only say is "I forgive you."

Ryan: "I forgive you." And that's what you're protecting. Is that now not only have I felt the loving forgiveness of Christ in my repentance toward Him, but now I can feel it even more deep way, more, I guess, tangible way right here and now in that my wife is forgiving me and my wife is still allowing me to embrace her, and to come to her with my sexual need, to express sexual affections toward her. And she still loves me despite my sin. That's a picture of-

Selena: The gospel.

Ryan: ...the gospel. Now, there's a lot of nuance in there. It doesn't mean that just because a husband says the words "I'm sorry. Will you forgive me?" It doesn't

mean the wife is necessarily going to trust him in that moment or even feel that he's being genuine.

Selena: Or trust him 1,000%. Right? Sometimes there's steps that we grow into. We have to walk out that repentance and forgiveness daily in multiple times. 70 times 70 times 70. Right? That is a picture of the gospel. And God is working in it. In Him and through Him.

Ryan: So we don't want to paint a picture that somehow by just saying the words that the trust is going to be restored automatically. But it does begin that process.

Selena: Yeah.

Ryan: The last reason for sex was the glory of God. Again, by engaging in the gift that He's given us, the gift of sex within marriage, we bring glory to Him. So when we are going about our marital joy, I'll say. *[both laughs]* Do you want to have marital joy later? *[laughs]*

Selena: Marital joy.

Ryan: When we're doing that in light of how God has created it and we're enjoying one another in the way that He's designed, that is glorifying Him. And so by drawings clear boundaries, by protecting our sex life, we are protecting... there are opportunities now to engage in sex in the exact context that He's given us to engage it in. And that's a profound thing.

And so one of the reasons of sex again is to shout the glory of God and to resonate His glory. Even when the doors are closed in the master bedroom, and we are being married, that glorifies God in a really profound way. And you're protecting that with these boundaries.

So the couple's conversation challenge is, talk through the boundaries that you have around your sex life. Maybe talk through these bad things that we mentioned, the defilers: fornication, adultery, pornography. And then what are some boundaries that you can create around your intimate life, your intimate conversations that you're having on this front? What conversations can you schedule to have down the line? I always like to say there's always the initial conversation, and then there's a follow-up, and then there's a follow-up, and then there's a follow-up.

Selena: And who can you involve in those conversations? Right?

Ryan: Yeah. If you have, you know, a guide couple of friends that are close to you, you can involve them in a way that's healthy and edifying. The point is, is talk about it. Talk about the boundaries that you set around your sex life, the hedge of protection. What bad things do you need to keep out? What good things are you going to protect and keep in? All right?

Selena: So good.

Ryan: Lord, thank you for this time. I thank you for your word. I thank you for the context that you give us. That you have opinions on these things. And you've allowed us to experience your goodness through obedience to you.

I pray that you'd help us see sex as the gift that it is, help us see kind of the darkness and some of the sin that wants to creep in. Help us to see that for what it actually is. And help us to run the opposite way into your arms, trusting your way, into the arms of our spouses. That we might fight this fight together, that we might protect this area of our marriage so that we might flourish. But more than anything, so that we might obey you gladly, quickly, and with our whole hearts.

Lord, I pray for marriages that feel broken, that they would begin to repair. Holy Spirit, you would work in the hearts of those listening right now. That you give them the next step to take toward health, toward following your way in this area of their life, in this area of their marriage. I pray that you'd walk alongside them and let them feel your presence, Lord. Let them feel your presence. Lord, you never leave us you never forsake us. We love you. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Selena: Amen.

Ryan: All right. Thanks for joining us. Ladies and gentlemen, 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.

[00:43:13] <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

- **[00:05:45]**
 - Scripture references:
 - Hebrews 13:4

- **[00:014:27]**
 - Scripture references:
 - Proverbs 5

- **[00:22:43]**
 - Scripture references:
 - 1 Corinthians 6:18

- **[00:25:30]**
 - Scripture references:
 - Matthew 5

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